Perception of Team Skills: A Comparison of Self and Peer Assessment

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Abstract:

Purpose - **Teamwork is a primary competency needed from management graduates to be successful in the workplace. Organizations and employers are increasingly seeking graduates who are good in teamwork skills. The purpose of this paper is to bring out the differences in perception, if any, in terms of self and peer assessment, and how it can be utilized effectively for promoting the development of teamwork and other professional skills in management graduates.**

Design/methodology/approach – **To assess team working competencies in the present study, theory and concepts of team development was explicitly taught to the students as the conceptual framework. A group project was assigned to each team so that they constructively aligned and engaged in team processes to complete the task in hand. A short questionnaire was developed on a five point Likert Scale and administered to each member of the group team to anonymously assess their own and the skills of their team members.**

Findings – **There are substantial differences in self and peer evaluation of the perception of team working skills.**

Practical implications – **There are perceptual differences in the team working skills based on self and peer evaluation. Efforts need to be made to align the two to be successful managers.**

Keywords: **Team-working skills, perception, peer-evaluation, Interpersonal skills**

1. INTRODUCTION

Teams are an essential part of modern corporate organizations. Survival in today's competitive setting makes it mandatory for companies to adopt and promote workplace that encourages teamwork. Several research studies have highlighted that teams provide numerous benefits. These include improved quality of decision making (Kerr & Tindale, 2004), nurturing innovation and creativity (Larson & LaFasto, 1989), and boost to organizational learning (Edmonson, Dillon, & Roloff, 2008). Strong synergy amongst team members facilitates in creating a constructive and effective team environment. However, ineffective teamwork can result in costly and disastrous decision making, which could translate into frustration and anxiety to the members of the team (Hackman, 1990; Lencioni, 2002). This in turn can escalate problems for the company by adversely impacting the bottom lines and also its business relationships.

Traditionally it was perceived that strong technical skills were the only skills necessary for career growth and advancement; however, workplaces are increasingly showcasing that technical skills are not enough to keep individuals employed (James & James, 2004). The ability to work effectively in a team is one of the key competencies needed from management graduates to be successful in the workplace. There is a need for employees who are good in team-work. Recruiters are therefore, in search of graduates who score high on this. New recruits, in many instances, have been asked to quit their jobs because they are unable to work well with others.

The ability to assess one's own skills through self-reflection is important. However, we tend to overestimate our own skills when compared to the assessment by the team-mates. This could result in false self-confidence about own teamwork skills. Often it has been observed that there are differences in the degree of teamwork skills assessed by an individual himself/herself and those assessed by his/her peers. There have been numerous studies that have highlighted the significance of the use of self and peer assessment (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000).