# Strategies for Improving Organizational Productivity

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## Introduction

This paper examines educational institutions, focusing on overcoming role and communication problems, lack of cohesiveness, and inter-group conflict. When considering the factors that affect group productivity, I realize a key to a productive group from start to finish is the attitude each member has during the forming stage. One must understand that there is no “I” in a team, no matter one’s level of expertise or lack thereof. Team process and performance both require and support the development of relevant soft skills such as effectiveness, communication, viewpoint sharing, constructive conflict and criticism, active listening, power-sharing, self-management, negotiation, and compromise. These factors will be more thoroughly discussed within my research, focusing on how these play a part in an educational institute.

According to our title, productivity is a process that shows whether an institution is effective and efficient. Organizational productivity improvement is a process of doing the right things better as part of the continuous process. Our discussion is about how we can improve the productivity of an educational institution. An educational institution is a place where people gather knowledge and skills or are being educated, and it comprises preschool, middle school, high school, and universities. For this paper, I will focus on the university level to analyze or discuss all the factors that I have mentioned above.

## University Stakeholders and Teamwork

The university comprises different stakeholders, such as students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, the board of management, and the student board of management. Every group of management has to work as a team to deliver high-quality service to their students. At the same time, teams might face various problems or conflicts like lack of trust, which can be caused by poor leadership, the location of the institution, diverse members, the team being too big, lack of good structure and ways of doing things, an unclear vision and mission, and being less concerned about each other. All these can be resolved by demonstrating good leadership, making trust a high priority, and creating a conducive environment for every one of the team members.

# Team Identity, Communication, and Decision-Making

The other one is the absence of team identity, where team members sometimes feel unaccountable to one another concerning the objectives of the team. This can be caused by a lack of commitment and effort, differences in team goals and objectives or inappropriate collaboration. These will happen due to a lack of identity as a cohesive unit. To overcome all these, organizations need to align the team with the appropriate values of an organization.

Another challenge that contributes to conflict in a team group is the lack of open communication. If a team member suffers from poor communication, this will automatically result in inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, lack of understanding, duplication of things, and many other problems. This can only be resolved by establishing the appropriate mechanism of communication among all team members and institution management. For example, in a poor university, communication might lead to a riot, strike, destruction of property, etc. (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Difficulties in making decisions are another challenge that can cause conflict between team members. This mainly arises when a member might be rigid in adhering to his/her position during decision-making or bringing an argument instead of providing new information. Also, ambiguity in upper leadership can cause difficulties in making decisions in the institution. The form of communication that a team tends to use in deciding within themselves needs to be very well understood.

Another challenge is a lack of ability to resolve conflicts in a group of people or individuals. This can be steered by communication issues, which cause difficulties in resolving conflicts between team members. Also, conflict can’t be resolved, especially when the tension is very high, when the team members are attacking each other or when they are demonstrating aggressive behaviour. This can only be resolved by establishing good leadership and establishing an intelligent system for dealing with conflict.

# Team Size and Leadership

Another key factor that causes conflict in a group of people is the size of the team. When the team is very large, there are a lot of differences, which mostly lead to conflicts of interest. The location of the institution can also cause conflict due to insecurity, transportation barriers, difficult climate or diversity. In case the team is very diverse, most will have better sharing, which will help them understand each other’s differences and the way each views things.

Lastly, ineffective leadership will also lead to conflict in a team group. This can be caused by the leader failing his or her team members by misinterpreting vision and improperly delegating duties. This can be corrected by being conscious of any imbalance in people’s participation. Improving the

maturity level of each and every team member will result in a cohesive group of people and a well-performing team, which needs to have clear objectives, meet many times, participate in constructive arguments concerning how to offer the best service to the students, exchange information, coordinate their tasks, back up each other, review their performance, and come up with a way to improve the institution.

## Team Cohesion and Institutional Productivity

All these factors, if not well addressed, will automatically affect the productivity of the institution due to ineffectiveness and inefficiency. For all organizations or any institution to be productive, they should first ensure that all team members are working with oneness and cohesion so that they can offer the best service to their clients. For an educational institution like the university, all members of the board of management need to have trust in each other and trust in the chairperson of this board. Also, all members of this group must be accountable to each other, and they need to give everybody a chance to express their opinions and respect each other's views or opinions. But if this board of management doesn't have a conducive environment or work with oneness and cohesiveness, no doubt automatically there will be a total mess in the whole management and institution, which may lead to a lack of development in the institution, low quality of education, poor management of resources, conflict between students, board of management, teaching staff and supporting staff, which might lead to riots, strikes or damage to resources and infrastructures.

Also, teaching staff group members need to have good communication with each other, have respect, be accountable to each other, give everybody a chance to express their opinions, and respect each other's views or opinions. But if either of these group managements doesn't have a good conducive environment or work with oneness and cohesiveness, automatically there will be a total mess in some group of management, and the institution at large won't give the best service to its students.

Also, supporting staff group members need to have good communication with each other, have respect, be accountable to each other, give everybody a chance to express their opinions, and respect each other's views or opinions. But if either of these group managements doesn't have a good conducive environment or work with oneness and cohesiveness, automatically there will be a total mess in some group of management, and the institution at large won't give the best service to its students.

Also, student leadership group members need to have good communication with each other, have respect, be accountable to each other, give everybody a chance to express their opinions, and respect each other's views or opinions. But if either of these group managements doesn't have a good conducive environment or work with oneness and cohesiveness, automatically there will be a total mess in some group of management, and the institution at large won't give the best service to its students.

For example, if there is good management in the leadership of the teaching staff, there is no reason for the teacher not to offer teaching services to their students as required, resulting in a high quality of education. Good management will result in a high quality of education, and this will improve the productivity of educational institutions.

## Causes of Intergroup Conflict

Another problem an educational institution might face is excessive intergroup conflict. This is where the different groups of management, like the board of management, teaching staff management group and student board of management, need to have a good mechanism of communication between all groups that are responsible for management. But at the same time, there are factors that cause an institution to have intergroup conflict, such as diversity, which is brought by differences in backgrounds and experiences and gives staff or members of the group different views of things when exchanging thoughts or handling challenges. Large workloads mostly produce a wide range of ways of doing things and solutions. Also, diversity can affect conflict for both sides within the teams and between the teams.

Different groups might have incompatible goals, and the most common and easy way to have a clear understanding of the conflict in an intergroup is mainly incompatible goals. According to Belak, as well as Miles Hewstone and Katy Greenland in their 2000 International Journal of Psychology article on the topic, just as conflict arises among group members with different goals, groups competing against each other for shared resources often disagree on how to use those resources based on their competing objectives.

## Communication and Reward Inequality

Another factor that can cause intergroup conflict is poor communication. This is mainly caused by little or no communication. Also, it is indicated that separation among groups contributes to a sense of superiority and limits the strength of how group members can interact. Once the groups that are supposed to work together toward institutional goals fail or have an improper way of communicating their respective pursuits, misunderstanding, mismanagement, and feelings of not being satisfied are more prevalent. Every team is required to have the ability to interact and communicate to work toward achieving specified goals (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Lastly, an unequal reward structure is another factor that can cause intergroup conflict. When a certain team feels that another team is not fairly evaluated or rewarded regarding different set standards, that team might become biased or envious because of the preferred group. Hewstone and Greenland indicate that this informal evolution of social identity within the workplace strongly impacts the feelings of groups about one another.

# Managing Intergroup Conflict

Also, there are key ways of handling intergroup conflict, including the prevention of disruptive conflict, which comprises establishing a conducive environment characterized by trust and respect. Once a different team is required to work on a particular project, it should start by scheduling a kickoff meeting, where it is supposed to invite all the team members to participate. Despite some conflicts being unavoidable, all these groups need to discuss the need to establish a comprehensive process of resolving inter-group issues when they arise. They need to think about possibilities and agree on a decision-making strategy, and also they need to communicate it to all the team members.

The second way of handling intergroup conflict is to come up with a mechanism for resolving conflict, which starts by acknowledging the conflict. Once you assume issues or avoid confrontation, it might tend to cause a very big problem to fester. Furthermore, there needs to be an open discussion about the effect that a conflict has on group productivity. If there are disagreements of opinion that might hinder the right communication, the task might not move as required from one end to another promptly. All group leaders should lead by example and keep communication open to all team members, and they need to use active listening skills to understand all sides of an issue.

The other way of handling intergroup conflict is understanding each other's groups, which involves understanding ongoing issues, scheduling regular meetings, and inviting all the team members. It is also necessary to allow each team leader of every group to present an update on arising issues and then grant time for discussion. Doing so normally gives the whole team a chance to present their grievances and work on resolutions by avoiding issues from becoming personal by focusing on the exact problems but not the person raising his/her issues. Also, they need to avoid attacking each other and pay attention to the task at hand instead. Then, clarify each group's position when there is inter-group conflict.

# Reaching Agreement

Finally, the last way of handling intergroup conflict is agreeing. All groups need to agree on a certain problem resolution and encourage every group member to be involved and keep an open mind. This requires analyzing the problem from different perspectives to get a broad perspective. This technique can typically lead to innovative and creative solutions that all team members can feel good about. The facilitator needs to conduct a volatile discussion between teams. Also, an impartial mediator is required to help calm tempers and help all teams reach a solution faster.

# Conclusion

To improve productivity for an educational institution, all teams need to work with oneness and cohesion. Also, there must be a conducive environment for all boards of management. Every group of

management has to work as a team in order to deliver high-quality service to their students. At the same time, teams might face various problems or conflicts like lack of trust, which can be caused by poor leadership, the location of the institution, diverse members, the team being too big, lack of good structure and ways of doing things, an unclear vision and mission, and being less concerned about each other. All these can be resolved by demonstrating good leadership, making trust a high priority, and creating a conducive environment for every one of the team members.

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