

COMS 361 – BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

FALL SEMESTER, 2020

STUDY GUIDE FOR UNIT 3: Cooperating (Group COMS)

Material from the reading by Jehn

1. Know whether or not, in much of the **previous literature**, conflict is generally deemed **detrimental** to performance and satisfaction. Know whether or not, while most studies use **observational and unobtrusive methods**, the author uses **survey methods**, or the **other way around**. Know whether or not conflict theory and research has **primarily focused** on **disagreements** about ends, but conflict can just as **easily occur** about means. Know whether or not, in many organizational groups, group members **largely agree** about individual and group goals yet they **still find themselves** in conflict. Know whether or not task-related management team conflict can **improve organizational performance** and growth through **enhanced understanding** of various viewpoints and **creative options**. Know whether or not **Guetzkow and Gyr** proposed that both **"affective"** and **"substantive"** conflicts exist. Know whether or not empirical research shows a **positive association** between relationship conflict, productivity, and satisfaction **in groups**. Know whether or not **task conflict** can improve decision-making outcomes and group productivity by increasing decision quality through incorporating **devil's advocacy roles** and **constructive criticism**. Know whether or not emotions define individuals' **subjective interpretation** of reality and reactions to **current situations**. Know whether or not there has been **considerable evidence** of **positive effects** of relationship conflict on **both performance and satisfaction**. (p. 530-533)
2. Know whether or not all interviews were **carried out in private** at the informant's workplace but **were not audio-recorded**. Know whether or not the author used the **tree diagrams** to investigate the group members' **cognitive schemas** surrounding **loyalty**. Know whether or not the distinction between two types of conflict is apparent in **all but one** of the **tree diagram examples**. Know whether or not the data revealed a type of conflict labeled **"process conflict."** Know whether or not the author examined the **similarity of trees** across work unit members by **comparing** the terms in each tree diagram and its **placement** in the tree. Know whether or not the author asked informants questions in **follow-up interviews** to check the **reliability** of the categorizations in their tree diagrams and the **consistency** with answers provided in the focused interviews. Know whether or not, while it is easy to imagine the **emotional component** in relationship conflict, **task and process conflicts** can also contain **high levels of emotion**. Know whether or not a term placed at the **top of the tree** was considered a **secondary category placement**, which indicates **comprehensiveness**, **importance**, and **saliency** of the term or category in an individual's memory. Know whether or not the **acceptability dimension** refers to group norms about **conflict and communication**. Know whether or not **low-performing groups** had higher levels of relationship conflict than high performing groups. Know whether or not, despite the **negative effects** of process conflict, changes in job assignments and responsibilities were **sometimes necessary** and even **boosted group productivity**. Know whether or not the **perceived resolution potential** of a conflict had a **general, positive effect** on **performance and satisfaction**. Know whether or not the **International and the Foreign Coding** units were the **lowest performing groups** in the set and had **moderate to high levels** of task-related conflict. Know whether or not, in the **Communication Unit**, members work **interdependently** to complete all communication-related tasks for the international division of the firm. Know whether or not the **second round of interviews** occurred simultaneously with the observation and were **semi-focused**, with questions about **specific topics** and research questions. (p. 533-551)
3. Know whether or not **two of the three types** of conflict were perceived as **distinct and distinguishable** by group members. Know whether or not **process conflict** appeared to have a **direct negative relationship** with group performance. Know whether or not **past research** has suggested a **curvilinear relationship** between **task conflict and performance**, such that low levels of task conflict **inhibit performance**, moderate levels enhance performance, and **high levels decrease performance**. Know whether or not the current data suggest that the **optimal profile** for high-performing groups includes important, **moderate task conflicts**, no **relationship conflicts**, little or no **procedural conflict**, with norms that task conflict is **acceptable and resolvable** and with little negative emotionality. Know whether or not past research often focused on conflict that **arises** over the **specific ends** of the group rather than examining conflict about the means by which those ends **were reached**. Know whether or not **specific norms** exist for **each type of conflict** within groups. (p. 551-552)
4. Know whether or not the **multiple methods** of this study provide data that support a **grounded theory** of multidimensional intragroup conflict. Know whether or not the data reveal that organizational members have **relationship, process, and task-related conflicts** that can be **highly emotional**, can have little potential for **quick**

resolution, and can be **very important** to the group's members. Know whether or not **destructive conflict**, fueled by **interpersonal difficulties**, process **uncertainty**, and **negative emotion** can undermine the potential **benefits** of group interaction. Know whether or not **task conflicts** focus on interpersonal relationships, while **relationship conflicts** focus on the content and the goals of the work. Know whether or not the dimensions uncovered (**emotionality, importance, acceptability, resolution potential**) were related to all three types of conflict. (p. 552-554)

Material from the reading by Klocke

1. Know whether or not groups can produce a **better outcome** by exchanging the **unshared information** of each group member and making the decision on the **basis of all information (shared and initially unshared)**. Know whether or not, **in comparable interventions** of previous studies, group members often only received **information passively**. Know whether or not, in the **interventions** in the study, group members were also **actively engaged** in a group exercise aimed at demonstrating the **effectiveness or ineffectiveness** of specific processes. Know whether or not, whereas this study focused either on **processes at the group level** or on **processes at the individual level**, previous studies analyzes **both levels simultaneously**. Know whether or not, in a **hidden profile task**, groups often do not go beyond a **simple aggregation** of their initial preferences. (p. 437-438)
2. Know whether or not **Brownstein** found that people **bias their information processing** to favor an **initially preferred alternative**. Know whether or not, the **higher** the amount of relevant information that groups process, the **lower** the quality of their decisions. Know whether or not, in the study by **Schulz-Hardt**, there is evidence at the group level that **more systematic processing** of information results in **higher quality decisions**. Know whether or not the **proportion** of group members who have **specific information** before discussion is related to the **impact** of this information on the **subsequent group decision**. Know whether or not groups might **fail to process** the available information systematically. Know whether or not, in **hidden profile tasks**, only the **integration** of unshared information ensures higher quality decisions by **groups compared to individuals**. Know whether or not **unshared information**, even if mentioned in the discussion, is seriously considered by other group members and therefore has **more impact** on the final decision than shared information. Know whether or not some studies have shown that decision quality is **unrelated** to the **introduction of shared information**. Know whether or not **systematic processing and both biases** only occur at the **group level**. Know whether or not **Tasa and Whyte** found a positive relationship between **vigilant problem solving** and **group performance**. (p. 438-442)
3. Know whether or not there is evidence **at the group level and at the individual level** that **dissent** can have **promotional effects** on decision making. Know whether or not, if the group members **recognize divergent preferences** of other members, they might be **more prone** to an early **direct expression** of their **own preference** than if they **agree** with the other members. Know whether or not it is likely that the **positive effect of dissent** on group decision quality is **mediated** by more systematic and less biased processing at the **individual level**. Know whether or not it has been demonstrated that **dissent**, especially when articulated by a **consistent minority**, promotes **divergent thinking**, a variable related to unbiased processing. Know whether or not researchers have found evidence that **groupthink** can have **detrimental** effects on group decisions. Know whether or not a lot of **interventions** have not been successful in **enhancing group decision quality**. Know whether or not **both interventions** were aimed at **enhancing systematic processing**. Know whether or not the **mixed results** of previous interventions suggest that a **mere instruction** to participants to **prevent defective processes** is not always enough to **improve quality** of group decisions. Know whether or not, in the reported study, it was assumed that the **sharedness intervention** would increase the **sharedness bias**. Know whether or not some authors instructed group members to **avoid mentioning their preferences** in the first part of the discussion and concentrate instead on **recalling and pooling** all relevant information. (p. 442-445)
4. Know whether or not all variables **except decision quality** were **normally distributed**. Know whether or not the **motive** for **sharedness bias** and the **preference bias** in information evaluation **correlated positively with decision quality**. Know whether or not, in line with **Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 10, and Hypothesis 11**, in the ANCOVA, **significant effects emerged**. Know whether or not the **manipulation** of the initial preference for a certain candidate was **successful** for 88% of the participants. Know whether or not, on **average**, participants agreed on the items measuring the **motive for sharedness bias** to a **medium extent**. Know whether or not an interesting finding is that **dissent** had **opposite effects** on the preference bias at the **individual level** and at the **group level**. Know whether or not **Schulz-Hardt et al.** found that dissent **reduced the repetition bias** in favor of **preference-consistent information**. Know whether or not **neither intervention** was successful in **stimulating systematic processing** at the group level. Know whether or not, because of **time restrictions** for the experimental sessions, the evaluation of information was **not measured separately** for each piece of information. Know whether or not this study analyzed **both biases and systematic processing** at the group level and at the individual level. (p. 453-464)
5. Know whether or not decision making in the context of complex problems **rarely requires** the integration of **knowledge from different experts**. Know whether or not, as **no intervention alone** was able to enhance group decision quality, a

combination of both **interventions and a stronger focus** on individual-level processes is **recommended**. Know whether or not the individual **overvaluing of shared and preference-consistent information** is responsible for the **failure to identify** the correct decision in the group. Know whether or not, when decision quality is of **high importance**, the decision-making team should be composed of members with a **diversity of opinions**. Know whether or not, if **no dissent** is present, evaluation bias can also be reduced by **two training interventions** with a **group exercise** to demonstrate defective decision processes. (p. 465)

Material from the reading by Warkentin et al.

1. Know whether or not virtual teams that can fulfil **constantly changing task requirements** can offer organizations the **flexibility to remain competitive**. Know whether or not **synchronous meetings** require more time than **asynchronous meetings** because information exchange takes longer, or the **other way around**. Know whether or not **virtual teams** are groups of people engaged in a **common task or goal** communicating through **electronic means**, which may be electronic mail (email), Web-based communications, video and/or audio, but in general having **considerable interaction on-line**. Know whether or not **CMCS increase** the range, capacity and speed of managerial communications. Know whether or not **asynchronous meetings** are **spontaneous**, in which ideas are exchanged with **little structure**. Know whether or not developing **relational links** involves performing activities related to the **member support and group well-being functioning**. Know whether or not the development of relational links among team members has been found to be a **significant contributor** to the effectiveness of information exchange. Know whether or not the **exchange of social information** will help teams develop relational links. Know whether or not **face-to-face conversation** is a remarkably **disorderly process**. Know whether or not **nonverbal mode** includes tone of voice, inflection, and voice volume. (p. 271-273)
2. Know whether or not electronic communication has **benefits and drawbacks** that have often been referred to as **"process gains and losses."** Know whether or not it has been shown that **higher total levels** of information exchange within groups is associated with **improved outcomes** and that information exchange is **strongly affected** by the group's **internal dynamics or relational links**. Know whether or not it has been found that electronic communication channels **initially raise** relational **intimacy**. Know whether or not a **critical part** of any meeting is the development of a relationship among the participants to provide a **foundation for trust and commitment**. Know whether or not **media richness theory** and **social presence theory** state that computer-mediated group interactions are **lacking in their ability** to share socioemotional information and cues needed to develop **trust, warmth and other interpersonal affections**. Know whether or not the participants in this study were **upper-level undergraduate students** enrolled in a course on computer architecture. Know whether or not the **three virtual team tasks** were part of the required work for the course. Know whether or not participants were informed of **possible drawbacks** to electronic communication. Know whether or not **MeetingWeb** was designed to have a **familiar look and feel** to users of the World Wide Web. Know whether or not subjects were **administratively placed into 12 groups** in such a way that **no two members** who met face-to-face in other course projects would be **virtual partners**. (p. 273-281)
3. Know whether or not **VTC training** led to **increasing perceptions** of cohesiveness and satisfaction with process over time. Know whether or not, although not **statistically significant**, teams with VTC training **out-performed the control teams** on the assigned tasks, and anecdotally reported **higher levels of satisfaction** with the dynamics of group interaction. Know whether or not **many business teams** meet only in the **virtual space**. Know whether or not many researchers have found that, between **women and men**, there are **measurable conversational differences** in the patterns and uses of interaction primitives such as **verbosity, interruption/turn-taking, tag questions and directives**. Know whether or not **Chidambaram and Bostrom** developed a framework that classifies **all models of group development** into two broad categories: **sequential and non-sequential**. Know whether or not many respondents indicated that the **lags and delays** of asynchronous communications **constrained** their communications, making it **inefficient and impeding the formation** of group consensus and conclusions. Know whether or not any of the individual **responses** to the qualitative **open-ended questions** on the research instrument proved to be **informative**. Know whether or not analysis of the data indicates that the teams **not receiving** the VTC training started out with **fairly high evaluations** in terms of the three relational variables, but these measurements **steadily decreased** throughout the project. Know whether or not non-sequential models do not propose a **predetermined sequence of events** but focus on explaining the underlying factors that **cause shifts** in group development. Know whether or not members of both **the treatment and the control groups** had significant objections to engaging in groups without the benefit of **traditional face-to-face** interaction dynamics. Know whether or not there was a **temporal trend**, and participants were able to identify characteristics by the **mid-study survey** and these perceptions were **significantly different** at the end of the study. Know whether or not **trust** is a basic feature of social situations that **require cooperation and interdependence** and also plays a critical role in problem solving. Know whether or not the group sizes for each section (**18 with VTC training and 20 for non-VTC training**) were large enough to offer **rigorous statistical analysis**. Know whether or not the findings from the analysis of the **trust, common goals and openness variables** suggest that it may be worthwhile to **investigate further** these relationships. Know whether or not it would be informative to evaluate teams that communicate **virtually initially** and then proceed to work **face-to-face**. (p. 281-287)