

Empirical Study of Group Dynamics in A Pedagogical Team

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Abstract: This article presents an empirical study of the socio-psychological characteristics of group dynamics in pedagogical teams of higher educational institutions. The study analyzed formal and informal relationships within pedagogical teams, leadership, group cohesion, emotional climate, and conflict management strategies. Sociometric methods, group cohesion diagnostics, and conflictological techniques were employed in the empirical research. The findings confirmed that informal leadership, emotional integration, and constructive cooperation within pedagogical teams have a direct impact on the quality of education and the effectiveness of collective activity. In addition, scientific and practical mechanisms for optimizing group dynamics were developed. The results of the study may be used to create a favorable psychological climate in higher educational institutions, support the professional development of teachers, and improve the effectiveness of collective work.

Keywords: Pedagogical team, group dynamics, socio-psychological relationships, leadership, group cohesion, emotional climate, conflict management, higher education.

Introduction: Group dynamics in a pedagogical team is a complex pedagogical and socio-psychological phenomenon that examines the processes of interpersonal relationships among group members, role distribution, leadership, authority, and interaction, all of which directly influence the effectiveness of the educational environment. According to Kurt Lewin's theory of group dynamics, every team functions as a "field of forces," and the nature of interpersonal relationships within the group determines the pace at which its common goals are achieved. The works of Wilfred Rupert Bion and Bruce Tuckman provide a scientific foundation for the stages of group development and highlight the significance of group psychology in the educational process. The study of group dynamics in pedagogical teams is of considerable scientific and practical importance, as it contributes to

improving the quality of education, creating an effective collaborative environment, and promoting the professional development of teachers. Within the framework of this study, empirical research was conducted to investigate the characteristics of group dynamics in the pedagogical teams of higher education institutions.

A pedagogical team is a social group composed of teachers and administrative staff who jointly carry out their professional activities in a general education school or a higher education institution. Its effectiveness and stability largely depend on psychological factors, emotional relationships, and social interactions among team members. The socio-psychological characteristics of interaction within a pedagogical team—such as the psychological climate, the level of mutual understanding among its members,

emotional closeness, empathy, and the ability to manage conflicts—play a crucial role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and fostering a culture of collaborative work.

Socio-psychological relationships within a pedagogical team foster trust and cooperation among its members. In particular, the presence of trusting relationships, the opportunity to express emotions openly, and mutual support among colleagues contribute to strengthening the overall psychological climate of the team. Such group dynamics enhance the quality of professional performance and facilitate the constructive resolution of conflicts.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the psychological climate within pedagogical teams—such as members' emotional stability, organizational stability, and a strong orientation toward collaboration—are important factors that ensure the sustainability of the team and enhance the effectiveness of its professional activities.

Pedagogical teams in higher education institutions (HEIs) differ significantly from those in general secondary schools in terms of their hierarchical structure, the high intellectual potential of the academic staff, and the multifunctional nature of their teaching and research activities. In the context of higher education, group dynamics determine not only the effectiveness of the educational process but also the productivity of fundamental research, the continuity of academic traditions within departments, and the sustainability of the teacher–student (or mentor–mentee) relationship.

From this perspective, Bruce Tuckman's model of group development—comprising the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning—takes on a distinctive dynamic character within the departments of higher education institutions. A particularly critical aspect of group dynamics is the differentiation of roles between early-career academics undergoing professional adaptation and senior professors with established academic status. This process largely determines the effectiveness of interpersonal interaction, the professional integration of newly appointed faculty members, and the overall stability of the pedagogical team.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of socio-

psychological relationships within a pedagogical team, an empirical study was conducted among the academic staff of a higher education institution. The practical component of the research included sociometric measurements to examine the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, psychological tests to assess the emotional climate, and diagnostic instruments designed to analyze conflict management strategies. The methodological framework integrated approaches based on Jacob L. Moreno's sociometric theory, Kenneth Thomas's conflict management model, and selected principles of Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory.

The object of the study comprises the system of formal and informal relationships within departmental teams of higher education institutions, the level of emotional integration among team members, and the patterns underlying the formation of microgroups within the pedagogical team.

The empirical study conducted among pedagogical teams in higher education institutions identified several significant patterns of group dynamics, as revealed through correlation analysis:

1. Role Hierarchy and Informal Leadership

The results of the sociometric survey revealed that, within academic teams, formal leadership (e.g., the head of the department or dean) and informal authority are not always vested in the same individual. According to Kurt Lewin's field theory, when functional cooperation is established between the formal leader and the informal leader, the rate at which the group achieves its shared goals (the synergistic effect) may increase by up to 42%. Conversely, the hidden destructive storming stage of group development tends to persist, negatively affecting the effectiveness of collaborative work.

2. Cognitive and Emotional Cohesion

The level of group cohesion, assessed using the Seashore Group Cohesion Index, demonstrated that teams with a higher proportion of faculty members holding academic degrees exhibit cohesion primarily of a cognitive nature, based on shared intellectual goals and professional interests. However, the empirical findings also indicated that in pedagogical teams characterized by low levels of emotional closeness and empathy, professional burnout develops considerably

faster. Consequently, this negatively affects the stability of the overall psychological climate and reduces organizational effectiveness within higher education institutions.

3. Conflict Potential and Its Constructive Transformation

According to the findings obtained using the Kenneth Thomas Conflict Management Instrument, 58% of educators preferred the Compromising and Collaborating strategies when dealing with conflict situations. This tendency can be explained by the high level of socio-cultural awareness and intellectual reflection characteristic of academic staff in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, latent competition among subgroups (microgroups) functions as a restraining force that hinders the integration of research activities and the development of effective academic collaboration. As a result, it may weaken group cohesion and limit opportunities for implementing joint research and educational projects.

Models for Optimizing Group Dynamics in Pedagogical Teams of Higher Education Institutions

The integration of the empirical findings indicates that fostering healthy group dynamics within pedagogical teams requires the implementation of the following scientific and practical measures:

1. Interactive Psychological Co-working.

Faculty members should be engaged not only in formal administrative interactions but also in socio-psychological training programs designed to strengthen emotional connectedness, mutual trust, and interpersonal communication.

2. A Facilitative Leadership Style.

The role of the department head should evolve from that of a directive administrator to a facilitator who guides, supports, and enhances the group's creative potential while encouraging collaborative decision-making.

3. Academic Organizational Culture.

A scientifically grounded motivational system should be implemented to ensure that each educator's individual achievements contribute directly to the overall reputation, academic standing, and institutional ranking of the department.

CONCLUSION

The empirical study of group dynamics within pedagogical teams represents one of the most significant issues in contemporary higher education management. Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Kurt Lewin, Wilfred Bion, and Bruce Tuckman, the findings demonstrate that the psychological climate and the system of socio-psychological relationships within academic teams should be regarded not merely as subjective factors but as strategic resources that determine the quality of education.

Creating a stable collaborative environment and effectively managing relationships among formal and informal subgroups contribute significantly to the professional development of academic staff while enhancing the competitiveness and institutional effectiveness of higher education institutions.

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