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Interdependence and Controversy in Group Decision Making: Antecedents to Effective Self-Managing Teams

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Abstract

Self-managing teams have the challenge to make decisions regarding their tasks and to manage their internal affairs. Findings on 60 self-managing teams with 540 employees indicate that the theory of cooperation and competition is useful for identifying the social processes that help these teams grapple with problems and work effectively. Specifically, teams with highly cooperative goals were found to discuss their opposing views open-mindedly and constructively which in turn developed confidence in team dynamics that contributed to effective team performance. Competitive goals appeared to interfere with constructive controversy, confidence, and effectiveness. Findings were interpreted as suggesting that structuring cooperative goals and constructive controversy can help self-managing teams gain confidence and work productively.



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