The power of group model building

A micro level analysis of social interaction during group model building

Dr. Inge Bleijenbergh
Dr. Pleun van Arensbergen
Monic Lansu MSc MA
Prof. Dr. Etiënne Rouwette

The method of Group Model Building

- Participatory intervention method

- Structuring complex problems

- Involving stakeholders & experts

- GMB starting point: equivalence between stakeholders

- Literature: power affects communication

- Focus on *legitimate* power and GMB *process*

- How do interaction activities differ between actors in GMB sessions, particularly between actors varying in legitimate power?

Methodology

- Real GMB intervention on gender equality at Science faculty of Dutch university (2014)

- 2 sessions of 4 hours each

- 11 participants (6 men and 5 women)

- Audiotapes fully transcribed and coded according to Bales' Interaction Process Analysis

I. Task directed anwers

II. Task directed questions

III. Positive social emotional reactions
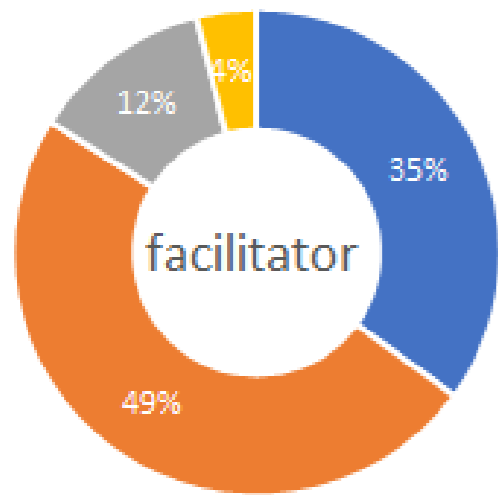
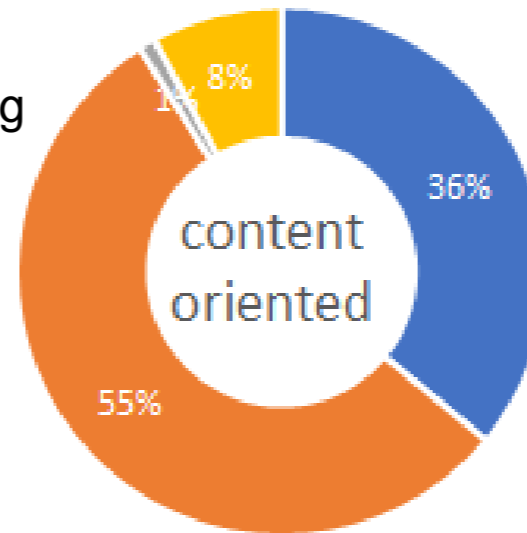IV. Negative social emotional reactions

Results: group behavior over time

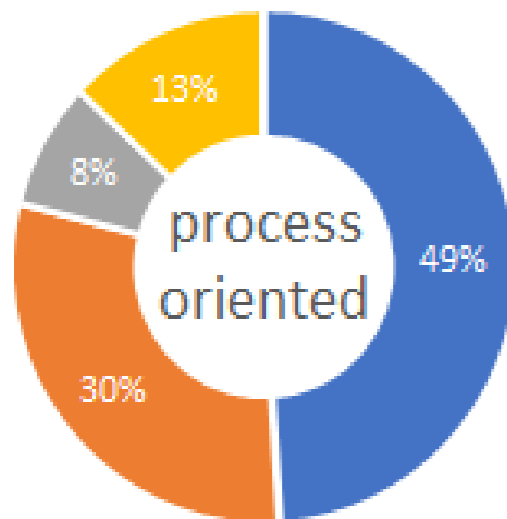Three phases: divergence, convergence and implementation
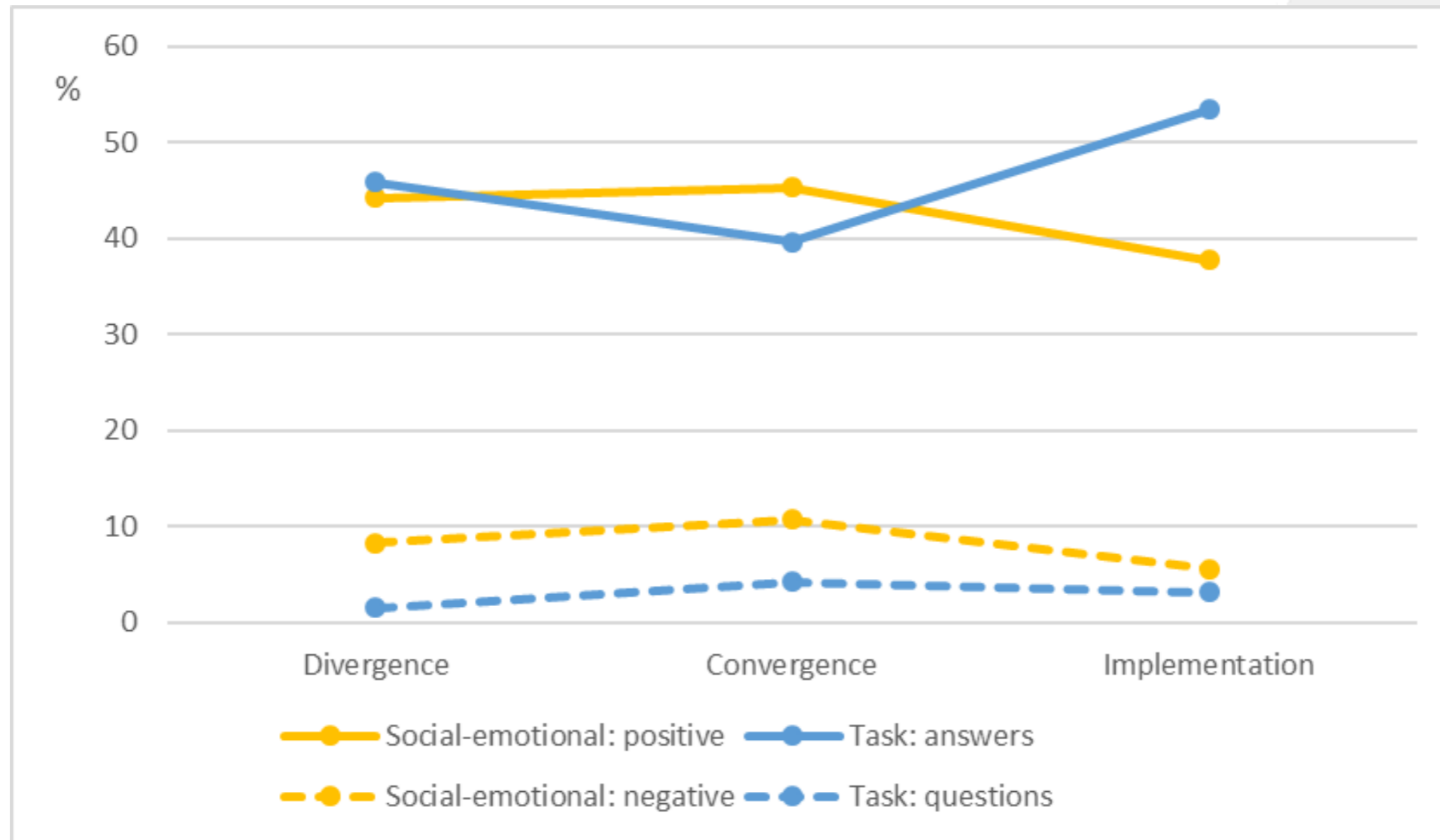
Results: (in)formal roles

facilitator
- 35%
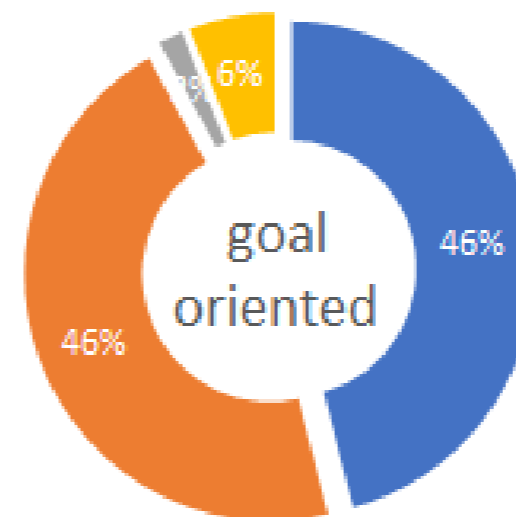- 49%
- 12%
- 4%

- much clarification & restating
- many questions
- little negative soc-em

content oriented
- 36%
- 55%
- 1%
- 8%

- Strong focus on providing information
- Less involved in group process

process oriented
- 49%
- 30%
- 8%
- 13%

- strongly oriented towards social process
- relatively many questions

goal oriented
- 46%
- 46%
- 1%
- 6%

- evenly strong focus on content (information) & group coherence (positive soc-em)

group oriented
- 54%
- 34%
- 2%
- 10%
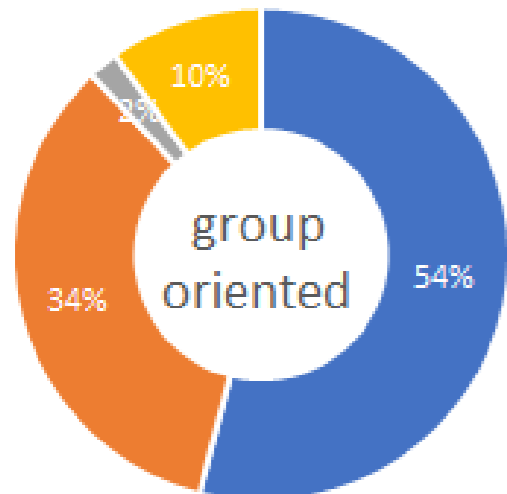
- focus on position in group
- few questions and answers

Legend:
- ■ Social-emotional: positive
- ■ Task: answers
- ■ Task: questions
- ■ Social-emotional: negative

Results: power differences

Mann-Whitney test:

no significant differences between high and low legitmate power for any type of social interaction

Conclusions & Discussion

- GMB process involves more social-emotional behavior than overall group interaction

- Confirmation GMB theory: fcilitator has attitude of inquiry, helping attitude, is neutral and has skills to build consensus and commitment

- GMB scripts allow participants room for variation in their contribution to the group interaction, as shown by typology of informal roles

- Confirmation of equalizing effect of group model building

- Scripts influence social interaction and may facilitate power leveling