

TEAM DYNAMICS AT WORK (161MN902C)**I-MBA 9th Semester****MODULE: I****TEAM**

A group of people with different skills and different tasks, who work together on a common project, service, or goal, with a meshing of functions and mutual support

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

1. The purpose, mission, or main objective is known and understood by all team members.
2. Communication in the team is open, direct and honest.
3. Sufficient leadership is available in the team.
4. There is regular review of how well the team is performing toward achieving its purpose.
5. There is an agreed organizational structure to the team.
6. Adequate resources are available to permit the team to perform its function, including skills, tools, facilities, and budgets.
7. Synergy exists, so the team performs in a way that is greater than the sum of its parts.

WHY USE TEAMS:

1. More knowledge and skill is brought to the problem.
2. Information flow is more effective.
3. More people are aware of the full breadth of the problem.
4. Meetings are more productive and goal-oriented.
5. Better decisions are made.
7. Team members learn from each other.
8. The team becomes more cohesive and develops a stronger sense of belonging to the organization.
9. Overall morale improves.
10. More is accomplished than is possible by equivalent individual efforts.
11. Productivity and time savings are achieved by eliminating duplication of efforts.
12. Absenteeism and missed deadlines are reduced.
13. Team members understand organizational issues better.
14. Teams set and achieve tougher goals than individuals.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS:

1. Teams don't need leadership.
2. Teams must have a say in all decisions.
3. "Talking teamwork" will make it happen.
4. Managing teams is more difficult than traditional management.

Types of Teams

A team is a cooperative unit of two or more people who have common goals and objectives. They work together to achieve these goals or objectives. In an organizational structure, teams are formed to accomplish complex tasks. A team is formed to maximize the output by combining

different types of expertise and people who have complementary skills and the ability to work as a team. This creates synergy.

According to Cole (2003), in order for a team or group of individuals to achieve organizational success, the quality performance of its individuals is vital. More often, to accomplish a task or project, teams are formed to combine diverse expertise to get desired outcomes. If the available talent in an organization is not utilized at optimum levels when forming a team, disharmony can be the result.

In an organization teams are classified according to its objective. The most common forms of teams in an organization are self-managed teams, problem-solving teams, virtual teams, cross-functional teams, leadership teams, self-directed teams, informal teams and traditional teams.

Self-managed Team

The use of self-managed teams first started in Japan and was later adapted for use in the United States in the 1980's. The basic theory behind this team style is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, which means the collective quality performance is more important and leads to expected outcomes more effectively than few individuals performing well while the rest perform below expectations. Self-managed teams are most commonly composed of 10-15 members, and are defined as a group of people who are working jointly in their own specialty to achieve common goals. Generally, people outside the team or from their internal team leadership define these common goals. The individuals then determine themselves how best to attain those goals. An advantage of this type of team structure is that the leader is a team player, and does not play a role of a boss. Therefore, the communication effectiveness increases in the group. Using self-managed teams will require open communication on company goals and objectives. This type of team is more goal-oriented, and as team members get a chance to learn from other team members, their participation and cooperation is improved. In this type of structure, team members learn to solve their problems by themselves. This type of team structure eliminates one level of management and employees become more organization oriented. A disadvantage of this type of team structure is there might be few people in a team who do not have the required skills and initiative to work together productively. This effectively reduces the growth path for the team members, increases the cost of training, and often increases turnover rates.

Problem-solving Team

This is a type of team that is created to form creative solutions to pressing organizational challenges. This type of team has three essential skills; the ability to think innovatively, the ability to think flexibly and imaginatively and, serious commitment and motivation to confront the challenge. A problem-solving team typically consists of five to twelve members within the same department who get together at a determined frequency to discuss ways of solving organizational problems. Examples of organizational problems may be decreased productivity, employee efficiency, etc. In this type of team, communication among team members regarding issues is high; they share ideas and give feedback to one another. Occasionally, a problem-solving team is given the authority to implement any of their suggested actions by themselves. The advantages of problem-solving teams are that more information and knowledge through member participation can be shared regarding the issue, greater numbers and diverse kinds of alternatives can be developed, and the team is more focused in solving problematic issues. The disadvantages of problem-solving teams are mostly the collaboration among teammates is often not effective. In such teams, probability of conflicts to arise is high. Due to conflict, time is consumed in solving an issue, which can cause decisions to get delayed. Often, a few members might dominate decision making, which might cause ideas not to be taken under consideration. Such situations may cause hard feelings among team members for each other and result in improper function of the team.

Virtual Team

Virtual teams are a relatively new development. They were not in existence before the development and domination of certain types of technology. In a virtual team, members might not interact physically with other members, and most of the time they communicate virtually to achieve a common goal. This virtual contact allows people to collaborate online via video conferencing, emails and other virtual mediums. The advantages of this type of team structure are that it is time and cost effective. Also, very diverse kinds of expertise can be obtained without any geographical barriers. The major disadvantages of this type of team is that the time difference of different team members due to geographical location can prove to be problematic if not managed properly. In this case, the advantages gained through physical communication cannot be accomplished. Often, it is difficult to understand verbal and non-verbal cues of the other team members through virtual communication. Also, the team members are cannot communicate without computers and Internet access.

Cross-functional Team

Cross-functional teams are comprised of employees who are generally of similar hierarchical level. A cross-functional team can accommodate a company's primary form of organizational structure, or can exist independently of a company's main hierarchical structure. The team member's areas of expertise are different from each other. For example, marketing, engineering, sales, and human resources professionals may work together to accomplish a common goal. Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company was a pioneer who used this type of team structure first in 1950's. The diverse nature of expertise of team members enabled them to exchange information, solve complex problems, and exchange information regarding complex projects and other organizational issues pertinent to their tasks. Parker (2003) said that in cross-functional teams, for the quality performance and timely attainment of goals the amalgamation of speedy and quality work and innovation is very important. The advantages of cross-functional teams are that they can solve problems through information processing. Cross-functional teams create agile communication channels, which are not often present in bureaucratic structured organizations. This type of team structure offers technical or professional excellence. Other advantages of cross-functional teams is that they reduce the time that takes to get things done, and can easily solve complex problems due to availability of diversity of expertise in team. The element of creativity is high, and the team members can more easily develop new professional and technical skills. Team members are more likely to learn from each other than those who are not part of cross-functional teams.

The disadvantage of a cross-functional team is that the team is only relying on expertise of one or two person regarding a subject. This means that a cross-functional team is covering the diversity of knowledge, but not depth of knowledge.

Leadership Teams

As discussed by Sheard, Kakabadse, &Kakabadse, (2009), leadership by a group or leadership team is a very productive approach of team building that some organization have adopted in order to get the various advantages and to overcome several impediments created by other types of teams. In such a group, more than one single leader within a team holding the leadership position and attributes can contribute to providing direction to the group as a whole.

The advantages of leadership teams are increased creativity, reduced costs, and downsizing. As some organizations have realized with other types of teams, leadership of a team is often too expensive. Other costs associated without a leadership team is the unnecessary interruption of

work time by the boss who is participating in the team and undue and nonproductive restrictions on teams. In a leadership team, individual qualities are collectively demonstrated in the group as a whole and thus will bring out the diverse and creative attributes in their groups. The leadership team is best suited to handle any given phase of the project. Additionally, as each team member has the opportunity to experience the high level of empowerment, it motivates members and feeds the cycle of success.

The disadvantage of leadership teams is often the conflicts that arise among individual leaders. As leadership styles are different. This style of team can cause conflicts, which can bring undesirable results on the overall performance of the team or on fulfilling the group's objective on the whole. When a group of leaders is assembled, personality conflicts are common, as each leader will try to establish a pecking order. Many are not used to serving on a team of equals, and are more suited to lead a team rather than serve on one.

Self-directed Teams

According to Wellins, Byham, and Wilson (1991) self-directed teams are empowered enough to make day to day decisions and actions on their own without the involvement of a higher authority. The team members not only do the work but also take on the management of that work. Self-directed teams are characterized by having direct access to information so that they can effectively plan, execute, coordinate and have authority over their work. In short, employees that are part of self-directed teams manage themselves. This allows managers to teach, coach, develop and facilitate rather than simply direct and control. Fisher (2000) states that an advantage of this kind of team development approach is helpful in building confidence and skills involving decision making, which helps to build and develop future leadership.

A disadvantage of self-directed teams may be the risk involved with the decision. Self-directed teams in an organization represent an approach of organizational design that is beyond just quality attainment and informal problem solving. In this type of team the leadership and problem solving capabilities of team members develop. They find their own direction while dealing with organizational projects, issues and problems. This approach lessens the dependency on external leaders, but also may serve to eliminate checks and balances, and can create a disconnect in achieving overall company goals.

Traditional Teams

Traditional teams are the formal groups normally believed to be a subdivision or functional unit. Leaders or managers of these teams are chosen by the organization and have ultimate power and authority within the team. The team is often tasked to produce a product, deliver a service, or perform a function that the organization has assigned. Diverse skills and knowledge among the team members are often characteristic of this type of team.

An advantage of a traditional team is that there is clear leadership, direction and discipline. Also, it is a more streamlined process for upper management, because they only have to receive reports from one team leader.

A disadvantage of a traditional team is that team members, unlike self-directed teams, are not allowed to make the decisions on their own and there is less delegation of authority. This type of team is a centralized kind of team. There may or may not be conflicts between the team members. This type of team is formal and rigid in structure and nature, having low adaptability when compared to other types of teams.

Informal Teams

As opposed to the formal groups, which are created as a result of manager's effort to accomplish the organizations, objectives, such as departments and divisions, informal teams are not planned teams of the organization. Rather, they evolve out of the formal organization due to the common needs or interest of individuals. The nature of an informal team is very open and flexible to changes, high in adaptability, and high in acceptability to teammates ideas. The communication among such groups is often very strong, and generally team members accept each other's ideas and exchange views. Informal teams are social in nature and the leader of an informal team may not be the same as were appointed by the organization in formal teams.

The advantages of informal groups are less conflicts and more similarity in thoughts. Often, an informal team can gain power and influence and may have an unseen influence on organizational decisions. This is common in union settings.

A disadvantage of an informal team is that often they have no real power or influence on organizational decisions.

Stages of Team Development

The most commonly used stages of team development are forming, storming, norming and performing. A fifth stage added by some researchers is called transforming.

Forming

This is the first stage of team development. In this stage, a team defines their tasks and responsibilities and defines ways to accomplish them. Methods are derived and acceptable behaviors are defined. In this stage members are often tested in different roles. This kind of behavior is found among team members, in team and external team leader roles. Because it is a first stage of team development, team members might not produce expected result instantly but instead try to adjust to change. Team members gradually learn from each other, learn to accept each other as unique individuals with unique views and ideas, and gradually learn to respect one another. This is a key to the success of a team. Progress on team goals may be limited due to the fact that often a team needs to be guided at first, and team members may be reluctant to take initiative.

Storming

This is the most challenging and critical stage. The storming stage is also called the conflict stage, and is a crucial part of the developmental process. At this stage team members often have disagreements with each other. They might experience stress, as their ways, ideas or suggestions may not be followed. Although disagreement takes place, the learning process of how to work in a team is continuous. At this stage, as mutual disagreement arises, team members argue about issues, which may result in team members being defensive or creating a state of competition. This situation increases the probability of interpersonal disputes. This frustration can be decreased if team members work together, get familiar with each other and genuinely accept to work with each other in a form of team before initiating a task. Slow progress and anxiety is common in this stage of team development.

Norming

This stage is called the teamwork phase, in which the tense situation created in the storming stage is overcome. At this stage, team members start giving each other enough space to share their views and ideas. The ability to tolerate and accept conflicting views increases in this stage. At this stage of norming, team members adopt logical and organized approaches to problem solving in which all members come to a consensus. Team members accept to work together and start performing positively as a team; however there is often a chance of over dependency on the internal team leader. The team often shows a greater attitude towards learning from each other,

and acceptability of each other increases in this stage. This is a positive sign and helps each individual team member to learn and develop professionally.

Performing

This stage of team development is also called the achievement stage. The main focus of the team in this stage is on performance and results. The main issues in this stage are productivity and team development, which take much of the teams attention. Members start working in a constructive manner with each other, and their focus is to achieve goals by giving maximum quality input by offering collective efforts. There is chance of conflict among team members, but in case a conflict arises they address and resolve it in an appropriate manner and determine solution of the conflict by mutual consensus.

Transforming

This is the stage presented by Tuckman (1965) is known as the stage of change. In this stage, the team is performing very well and it is producing synergetic results. The communication process among teammates is effective and functions are not strictly defined. Team members move freely among interchangeable responsibilities. The team recognizes their problems and works on their goals effectively, finding various alternatives for them. This is the transformation change in which the capabilities and capacity of productivity of a team increases as compared to when first forming a team. At this stage, the team is giving a high performance and their transformation from one stage to another and adaptation to difficulties that seemed to be harder at first stage becomes easier. This better enables them to deal effectively with future organizational challenges.

Team Success

One of the prerequisites to studying and understanding teamwork is defining the nature of team success. Measuring the success of teamwork can be difficult. The characteristics that team members and leaders believe are important for success might not be the same characteristics that managers believe are important. Team members focus on the internal operations of the team; they look at the contributions that each member brings to the team and how well members work together. Managers focus on the team's impact on the organization; they are concerned with results, not with how the team operates. There is a danger in using too simplistic a view of success because it may focus on the wrong factors when trying to evaluate and improve a team.

According to Hackman (1987), there are three primary definitions of team success, **relating to the task, social relations, and the individual**. A successful team completes its task or reaches its goals. While

completing the task, team members develop social relations that help them work together and maintain the team.

Completing the Task

From a management perspective, the obvious definition of team success is successful performance on a task. A successful team performs the task better when compared to other ways of organizing people to perform the same task. Completing a task successfully as a team is a measure of success, but project success is not a demonstration of team success. Could the task have been completed without a team? What was the benefit of using a team for performing the task? For a particular task, there is often little advantage to using a team. In fact, there are disadvantages because time is “wasted” in developing the team rather than focusing on the task. The advantages of using a team to perform a task when unforeseen problems arise and when the team works together on future tasks.

If a project runs smoothly, people working individually under supervision often can perform the necessary task. If a project encounters difficulties, however, the value of a team is demonstrated by the ability of team members to use multiple perspectives to solve problems and motivate one another during the difficult period.

Developing Social Relations

Measuring the results of a team’s task performance does not completely capture the definition of team success. A successful team performs its task and is better able to perform the next assigned task. This is the social relations, group maintenance, or viability aspect of teamwork. An important value of teamwork is building the skills and capabilities of the team and organization. For this to happen, the team must have good internal social relations. Performing in the team should encourage participants to want to continue working as a team in the future. A team must develop social relations among its members. The social interactions necessary for teamwork require group cohesion and good communication. Cohesion comes from the emotional ties that team members have with one another. Good communication depends on understanding and trust.

Benefiting the Individual

The third aspect of team success concerns the individual. Participating in a team should be good for the individual. Teamwork should help improve an individual’s social or interpersonal skills in the workplace, being in a team with members with different expertise or skills should broaden an employee’s knowledge and make him or her more aware of other perspectives. In addition to personal development, participating in a team should further an employee’s career. Successful

contributions to a work team should be reflected in the employee's performance evaluations. Working in teams helps satisfy people's social and growth needs. People enjoy working in teams because it increases the social and emotional support they receive. Teams can be great learning experiences. Team members share their knowledge and expertise. As they learn how to be good team members, they also develop communication and organizational skills. Obviously, these personal benefits are more important to some people than to others.

2. Conditions for Team Success

The success of a team depends on four conditions .First; the team must have the right people to perform the task. Second, the task must be suitable for teamwork. Third, the team must combine its resources effectively to complete the task. Fourth, the organization must provide a supportive context for the team.

-Team Composition

A team's performance depends on the qualities of the individuals performing the task. First, the team must contain people with knowledge, skills, and abilities that match the task requirements. However, the team's members must also have the necessary group process skills to operate effectively. This relates to the social skills and personalities of the team members. Some teams fail because their members do not have the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their tasks. Good teams have good team members. The success of groups is due to the leaders' ability to recruit highly competent team members. High-performing leaders are not afraid to hire people who are more skilled than they are themselves.

Part of creating an effective team is making sure it has the necessary diversity of knowledge and skills. Interdisciplinary research teams are more productive than teams whose members have similar backgrounds. Teams whose members have differences of opinion are more creative than like-minded teams. Teams require that team members have the skills to work together as a team. Interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and teamwork skills may be used as selection criteria for team members, may be taught to team members, or may be inducted through the use of facilitators. Interpersonal skills are communication techniques, such as interviewing, active listening, providing feedback, and negotiating. Problem-solving skills improve the effectiveness of teams by providing approaches to analyzing problems and making decisions. Teamwork skills promote an understanding of group processes and provide skills to manage the group processes effectively.

-Characteristics of the Task

Teams can be used to perform a variety of types of tasks, and tasks vary in how well suited they are for Teamwork. A good team task motivates team members and requires coordinated activity. Teams require both appropriate tasks and organizational support for those tasks.

McGrath (1984) developed a system to describe the different types of tasks that teams perform, based on four team goals—**generate, choose, negotiate, and execute**. **Generation** includes tasks that focus on the creative generation of new ideas and tasks that develop plans for behavioral action. **Choosing** deals with intellectual tasks, such as problem solving, when there are correct answers and decision-making tasks when there are no correct answers. **Negotiation** includes tasks aimed at resolving conflicting viewpoints and mixed-motive tasks aimed at resolving conflicts of interest. **Execution** refers to competitive tasks that help resolve conflicts of power and performance tasks designed to make things or provide services. The benefits of teamwork are realized only when teams are working on tasks that are suited for teamwork and organizations are willing to support them.

-Group Process

Having the right people and the right type of task does not guarantee success for a team. Team members' must be able to combine efforts successfully. Teams may not reach their potential if their internal processes interfere with their success. Effective teams organize themselves to perform tasks, develop social relations to support their operations, and assign leaders who can provide direction and facilitate team operations.

Teams communicate in order to make decisions and perform tasks. For both these activities, internal group processes may limit success. Teams may encounter problems with decision making. Team decisions may be disrupted by personal bias, distorted by the desire to maintain good relationships, or impaired by the desire to make decisions quickly. Teams often become prematurely committed to the first acceptable solution instead of taking a structured approach to problem solving.

It is the leader's responsibility to provide direction for the team and facilitate its internal processes. There is no set of rules that a good leader can mechanically follow. Depending on the tasks and team maturity, groups require different types of leadership. The use of teams often changes the nature of leadership because team leaders do not have the same power and authority as traditional managers. The role of the team leader is not to control the team's

behavior, but to help create the conditions that allow the team to manage its processes in a changing environment in order to be successful.

-Organizational Context

The organizational context relates to the culture of the organization, the support it provides for teams, and its evaluation and reward systems. Teams are more likely to be successful in organizations with supportive organizational cultures. Supportive cultures encourage open communication and collaborative effort. Power and responsibility are given to teams so they can control their own actions. A number of organizational supports should be provided to help teams function more effectively

Teams perform better when they have clear goals and well-defined tasks. They must be provided with adequate resources, including financial, staffing, and training support. Reliable information from the organization is required for teams to make decisions, coordinate their efforts with other parts of the organization, and plan for future changes. Finally, technical and group process assistance should be available to the teams. They need technical help to solve their problems and facilitation or coaching to deal with interpersonal difficulties.

Building effective teams requires the efforts of both team members and the organization. To improve on the way team members operate, a team needs feedback on its performance and an incentive to change. To an extent, the team can evaluate itself, and team members can provide support for one another, but an effective team requires feedback from the organization and rewards for good performance. Without this, team members cannot focus on the goals the organization has established for the team.

Characteristics of Successful Teams

The following are several examples of attempts to define the characteristics of successful teams.

1. **Clear direction and goals.** Teams need goals to focus efforts and evaluate performance.
2. **Good leadership.** Leaders are needed to help manage the internal and external relations of teams and orient teams toward their goals.
3. **Tasks suited for teamwork.** Tasks should be complex, important, and challenging, requiring the integrated efforts of team members, and the tasks should not be capable of being performed by individuals.
4. **Necessary resources to perform tasks.** These include material, training, and personnel resources.
5. **Supportive organizational environment.** Organizations must allocate sufficient power and authority to allow team members to make and implement decisions.

Benefits of Teamwork

Teamwork is increasing because teams are an effective way to improve performance and job satisfaction. Large-scale studies on the use of production work teams show their effectiveness.

Using teams provides the flexibility needed to operate in today's rapidly changing business world.

When work teams are widespread in an organization, the organization tends to show improvement in other performance areas, such as employee relations.

In addition to increasing organizational effectiveness, the implementation of work teams often leads to Improvements in job satisfaction and quality of work life

Teams have these beneficial characteristics because they provide social support to employees, encourage cooperation, and make jobs more interesting and challenging.

Problems of Teamwork

One of the problems is that teamwork programs are implemented with little consideration for their applicability. Rather than attempting to make existing programs work better, new programs are introduced.

Teamwork programs like quality circles provide only limited power to teams. Such programs often lead to small short-run improvements in performance, but not to long-term improvements

Teams with poor performance norms may not be effective and may be highly resistant to change. Low levels of group cohesion may limit team members' ability to work together.

Group process

Group process refers to how an organization's members work together to get things done. Typically, organizations spend a great deal of time and energy setting and striving to reach goals but give little consideration to what is happening between and to the group's greatest resource – it's members. While working hard to achieve results, it is critical that members' needs be addressed. Membership in an organization is as much an opportunity to develop self-confidence, refine skills and make friends as it is to support a cause, fundraise or educate the campus community. All of these can be done simultaneously, but most likely will not just happen on their own.

Effective organizations take a close look at how members work together, which roles they fill and whether members are contributing equally. Through group process, observation and analysis can

help identify problems early, thus alleviating the need for major overhaul as the year progresses. Your vantage point as a group member provides a great opportunity to regularly observe how things are going. Depending on the frequency of meetings and an understanding of what to look for, you can be instrumental in ensuring group and individual success. Process observation requires patience and the ability to focus on everyone in the group. Paying attention to these questions and roles can help you to better understand how the group is affecting its members and vice versa.

Elements of an organization that typically influence group proceedings include communication, participation, decision making and organizational roles. When observing these specific areas you will likely see several things happening simultaneously. This is to be expected, but it can also be rather confusing. Initially, you may want to isolate a single aspect of the group. As you become more adept at observation you can gradually increase your areas of focus.

COMMUNICATION

One of the easiest aspects of group process to observe is the pattern of communication: Who talks? For how long? How often?

- At whom do people look when they speak?
- Single-out individuals, possible potential supporters.
- The group
- No one
- Who talks after whom? Who interrupts whom?
- What style of communication is used (assertions, questions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.)?

The kind of observations we make give us clues to other important things that may be going on in the group (e.g., who leads whom or who influences whom). If you are uncomfortable observing the group, someone from the Student Activities and Leadership Center can observe your group's process and share that information with you.

PARTICIPATION

One indication of involvement is verbal participation. Look for differences in the amount of participation among members.

- Who are the high participants? Who are the low participants?
- Do you see any shift in participation (e.g., highs become quiet; lows suddenly become talkative)?

What are possible reasons for this in the group's interaction?

- How are the silent people treated? How is their silence interpreted? Consent, Disagreement? Disinterest? Fear? Etc.?
- Who talks to whom? Do you see any reason for this in the group's interactions?
- Who keeps the ball rolling? Why? Do you see any reason for this in the group's interactions?

DECISION MAKING

Many kinds of decisions are made in groups without considering the effects that these decisions will have on other members. Some people try to impose their own decisions on the group, while others want all members to participate or share in the decision making process.

Does anyone make a decision and carry it out without checking with other group members (self-authorized)? For example, one person decides on the topic to be discussed and immediately—begins to talk about it. What effect does this have on other group members?

Does the group drift from topic to topic? Who topic-jumps? Do you see any reason for this in— the group's interactions?

Who supports other members' suggestions or decisions? Does this support result in the two— members deciding the topic or activity for the group? How does this affect the other group members?

Is there any evidence of a majority pushing a decision through over other members' objections? Do they call for a vote?

Is there any attempt to get all members participating in a decision? What effect does this seem— to have on the group?

Does anyone make any contributions that do not receive any kind of response or recognition?— What effect does this have on the member?

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

A variety of crucial roles need to be filled to ensure group goal accomplishment and success. Roles are distributed among three types:

Task focused on getting things done. Examples: initiator, contributor, information seeker and giver, elaborator, orientator, energizer, recorder.

Maintenance Oriented toward improving relationships among members. Examples: encourager, harmonizer, compromiser.

Self-Oriented Focused on personal needs regardless of group concerns. Examples: aggressor, recognition seeker, dominator, blocker.

Understanding the Basic Team Processes

Motivation, group cohesion, role assignments, task and social behaviors, and team learning are the basic building blocks of successful team performance. Team members working in a team may be motivated to work harder, but sometimes individual effort decreases when individuals work in a team. This phenomenon is called social loafing. Developing challenging tasks that require interdependent actions, improving the reward system, fostering team efficacy, and increasing commitment to the team can help reduce social loafing and motivate the team.

Beyond motivating a team, successful performance depends on other factors. Group cohesion is the bond that ties the members together. Cohesive teams generally perform better, but cohesion also can cause performance problems. Like the roles in a play, people perform roles in a team. Poorly defined roles can lead to stress and inefficiency, while clear roles help teams operate with less stress and more efficiently. Although task behaviors typically dominate in work teams, social behaviors are necessary to build relationships among team members. Teams sometimes suffer from a lack of activities aimed at building relationships among members. Teams need to adapt to changing situations and learn how to improve their performance. Learning requires setting aside time to reflect on how the team is doing.

4.1 Motivation

The potential of teamwork lies in the fact that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That is, the collective work of a team of people is greater than the work that its individuals could accomplish separately. However, team synergies, the creativity in conflicting ideas, and the motivating impact of team spirit should give a team an advantage over a collection of individuals; it does not always work out that way. In some circumstances, working together causes a decrease in motivation that may be due to social loafing. Understanding this motivation problem can suggest to teams the ways to increase team motivation.

Social Loafing One of the biggest motivation problems for teams is social loafing, which is the reduction of individual contributions when people work in groups rather than alone (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). A simple experiment demonstrates social loafing. Ask individuals to shout as loud as they can when they are alone, and record the volume. Next, ask two individuals at a time to do the same task and record the volume; the volume will be 34% less than when two individuals shout alone. Finally, ask individuals to perform the same task in six-person groups and record the volume; it will be 64% less than when six individuals are shouting alone. Social loafing

is related to several other group phenomena. People can become “free riders” who perform little in a team because they do not believe their individual efforts are important, and they know they will receive their share of the team’s reward regardless of their efforts (Sweeney, 1973). The “sucker effect” (Johnson & Johnson, 1997) is when good performers slack off in teams because they do not want others to take advantage of them. This can lead to all team members reducing their contributions to the task.

A variety of factors contribute to social loafing (Karau & Williams, 1993). If the tasks the team is performing are just a collection of individual tasks, why does the team need to perform in a coordinated way? This reduces motivation because of the lack of a perceived need to work as a team. Individual performance can be hidden in the team’s collective effort, leading members to reduce their effort because they are no longer concerned about what others think of their performance. Finally, team members might be unaware of how much effort others are putting into the task. As a result, they do not know whether they are doing their fair share. Unfortunately, people tend to overestimate the extent of their contributions to the team.

One of the best ways to understand social loafing is to look at a situation where it rarely occurs, such as a championship basketball game. Only the team’s score counts in determining the winner, but every individual’s participation is observable and measurable. The task is motivating by itself and becomes more motivating through the social aspects of performance. The task requires an integrated and coordinated performance. One player cannot win the game by himself or herself, so each player is dependent on the coordinated efforts of the team to win. Winning is important, and success is highly rewarded. There is no social loafing in basketball or in other tasks that share these characteristics. Research on work teams shows that these sports principles apply to work. When work teams are given challenging tasks, when they are rewarded for team success yet have identifiable individual performance indicators, and when there is commitment to the team, social loafing does not occur (Hackman, 1986).

Increasing Team Motivation

The discussion of the impact of social loafing on a team helps identify the factors that encourage motivation in the team. Increasing a team’s motivation depends on multiple factors: the task it performs, how performance will be evaluated and rewarded, the team’s belief in its ability to succeed, and the team members’ sense of commitment or belonging.

Task

A team is more motivated when the task it performs is interesting, involving, and challenging. Probably the best description of how to create this type of task comes from the job characteristic model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). A satisfying job creates three critical psychological states: experienced meaningfulness, responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of results. A task is meaningful when it provides the opportunity to use a variety of skills, to complete an entire piece of work from beginning to end, and to affect others with its completion. Responsibility is experienced when given autonomy or the freedom to design, schedule, and carry out the task as desired. Knowledge of results comes from feedback on the effectiveness of one's performance.

However, a good team task is more than just a good individual task. A good team task requires task interdependence; team members must work together to successfully complete the task. Task interdependence is an additional factor that can be added to the job characteristic model (Van der Vegt, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1998). It is a shift from individual responsibility to experienced team responsibility for outcomes. To be successful, team members must feel responsible for both their own work and the work of the other team members. It is only when team members experience both types of responsibility that they work in a cooperative way.

Task interdependence can come from the distribution of skills among team members and the work processes of the team. It is one reason why action teams (e.g., sports teams) and cross-functional teams (e.g., design teams where members have different skills) often are more successful than student project teams. In a sports team, the players need one another to succeed. In a cross-functional team, working together is the only way to complete a project. However, in a student team, the students typically all have the same skills and knowledge, so they do not need one another to complete the task.

Interdependence helps motivate team members in several ways. When team members depend on one another to complete a task, power is shared among the members (Franz, 1998). The more team members need one another to complete a task, the more power each team member has over the team. Task interdependence affects how factors, such as conflict, cohesiveness, work norms, and autonomy relate to team effectiveness (Langfred, 2000). When teams are highly interdependent, these variables have a more powerful effect on how well teams perform. Interdependence also encourages members to believe that their contributions to the team are indispensable, unique, and valuable, thereby making them more willing to put effort into the team's task (Kerr & Bruun, 1983).

Evaluations and Rewards

Interdependence relates to both the task and the outcome of the team's work. The task may require coordinated effort, but team members may believe their evaluations and rewards are primarily based on individual performance rather than on the success of the team's effort. Research shows that a belief in outcome interdependence is important because it helps motivate members to work together.

To be successful, team members must feel responsible for both their own work and the work of other team members. Team goals and team reward systems encourage this dual sense of responsibility. For example, managerial teams often do not perform well because managers are more concerned about what happens in their respective departments than in the organization as a whole. One of the values of companywide profit sharing programs is to make organizational success an important goal. When it is achieved, each member of the management team is rewarded. This encourages the managers to think about what is good for the organization rather than only about what is good for their departments.

A balance of individual- and team-based rewards is necessary to encourage both a commitment to the team and an incentive for individual performance (Thompson, 2004). Finding the right balance can be difficult for an organization. In addition, the performance evaluation system must fairly identify both team success and an individual's contribution to that success. When individual contributions to the team are identifiable and linked to the reward system, motivation is increased.

Team Efficacy

Teams evaluate their ability to succeed by examining their personal resources and their ability to work together. Team efficacy is the perception that the team is capable of performing well at a given task, while team potency is the perception that the team is capable of successfully performing across various tasks. Increasing a sense of team efficacy helps increase motivation. Teams with higher collective efficacy have higher levels of motivation to perform, greater staying power when they encounter difficulties and setbacks, and improved performance (Bandura, 2000). Both team efficacy and team potency relate to team performance, especially when there are high levels of task interdependence.

Team efficacy has a reciprocal relationship with team performance. In other words, successful performance increases team efficacy and vice versa (Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005).

Team efficacy is influenced by a number of factors (Burn, 2004). Teams that have been successful in the past have higher levels of team efficacy. Leaders who believe their team is competent create teams with higher collective efficacy. Teams with higher collective efficacy are more likely to set higher performance goals, which encourage greater performance (Goncalo, Polman, & Maslach, 2010). Teams with a stronger group identity, whose members more highly value their membership in the team, also have greater team efficacy.

Commitment and Cohesion

The more people value membership in the team, the more motivated they are to perform. The increased sense of commitment and attraction to a team is called group cohesion. Cohesive teams are less likely to experience social loafing (Karau & Williams, 1997). Group cohesiveness includes a commitment to the task that the team is performing. In a highly cohesive team, members like the task the team is performing, enjoy working together on the task, have personal involvement in the task, and take pride in the team's performance. Highly cohesive teams have more commitment to their tasks and perform better.

4.2 Group Cohesion

Group cohesion refers to the interpersonal bonds that hold a team together. Cohesion is a multidimensional concept. To many theorists, team pride or social identity is the core of group cohesion. Members of a cohesive team have a shared social identity. Membership in the team is personally important, so they define themselves as members of the team. Others view cohesiveness as a type of social attraction. Members of a cohesive team like one another and feel connected because of this relationship. Cohesiveness also can come from the team's task. The joining together to work as a team can create a sense of cohesiveness. The sense of identification with the team that occurs in cohesive teams has important implications. A team is better able to manage stress and conflict among its members if it has a firm sense of itself as a distinctive team. The creation of a sense of insiders and outsiders to the team causes people to view the members of the team as similar and at the same time different from members of other teams. In work teams, members may have very different skills, professions, and even statuses. Such differences do not prevent development of a cohesive team, however.

How Cohesion Affects the Team's Performance

Group cohesion affects the team in a number of ways. People who are part of cohesive teams are more satisfied with their jobs than are members of non cohesive teams. Group cohesion also

helps reduce stress because members are more supportive of one another. The interpersonal effects of group cohesion are generally positive, but the effects on a team's performance are mixed.

Group cohesion has a generally positive impact on team performance. This is especially true for smaller teams. This relationship goes in both directions: Cohesion can help improve performance, and performance can help improve cohesion. When a team is successful in its task, its level of cohesiveness increases. However, when a team is not successful, members often blame each other for the failure, which reduces group cohesion. Cohesion based on commitment to the task has a larger impact on performance than does cohesion based on team attraction or social identity. The effects of cohesion are more important when the team's task requires high levels of interaction, coordination, and interdependence.

Members of a cohesive team are more likely to accept the team's goals, decisions, and norms. The increased interpersonal bonds among team members amplify the pressure to conform to team norms. As was seen in the discussion of team norms, norms can either support or hamper team productivity. Effective work teams have norms that support high-quality performance and a level of group cohesiveness that provides social support to its members. However, cohesive teams that lack good performance norms may be ineffective and highly resistant to change.

An important aspect of group cohesion relates to conflict resolution and problem solving. A team with poor social relations will avoid dealing with problems until they disrupt the team's ability to perform the task or threaten its existence as a team. A team with good social relations is better equipped to handle problems when they arise. The team can do this because its more open communication allows team members to manage conflicts constructively. This is one reason it is important to develop group cohesion and good social relations early in the team's existence. Forming good social relations early means a team has a better ability to solve problems and manage conflicts throughout the team's work.

Building Group Cohesion

Research on organizations has identified several factors that encourage cohesion in work teams. Team members in a cohesive group tend to have similar attitudes and personal goals. They have spent more time together, which increases their opportunity to develop common interests and ideas. A team's isolation from others may help produce a sense of being special and different. A smaller team tends to be more cohesive than a larger team. Having strict requirements to join a

team increases cohesion. Finally, when incentives are based on group rather than individual performance, the team becomes more cooperative and cohesive.

Several approaches can be used to increase cohesion in work teams. Training in social interaction skills, such as effective listening and conflict management, can improve communication and cohesion. Training in task skills, such as goal setting and job skills, improves the team's ability to work successfully. Team success, and reward for success, improves cohesion. The team leader can enhance cohesion by promoting more interactions among team members, reducing status differences, ensuring that everyone is aware of one another's contributions, and creating a climate of pride in the team. For virtual teams that are located in different places and interact primarily via technology, social media may be a valuable technique for keeping the team together socially, especially for younger team members.

One of the strongest predictors of group cohesion is team success. Creating opportunities for successful performance and rewarding these successes improves a team's sense of efficacy, increases a sense of pride in the team, and builds cohesion among team members.

4.3 Team Roles

Roles are one of the basic building blocks of successful team performance. A role is a set of behaviors typical of people in certain social contexts. Roles within a team are similar to roles in a play: They describe what people are supposed to do and how their parts relate to what others in the team are doing. Team members can negotiate the roles they want to play, and they have a certain amount of freedom in the performance of their roles.

A team can deliberately create roles for members to perform. These roles are task-related and allow the team to operate more efficiently. Even without deliberately creating formal roles, team members assume informal roles within the team, which emerge over time as the team interacts. These roles can be task-related (e.g., expert, facilitator) or social.

The selection or allocation of roles may occur in a variety of ways. The organization, team, or individual may select roles. For example, management in the organization may assign the team leader, the team may elect its leader, or the team may have no official leader (however, an informal leader may eventually emerge in the team). The type of role also affects the selection process. The team often selects members to perform skill based tasks, whereas social roles often emerge by self-selection.

Role Problems

The roles people perform in a team may be a cause of stress, usually as a direct result of role ambiguity and role conflict. Because team roles often emerge without formal definitions, the responsibilities of the roles often are ill defined. A person fulfilling a role may not understand what other group members expect of him or her, thus creating uncertainty in the role performer and hostility from the other team members when the role is not performed as desired.

Team members also occupy several roles at a time, which may involve conflicting demands. Interrole conflict occurs when a person has several incompatible roles. For example, when a person is promoted, he or she often experiences conflict between being a manager and being a friend to former coworkers. Conflicts also may occur within a single role (i.e., intraoral conflict). In a task force with team members from different areas of the organization, members may experience a conflict between roles that are good for the team and/or roles that are good for their organizational areas.

Role ambiguity and conflict have a negative impact on people in an organization. These role problems can create higher levels of stress, decreased satisfaction and morale, and increased job turnover. Role problems also decrease commitment to the organization and reduce 96 involvement and participation in the team's interactions.

To address role problems, a team may make explicit the important roles in the team. The tasks that the group is performing may be prioritized so that team members can decide what to do when there are conflicts among tasks.

4.4 Task and Social Behaviors

Teams perform two basic types of behaviors: task behaviors and social behaviors. Task behaviors focus on the team's goals and tasks, while social behaviors focus on the social and emotional needs of the team members and help maintain social relations among them. To function effectively, teams need both task and social behaviors.

Task and social behaviors are used to support the members of the team and are important factors in team success (Huffmeier & Hertel, 2011). Task-related support includes both information sharing and behavioral assistance. Giving ideas and advice and explaining how to perform a task are examples of information sharing, while helping another team member with work tasks and providing supportive backup behaviors are types of behavioral assistance. Social support includes social recognition, such as expressing acceptance and encouraging a sense of belonging to the group, and encouragement, such as rewarding others and listening to their personal issues.

Task support increases the collective efficacy of the team and improves coordination among team members. Social support increases group cohesion and helps motivate team members. Both of these factors interact to improve team performance.

The optimum balance between task and social behaviors depends on the characteristics of the task and the team (Belbin, 1981). In task-oriented teams, task-oriented behaviors will dominate the team's interactions. A study of engineering teams found that more than 90% of a team's interactions were task oriented.

When technical teams are under time pressure, they may not have time to devote to group process issues. Under these conditions, teams may fall back on traditional management methods rather than using teamwork to get the job done (Janz, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997). In general, effective work teams spend about 80% of their time working on the task.

The right mix of task and social behaviors also depends on the maturity level of the team. When teams are in the forming stage, they must engage in more social-oriented behaviors to develop the social relations of the group. Teams in the performing stage will be dominated by task-oriented behaviors. When a work team develops good social relations early in a project, the team is better able to handle the time pressure at the end 99 because it has developed the working relationships it needs to complete the project.

COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

Cooperation is an integrating activity and is believed to be the opposite of competition. The word "cooperation" is derived from the two Latin words "co" meaning together and "operari" meaning to work. It is thus a joint activity in pursuit of common goals or shared rewards. It is goal oriented and conscious form of social interaction. Actually it involves two elements – (i) common end and (ii) organized effort. It is the process by which individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organised way for the attainment of common objective. Generally co-operation means working together for a common objective. In many festivals, volunteers work together to collect money from different parts and want to organise the program successfully and everybody want to stretch forward their hands to celebrate the occasion successfully. Among the members of the group, there seems to be indication of good interaction

process. All of them behave in co-operative manner. Co-operation is brought about by several factors which includes the following:

Desire for individual benefits

Desire to give and share

Total decision on common purposes

Situational necessity and

Types of Cooperation

We can classify cooperation into five categories, viz.

- i) Direct cooperation
- ii) Indirect cooperation
- iii) Primary cooperation
- iv) Secondary cooperation and
- v) Tertiary cooperation desire to achieve larger goals

i) Direct cooperation: The essential characteristics of this kind of cooperation are that people do in company the thing which can also do separately. In this category cooperating individuals do things of common interest together and perform identical functions. Playing together, worshipping together are the examples of direct co-operation.

ii) Indirect cooperation: In this type of cooperation individual work towards a common end each has his own specialised functions. Thus, we can say that indirect cooperation is obtained when people perform dissimilar tasks towards a common end, i.e., each has its specialised role to play. In the modern society it is the indirect cooperation which is more in play than the direct cooperation because technological changes require specialisation of skills and functions.

iii) Primary cooperation: There is an identity of interest between the individual and the group. It is the cooperation which is found in primary groups such as family. Not only family but also peer groups is also called primary cooperation where people have to choose face-to-face relations. We can also say that interest of the individual merge with the interest of the primary group.

iv) Secondary cooperation: This type of cooperation is generally found in the secondary group, viz., government, industry, church and trade union etc.

- v) **Tertiary cooperation:** This is the interaction between various big and small group to meet a particular situation. Here the individual or group who wants to compete with one another, come together and cooperate with each other for a specific purpose. In such type of cooperation the attitudes of the cooperating parties are purely opportunistic.

Role of Cooperation

It is a universal phenomenon. Cooperation for human beings is both a psychological and social necessity. Individual as well as collective goals cannot be achieved without cooperation. Cooperation is essential for maintenance of social order. We cannot do anything without cooperation, if we are to live as members of the society. Family members cooperate with each other in terms of sharing economic, emotional and social requirements of one another. All the activity in each and every family is done in a cooperative way. People learn their first lesson in cooperation as members of the family. The physical, mental and even the spiritual needs of the individual remain unsatisfied if he does not agree to cooperate with his fellow members.

Benefits of Cooperation

- Cooperation has the opposite effect on team members. In a cooperative team, all team members are motivated by the team's goals. This motivation is mutually reinforced or encouraged. Team members help and learn from one another. Not only does the team perform better, but so do most of the individual members.
- The benefits that accrue to individuals in a cooperative situation have a positive impact on teamwork.
- Cooperation encourages supportive rather than defensive communication (Lumsden&Lumsden, 1997).
- Team members are more willing to talk to one another, and this encourages more communication.
- Increased communication improves coordination on tasks, satisfaction with working together, and overall team performance. The benefits of cooperation at work depend in part on the task. Cooperation is more important when tasks are ambiguous, complex, or changing .Such tasks require substantial information sharing to determine the best way to perform them. Because they require coordination, cooperation also is more important when tasks are interdependent and team members need to rely on each other.

- Cooperation provides the foundation for the social relations of team members. Teams that work cooperatively have less tension, fewer conflicts, and fewer verbal confrontations (Tjosvold, 1995). They also enjoy a stronger sense of team spirit and greater group cohesion.
- Many of the benefits of cooperation for teams are due to the way that conflicts are managed, To make better decisions, teams need to be motivated to process information and manage differences of opinion in a constructive manner. Cooperation, trust, and safety are preconditions for allowing constructive controversy to occur. When teams handle conflicts constructively, they learn more from each other and perform more effectively.

Problems with Cooperation:**1. Conformity**

Highly cooperative teams tend to become highly cohesive. Over time, team members become socially and emotionally connected to one another, which improves communication and coordination. However, this can also create problems because the team becomes too oriented toward itself. A highly cohesive team is self-rewarding. It rewards contributions and discourages behavior that is not accepted by the team. This means that the team demands conformity from its members. Conformity can help the team operate, but it also can make the team resistant to outside influence and resistant to changing the way it operates. When a team is functioning well and has good performance norms, conformity is a benefit. However, conformity can make it difficult for outsiders to influence the team and change its direction. Even a highly cohesive and cooperative team can perform poorly. Sometimes a work team has norms about not doing too much work. These norms are enforced by the team and can be resistant to change from the organization.

2. Unhealthy Agreement

Another negative impact of cooperation involves a team's ability to make decisions. Decision making should be focused on making the best decision, given the constraints of the situation. Cooperation can help decision making by establishing trust, which encourages open communication. However, when a cooperative team is cohesive, then the fact that members like one another can disrupt the decision-making process. The Abilene paradox describes a problem with group decision making caused by members trying to be friendly and cooperative. This occurs when group members adopt a position because they believe it is what other members want. The members fail to challenge one another because they want to avoid conflict or they want to achieve consensus. In the end, they support a proposal no one really wants

because of their inability to manage agreement. For example, a project team may continue working on a design strategy that no one thinks will work. However, everyone believes the other team members support this approach, one raises objections during team meetings. The team's desire to reach agreement on an issue becomes more important than its motivation to find a good solution.

COMPETITION

Competition is the most important form of social struggle. According to Anderson and Parker, "Competition is that form of social action in which we strive against each other for the possession of or use of some limited material and non-material goods." According to Sutherland, Woodward and Maxwell, "Competition is an impersonal, unconscious continuous struggle which, because of their limited supply, all may not have." Competition is a form of interaction. It is the struggle for position to gain economic status. It occurs whenever there is an insufficient supply of anything that human beings desire - insufficient in the sense that all cannot have as much of it as they wish. Sometimes competition happens because of limited supply and also difficult for equal distribution.

Characteristics of Competition

The characteristics of competition are: | Competition is impersonal struggle. Park and Burgess defined competition as "interaction without social contact." We can say it is inter-individual struggle that is impersonal. It is usually not directed against any individual or group in particular.

- Competition is universal. There is no society which is devoid of competition. Not only this, degree of competition may vary from society to society. It is very common for society as well as culture.
- Competition is considered as conducive to progress. Competition provides the individuals better opportunities to satisfy their desires for new experiences and recognitions.
- Both associative and non-associative dimensions of social processes indicate competition. | Competition is mainly an unconscious activity but personal competition or rivalry is a conscious activity. | Competition may create emotional disturbances.
- Competition is an innate tendency.
- Competition is a social phenomenon.
- Degree of competition is determined by social values and social structure.

Value of Competition

Competition is indispensable in social life. Competition performs many powerful functions in society. Sometimes competition is extremely dynamic. It performs five positive functions.

- It helps to determine the status and location of individual members in a system of hierarchy.
- It tends to stimulate economy, efficiency and inventiveness.
- It tends to enhance one's ego.
- It prevents undue concentration of power in an individual or group of individuals.
- It creates respect for the rules of the same group.

Problems with Competition

1. Communication and Goal Confusion

When individuals or teams in an organization compete against each other, changes occur that prevent the team from being successful. Individual competition creates confusion about goals. Eventually, this creates distrust that reduces communication within the team.

A successful team has members who work together to reach a common goal. This common goal provides a focus for the team. However, when team members compete against one another, individual goals can conflict with the team goal. Conflict exists between doing what is best for the individual to succeed (by being better than the others) and doing what is best for the team, which further creates confusion about the goals of the team. Team members then distrust one another because they are uncertain of one another's motives. The distrust created by mixed goals leads to reduced communication within a team. Communication requires trust; without trust, there is no reason to communicate with others. Over time, internal competition reduces communication within the team.

2. Intergroup Competition

The example of how competition can lead to conflict and hostility is even more pronounced in the intergroup situation. Groups are more likely to act competitively with each other than are individuals. One explanation for this observation comes from social identity theory, which reports that a person's sense of self-worth is connected to the groups to which he or she belongs. Consequently, it becomes necessary to view one's group as superior. This translates into an in-group bias, where group members view their own group in overly positive terms, and consequently out-groups in overly negative terms. When the

superiority of the group is challenged, members rally to support it and attack the out-group. The conflict escalates easily because group behavior is more anonymous, with fewer interpersonal connections between members and the out-group.

Sherif's (1966) classic study demonstrates several important points about the effects of competition. The main focus was to show that competition led to prejudice. However, the study also revealed the effects of external competition on a team. When a team enters a competition, the team experiences an increase in cohesion and group spirit. Team members become more task focused and tolerate more autocratic leadership. As the competition continues, more loyalty and conformity are demanded from team members. In the short run, these changes may increase productivity and efficiency. In the long run, however, problems arise for the team, regardless of its success.

These negative effects of competition occur for both winners and losers. When teams compete, the winners attribute their success to their own superiority. This causes the winners to ignore their problems, which go unsolved. The losing teams often enter into a period of blaming and scapegoating. Team members first blame their losses on the situation, then on one another. Eventually, if the teams survive the internal emotional turmoil, they can move to the next step to recognize and solve their problems.

Why Are People in Teams Competitive?

Even though working cooperatively on a team should prevent competition, competition may occur anyway. Team members may misperceive the situation and turn a cooperative situation into a competitive one, or may choose to act competitively even when it is in their best interests to act cooperatively. Why do people misperceive a cooperative situation and turn it into a competitive one? The explanations for this phenomenon have to do with culture, personality, and organizational rewards.

1. Culture

One way to view cultural differences are along an individualist-collectivist dimension. Individualists tend to be more competitive with their coworkers than collectivists. The United States has an individualist culture that promotes competition. Their emphasis on individualism, freedom, capitalism, and personal success all support the value of competition. Clearly, this cultural value affects the ways in which people respond to situations. Some Americans even have a negative attitude toward teamwork because they believe the

individual is more important than the team. From a cultural and business perspective, the Japanese have developed a sound approach that combines cooperation and capitalism. Their collectivist culture promotes cooperation. In Japan, cooperation is highly encouraged and rewarded, and commitment and loyalty are the keys to success in Japanese corporations. At the same time, Japanese businesses have a keen competitive sense. They believe that they are in a competitive fight for survival with other organizations. The Japanese and other collectivist cultures have developed a strong inside-outside perspective toward working in teams. It is important for them to act cooperatively with their team members, but also to act competitively with those outside of their team.

2 Personalities

Researchers have identified three personality types to explain why some people are competitive. These personality types affect how people interpret the situations they are in and how they define success.

Cooperators focus on the team. They are concerned with both their own outcomes and those of others. They attempt to make sure the team is successful and that rewards are distributed equitably among team members.

Competitors view a situation as an opportunity to win. They define success not in terms of their individual goals or the team's goals, but rather relative to others' performances. To a competitor, success means performing better than others. They want to excel more than the other members of the team.

Individualists define success relative to their own personal goals. Unlike competitors, they do not evaluate their performance relative to others. They may or may not care about the success of the team. The team's success is important only if they have adopted the team's goals for themselves.

Conscientious people are focused on successful performance, so they are more willing to cooperate with others in teams. **Extroverts** enjoy cooperation because they like working with others. **Agreeable** people are more cooperative because they want to avoid the conflicts that competition creates. Finally, people with higher levels of **emotional stability** tend to be more cooperative and helpful with others.

3 Organizational Rewards

Although managers say they want all employees to work as a team, organizational practices often do not encourage or reward teamwork. In most organizations, performance evaluations are based on individual performance, and evaluation is relative to the performance of the other employees. Employees receive a

mixed message: Do what the manager says is important (engage in teamwork) or do what you will be rewarded for (stand out as superior to your coworkers).

The inability to share rewards is probably the factor that most encourages unhealthy competition within organizations. It affects both individual employees and organizational units. For example, departments within an organization often act competitively because they believe they must fight for their share of the organization's resources. Working interdependently to succeed should encourage cooperation over competition.

Competition and cooperation differ in many respects. No society is exclusively competitive or exclusively cooperative. Actually, social system is a balance between competitive and cooperative force. But some competition is healthy and fair.

Competitive Versus Cooperative Rewards

There are benefits and problems with both competitive and cooperative reward systems. Competitive rewards are effective in motivating individual performance, while cooperative rewards promote trust, cohesiveness, and mutual support, which in turn promote team performance. When a task requires coordinated effort, cooperative rewards are more effective than competitive rewards. However, this simplistic view of cooperative and competitive rewards ignores several important factors that influence work.

What is the primary performance goal? Accuracy and speed of performance are separate, unrelated criteria. Most complex tasks in organizations require both speed and accuracy, but the relative importance of these two factors may vary. A manufacturing team may be encouraged to produce as fast as possible, but this is likely to negatively affect the quality of their performance. Emergency medical teams often must work quickly. At the same time, they must be concerned with the accuracy of their performance. Competitive rewards are strong motivators, especially for encouraging speed. Cooperative rewards encourage discussion, collaboration, and information sharing, which may improve accuracy, but will slow the speed of performance.

Communication Process

Communication in teams can be viewed as a transaction (Barnlund, 1970). This perspective emphasizes that communication is more than simply the transmission of a message from a sender

to a recipient. Rather, the transactional model of communication recognizes that people are both simultaneously senders and recipients of messages—both verbal and nonverbal feedback provided by a recipient continuously influences the message that a sender sends. A second component of the transactional model is that all parties involved in communication influence and are influenced by each other. Taken together, the simultaneous sending and receiving of messages and the mutual influence of team members. However, members are not the only dynamic affecting communication in teams— levels of trust, power, status, and motivation also change over time and have consequences for the cohesiveness and productivity of a team. These dynamics emphasize that not only *what* you communicate, but *how* you communicate is influenced by and influences the functioning of a team.

Verbal Communication

When communicating verbally, we use language in an attempt to share meaning with others. While this may appear rather straight forward, the nature of language often makes sharing meaning difficult. This is because the meanings of words are often highly subjective. While the reference of some words is concrete, many others— are ambiguous. Overlooking this communication element can lead to frustration, failed projects, and wasted time. However, team members often assume that everyone understands the same meaning for a word. This is called *bypassing*, and it can be a source of much misunderstanding and conflict. Similarly, senders of information often have poor perspective-taking and overestimate a receivers' familiarity with the information being discussed.—they assume that the receivers have sufficient background information to make sense of brief messages.

Nonverbal Communication

In addition to using verbal language to share meaning with others, nonverbal cues, such as body language, vocal tones, gestures, touch, eye contact, facial expressions, and use of time and space, can also communicate meaning to others. Moreover, nonverbal messages can replace, emphasize, or even contradict our verbal communication. For example, members can assert dominance over the team through their posture and vocal tones and sarcastically apologizing. Just like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is also ambiguous and easily misunderstood.

Communication within Teams

The simultaneous sending and receiving of verbal and nonverbal Communication and the mutual influence of all members have widespread implications for the development and functioning of a team. Poor communication can lead to dysfunctional processing of information and unnecessary conflict among team members. However, by developing the knowledge and skills of effective and appropriate communication. Teams can foster trust, establish appropriate team norms, and develop a collaborative and creative climate. More importantly, it is through *continued* effective and appropriate communication that these benefits are realized. Communication is a transactional process through which we are constantly defining and redefining our relationships with group members.

Flow of a Team's Communications

Communication plays a vital role in the functioning of a team. Members need to be aware of how to communicate in a manner that is both effective and appropriate for reaching team goals and maintaining the relationships. Ineffective communication can contribute to dysfunctional processing of information, leading to poor decisions. Inappropriate communication can damage the cohesiveness between team members and impede the development of trust. Choices in how you communicate can establish and maintain a safe communication climate that encourages team members to express their knowledge, opinions, and feelings in difficult situations.

Dysfunctional Information Processing Within the Team

The use of teams creates the potential to make better decisions because members can pool information from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This benefit of using teams occurs only if members share their unique information with the team. However, teams can engage in dysfunctional information sharing and processing that can lead to poor decision making. For example, teams spend most of their time discussing the information already shared by all members rather than combining the unique knowledge and perspectives of members. Biases in the ways a team processes information may prevent the team from making good decisions because important information that one member holds is ignored by the team. Likewise, design teams may not seek out information that disconfirms the assumptions and beliefs of the team. However, teams that actively process disconfirming information can produce more creative designs, or at the very least, avoid implementing poor solutions.

Gender and Communication

Research examined group interactions in mixed-sex teams and revealed that men and women tend to exhibit a preference for different communication styles. Masculine communication styles emphasize gaining *status*, which means that talk embodies independence, competition, exerting control, and reporting knowledge in an effort to elevate their position in the group. Consequently, men tend to speak more, focus on task-oriented information, interrupt, offer advice, and make jokes more often than women in mixed-sex groups. In contrast, feminine communication styles emphasize building *connection*, which means that talk embodies interdependence, cooperation, and empowerment in an effort to facilitate agreement, interest in others, and participation. Women, then, tend to share feelings, invite others to speak, and listen in order to foster bonds between members. While labeled masculine and feminine, both of these communication styles are used by both sexes.

Building Trust

Trust can develop differently across different cultures. For instance, a basis for trust in the United States is through having a shared category membership with group members (e.g., both went to the same college), while in Japan, trust is impacted by sharing interpersonal ties with group members. Trust is also key to fostering communication in a team. For team members to trust, they must believe the team is competent to complete its task (team efficacy) and the team environment is safe for all members. Trust is the expression of confidence in the team relationship—that is, the confidence one has that other team members will honor their commitments. Trust within a team encourages communication and cooperation and makes conflicts easier to resolve. Trust has many impacts on interpersonal communication, cooperation, and teamwork. When teams have high levels of trust, people are more willing to help others in a variety of situations.

Psychological Safety

Trust is closely associated with psychological safety in teams. Psychological safety is the perception that members are free to take interpersonal risks and to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of consequences.

The value of psychological safety can be seen in the operation of cross-functional teams that are composed of members from a variety of technical backgrounds. The diversity of viewpoints in these teams is crucial for their success, but this only happens if team members are willing to share their knowledge and learn from each other.

To overcome the problems created by diversity, teams need to develop an environment of psychological safety to mitigate psychological safety by inviting input and feedback, while showing openness to receiving critical information. They can also encourage members to speak up by facilitating communications and minimizing status differences. All team members can foster psychological safety through promoting a supportive communication climate.

Gibb offers the following patterns of communication that can contribute to a defensive versus supporting climate:

Evaluation versus Description

Messages with evaluations contain judgments, accusations, you-statements, contempt, fault finding, and criticism (e.g., *You haven't contributed enough to this presentation*), which are often met with efforts to absolve oneself from blame (e.g., *But, I came to every meeting! Besides, you never gave me clear directions*). By contrast, descriptions that involve framing comments in a manner minimize unease and consider the perceptions and feelings of the sender (e.g., *I'm concerned that our presentation won't go well and have some requests that I'd like you to consider*). Strategies to adopt more descriptive language include using "I-statements" rather than "You-statements" and providing genuine praise before negative feedback.

Control versus Problem Orientation

A defensive climate can emerge from communication aimed at controlling other people by telling them what to do. Indeed, research on psychological reactance reveals that efforts to control one's behavior are often met with resistance or even the opposite behavior. This can be illustrated by imagining the typical response of a child being told to clean his or her room. Similarly, members in teams often respond negatively to demands placed on them by others. However, a more effective pattern of communication is to focus instead on the problem and invite ideas for solving the problem (e.g., *what can we do in order to finish this project by tonight?*). This allows for a productive conversation aimed at how to solve the problem, rather on placing demands on specific team members.

Strategy versus Spontaneity

People are sensitive to strategies employed to manipulate or deceive them, such as members excusing themselves from a meeting by calling in “sick” or leaving a meeting early because they suddenly have an “appointment.” While certainly there are times when such reasons may reflect reality, they contribute to a defensive climate when perceived to be strategic ways of evading uncomfortable questions, withholding information, or not participating. Instead, employing spontaneous communication that is honest, assertive and contains true self-disclosure can promote an atmosphere of trust in a team.

Neutrality versus Empathy

When people communicate, they want to feel heard and to have their perspective considered. In team discussions, however, members may respond with indifference or make little effort to acknowledge others. An example of neutrality is responding to a member’s concern about the ethics of a group decision with a dismissive, “No, it’s fine. Don’t worry. Let’s move on.” Other times a member’s email or text message to the team might be completely ignored—even professors can feel devalued by students that fall asleep in class or are distracted by technology. Such behaviors are frustrating and disrespectful, which can contribute to a defensive climate. A supportive climate can be fostered by communicating with empathy—taking another’s perspectives and feelings into account. This can be achieved through positive nonverbal behaviors (e.g., listening, putting away a phone during conversations) or verbal behaviors.

Superiority versus Equality

Teams often are composed of members possessing differences in power, intelligence, knowledge, skill, wealth, and so on. Despite these differences, messages that are communicated in a superior, belittling manner evoke defensiveness that can stifle trust and even promote hostility. This defensiveness can impede the psychological safety of the team by limiting the ability or desire of members to provide meaningful feedback or ask for help that they may need. Instead, one should adopt communication that embodies a tone of equality.

Communication Skills for Team Meetings:

3. Ask questions.

Many types of questions are useful for promoting team discussions (Hackett & Martin, 1993). In general, open-ended questions encourage discussion, whereas close-ended questions (e.g., yes/no questions) tend to limit discussion. It is better to ask the team to discuss the pros and cons of an idea than to ask team members whether they agree or disagree with it. After someone has

answered a question, it is often useful to ask follow-up questions to clarify the issues. When questions are addressed to the leader, they should be redirected back to the team, if possible, to promote discussion.

4. Listen actively

Active listening is another approach to improving communication. In this approach, the listener paraphrases what he or she heard and asks the sender if this is correct. The paraphrasing should convey the listener understands of the communication rather than a simple parroting of the message. This sends a message that the listener cares about understanding the message and allows the sender to clarify the communication if needed. Although this is a useful technique, it can become tiresome if used all the time.

5. Give constructive feedback.

Everyone needs feedback to improve performance. However, receiving feedback (especially negative feedback) may be an uncomfortable experience. Improving one's ability to give constructive feedback is an important teamwork skill.

6. Manage feelings.

When emotions become disruptive to the operation of the team, they must be managed effectively (Kayser, 1990). People cannot be prevented from becoming emotional. When emotional issues are related to the team's task, the issues should be addressed in the team meeting. Emotional conflicts related to personal issues may need to be handled in private. All team members should learn how to handle emotional interactions in the team. The following is an approach to managing feelings during team meetings.

Stay neutral. People have a right to their feelings. The team should encourage and acknowledge the expression of feelings.

Understand feelings rather than evaluate them. All team members should be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal messages. When dealing with emotional issues, it is best to ask questions and seek information to better understand the feelings.

Process feelings in the group. When the team's operation is disrupted by emotions, the team should stop and be silent briefly to cool down. Once that has happened, the task-related issues should be discussed as a group.

MODULE 2

Conflict Management

Conflict can be defined as a mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, and external or internal demands. Where there are people, there is conflict. They are usually taken in a negative association. However, this is inaccurate as conflicts are necessary for healthy relationships.

Classification of Conflict

Types of conflict which are easily identifiable are classified into four different types –

- Intrapersonal
- Intra group
- Interpersonal
- Intergroup

Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal conflict takes place within an individual. The person experiences it in his own mind. Thus, it is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Intrapersonal conflict may come in different forms, from the simple routine ones like deciding whether or not to go for lunch to ones that can affect major decisions such as choosing a career path.

It results in restlessness and uneasiness, or can even cause depression. On such occasions, it is advised to seek a way to let go of the anxiety by communicating with other people. Eventually, when the person finds himself/herself out of the situation, he/she can become more empowered as a person.

Intra group Conflict

Intra group conflict occurs among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings between team members leads to intra group conflict. It starts from interpersonal disagreements like team members have different personalities which may lead to tension or differences in views and ideas.

Within a team, conflict can be helpful in coming up with decisions, which will eventually allow them to achieve their objectives as a team. But, if the degree of conflict disrupts harmony among the members, then some serious guidance from a different party will be needed for it to be settled.

Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflict means a conflict between two individuals. Basically, this occurs because of some differences in people. We have varied personalities which usually lead to incompatible choices and opinions. So, it is a natural occurrence which can eventually help in personal growth or developing our relationships with others.

In addition, adjustments are necessary for managing this type of conflict. However, when interpersonal conflict becomes too destructive, calling in a mediator helps so as to have the issue resolved.

Intergroup Conflict

Intergroup conflict occurs when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization. For example, the marketing department of an organization can come in conflict with the customer support department. This is because of the varied sets of goals and interests of these different groups. In addition to this, competition also contributes to intergroup conflict.

Conflict should not always be perceived as a problem rather at times it is a chance for growth and can be an effective means of opening up among groups. When conflict begins to disrupt productivity and gives way to more conflicts, then conflict management is needed for problem resolution.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a method by which two or more parties find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. When a disagreement arises, often the best course of action is **negotiation** to resolve the disagreement. When people gather for a discussion, it is not necessary that what one thinks is right the other thinks the same way, this difference leads to conflict.

Conflict Management Techniques

Here are five strategies from conflict management theory for managing stressful situations. None of them is a "one-size-fits-all" answer.

- **Collaborating** – win/win
- **Compromising** – win some/lose some
- **Accommodating** – lose/win
- **Competing** – win/lose
- **Avoiding** – no winners/no losers

1.Collaborating

This technique follows the rule "I win, you win". Collaborating means working together by integrating ideas set out by multiple people. The objective here is to find a creative solution

acceptable to everyone. It calls for a significant time commitment but is not appropriate for all conflicts.

This technique is used in situations where –

- There is a high level of trust
- We don't want to take complete responsibility
- We want others to also have "ownership" of solutions
- People involved are willing to change their thinking

Compromising

This technique follows the rule "You bend, I bend". Compromising means adjusting with each other's opinions and ideas, and thinking of a solution where some points of both the parties can be entertained. Similarly, both the parties need to give up on some of their ideas and should agree with the other.

This technique can be used in situations where –

- People of equal levels are equally committed to goals.
- Time can be saved by reaching intermediate settlements on individual parts of complex matters.
- Goals are moderately important.
- Important values and long-term objectives can be derailed using this technique.

Accommodating

This technique follows the rule "I lose, you win". Accommodating means giving up of ideas so that the other party wins and the conflict ends.

This technique can be used when –

- An issue is not that important to us as it is to the other person
- We realize we are wrong.
- We know we cannot win
- Harmony is extremely important
- What the parties have in common is a good deal more important than their differences

However, using this technique, one's own ideas don't get attention and credibility, and influence can be lost.

Competing

This technique follows the rule "I win, you lose". Competing means when there is a dispute a person or a group is not willing to adjust but it simply wants the opposite party to lose.

This technique can be used when –

- We know you are right.
- Time is short and a quick decision is to be made.
- A strong personality is trying to steamroll us and we don't want to be taken advantage of.
- We need to stand up for our rights.

This technique can further escalate conflict or losers may retaliate.

Avoiding

This technique follows the rule "No winners, no losers". Avoiding means the ideas suggested by both the parties are rejected and a **third person** is involved who takes a decision without favoring any of the parties. Using this technique may lead to postponing the conflict, that may make matters worse.

This technique can be used when –

- The conflict is small and relationships are at stake.
- More important issues are pressing and we feel we don't have time to deal with this particular one.
- We have no power and we see no chance of getting our concerns met.
- We are too emotionally involved and others around us can solve the conflict more successfully.

Power and Social Influence

Social influence refers to attempts to affect or change other people. Power is the capacity or ability to change the beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors of others. We often think about power in terms of how individuals try to influence one another, but a team has collective power. Conformity occurs through influence from the group, either by providing information about appropriate behavior or through implied or actual group pressure. In addition, obedience occurs through influence from the leader of the group.

There is an important distinction between compliance and acceptance. Compliance is a change in behaviors due to social pressure, but it is not a change in beliefs or attitudes. Acceptance is a change in

both behaviors and attitudes due to social pressure. However, if individuals are repeatedly influenced to change their behaviors, they often internally justify the new way of behaving. Therefore, changes in behavior often lead to changes in attitudes.

Why do people change because of social influence? Social psychologists provide two main reasons for the effects of social influence: normative influence and informational influence. Normative influence refers to change that is based on the desire to meet the expectations of others and to be accepted by others. Informational influence is change that is based on accepting information from others about a situation. Social psychologists conducted several classic studies on power to demonstrate the basic characteristics of social influence. These studies show how a team influences the behaviors of its members and the power that team leaders have over the members.

Types of Power

Team members use various types of power to influence one another and the team. The types of power that members possess can be examined in several ways. The study of bases of power is concerned with the sources of power, whereas the study of influence tactics examines how various power tactics are used.

Bases of Power

There are two types of power that an individual can have in a team or organization: personal or soft power and positional or harsh power. Personal or soft power derives from an individual's characteristics or personality and includes expert, referent, and information power. Positional or harsh power is based on an individual's formal position in an organization. It includes legitimate, reward, and coercive power.

The types of power are related to each other and are often used together. For example, the more one uses coercive power, the less one is liked, so the less one has personal or soft power. The more legitimate power one has, the more reward and coercive power one typically has. Because team leaders have less legitimate power than traditional managers, they often rely on expert and referent power to influence the team.

Influence Tactics

Team members can use a variety of social influence tactics to change one another. Their use depends on the target for influence. (e.g., subordinate, peer, superior) and the objective of the influence (e.g., assign task, get support, gain personal benefit). These power tactics vary by directness, cooperativeness, and rationality. Direct tactics are explicit, overt methods of influence (e.g., personal appeals and pressure), whereas indirect tactics are covert attempts at manipulation (e.g., ingratiation and coalition tactics). Cooperative tactics encourage support through rational argument or consultation; competitive tactics attempt to deal with resistance through pressure or ingratiation. Finally, some tactics are based on rational argument or the exchange of support, whereas inspirational and personal appeals rely on emotion.

People prefer direct and cooperative strategies. The most effective tactics are rational argument, consultation, and inspirational appeals. These are the more socially acceptable tactics and are useful in most situations. However, status differences in a team determine which tactics are used. Traditional leaders often use pressure and legitimizing tactics to influence subordinates, while subordinates often use rational argument, personal appeals, and ingratiation to influence leaders. Team leaders have less positional power than managers, so they are more likely to use cooperative influence strategies

Power Dynamics

The use of power changes the dynamics of the group process. Unequal power changes the way the leader treats other team members and the way members communicate with one another. Subgroups that disagree with the majority can have substantial influence on how the team operates. The level of interdependence among team members changes the power they have over one another.

Status and the Corrupting Effect of Power

Power is rewarding, so people with power often want more of it. It has a corrupting influence: People with more power often give themselves a higher share of rewards. It is easy for someone with power to give commands rather than make requests. Because powerful people get mostly positive feedback from subordinates, they begin to care less about what subordinates say and have an inflated view of their own worth. Kipnis (1976) demonstrates the corrupting nature of power in studies on teams in business organizations and families. He documents a cycle of power where power leads to a desire to increase one's power.

One of the problems with this effect is that its impact is often unconscious. Over time, powerful leaders come to believe their subordinates are externally controlled and therefore must be monitored and commanded by their leaders to get them to do anything. It is a self-reinforcing cycle. A team may try to deal with this problem by rotating team leaders. When leaders know that they will eventually become just another team member, they are less likely to use controlling power tactics.

Unequal Power in a Team

Teams vary in the ways power is distributed. When teams have unequal power levels among members, there tends to be more mistrust, less communication, and more social problems than in more democratic groups. Teams with powerful leaders tend to have less communication and more autocratic decision making, thereby reducing the quality of team decisions.

Unequal power is often caused by status differences, which have an impact on team communication. High-status members, talk more and are more likely to address the entire team. High-status leaders have lower opinions of other team members' communications, are less willing to view issues from the perspective of others, and are less likely to listen to others. Team members communicate more with high-status people and pay more attention to what they say. Low-status members often talk less because they recognize that their contributions are not valued. They are unwilling to state their true opinions if they differ from those of high-status people. Consequently, when high-status people speak, people either agree or say nothing. As a result, high-status people have more influence in team discussions. This communication pattern does not lead to good decision making or to satisfied and motivated team members.

Unequal status within a team can have positive and negative effects on the ability of the team to manage conflicts. In some cases, for example factory teams, unequal status can help resolve conflicts because powerful leaders are better able to manage the process and coordinate a decision to resolve the conflict. However, unequal status in professional teams may lead to more team conflicts because of feelings of inequality and increased internal competition. These teams are more resistant to solutions dictated by the team leader.

In theory, a team should have only equal-status communication, but this is not always the case. The team leader may assume a higher status than the other team members. A team is sometimes composed of members with different levels of status within the organization. Team members should leave their external status positions at the door so that everyone on the team has equal status. However, it is

difficult to interact as an equal with someone in one situation and be deferential with the same person in other situations.

When power is unequal because of status or other factors, a team can try to improve the situation by using team norms to equalize power and control communication. Norms level the playing field in a team. They equalize power by putting constraints on the behaviors of powerful members. For example, the norm of consensus in decision making limits the power of the leader. The team may have norms that encourage open and shared communication, prevent the use of intimidation or threats, and value independent thinking. An alternative approach is to train the team leader in facilitation skills so that he or she is better prepared to promote safe and equal communications within the team.

Minority Influence

Most of this discussion of power focused on the impact of powerful people or the pressure from the group majority. However, a team may have individuals or minorities that resist group pressure. The term “minority” here has a statistical meaning; a minority is a person or subgroup within a larger group that has fewer members than the majority. The ability of minorities to influence the majority group depends on their consistency, self-confidence, belief in their autonomy, and relationship to the group overall.

Minorities become influential by sticking to their positions (Nemeth, 1979). When minorities are consistent, their determination makes the majority think about its position. A team can put quite a bit of pressure on minorities to change; it takes self-confidence to resist this pressure. If minorities are going to be influential, they must appear to be autonomous and able to make their own choices. If the minorities are viewed as supported or influenced by an outside group, their impact is reduced. Finally, minorities must appear to be part of the team.

It can be difficult to be a minority team member who disagrees with the majority. Because of the desire to be accepted by the team, individuals are often unwilling to disagree or even present an alternative view. When minority opinions have some support within the team, they are more likely to be expressed and accepted by the team.

Empowerment

Empowerment in a workplace refers to the process of giving employees more power and control over their work. It is the shifting of power and authority from managers to employees. In one sense, empowerment is the core notion of teamwork. A team must have the power to control how it operates; this element is what makes a team different from a work group. A team cannot operate successfully if a manager controls its internal operation.

The success of empowerment programs depends on an organization’s willingness to share information and power with its employees. Leaders love the idea of empowerment in theory, but they primarily engage in command and control actions because that is what they are comfortable doing. Delegating authority is stressful for managers because organizations typically hold them responsible for the outcome of the team’s work. Although they may feel discomfort delegating authority to a team,

Supporting empowerment leads to more effective team performance. Delegating authority and responsibility to the team and involving the team in decision making encourages team empowerment.

Group Decision Making

Using groups to make decisions creates both advantages and disadvantages. Depending on the situation, group decisions may or may not be superior to individual decisions.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Decision Making

A team brings more resources to a problem than are available to one person. Team members pool their knowledge through group discussion. Their interaction leads to new ideas that no single member would have developed.

Incorrect information is more likely to be identified and rejected by a team rather than by an individual.

A team has a better memory for past facts and events, so it is less likely to repeat mistakes. Overall, team members combine different skills and knowledge to make higher quality decisions.

Group decision making has motivational effects on team members. Being part of a team encourages members to try to make good decisions and to perform better. Members become more committed to a decision in which they participated so they are more likely to support its implementation.

Group decision making affects the skills of team members and the team as a whole. Members benefit by gaining a better understanding of the issues involved by participating in the discussion. The team benefits by learning to make decisions. Over time, a team can become more efficient at decision making, thereby reducing many of the problems inherent in group decision making.

The **main disadvantage** with group decision making is that teams are less efficient in making decisions because they suffer from process loss. When teams enter into discussions, some of the discussions are about coordination and social issues. This “wasted” discussion time (called “process loss”) prevents teams from Focusing solely on their tasks.

Teams encounter many communication problems when trying to make decisions

To be efficient, group decision making requires skillful facilitation. Decisions can get bogged down in emotional conflicts that waste time and damage the morale of teams. Powerful team members or people who like to talk too much can dominate discussions and disrupt a group’s ability to make decisions.

Finally, sometimes a team can work hard to make a decision when it is not really important the team may be asked to make a decision, but it is really only a recommendation, and the decision is left to individuals higher in the organization. This creates a sense of wasted time and effort and may discourage future participation in the team.

When Are Group Decisions Superior to Individual Decisions?

Group decisions are better than individual decisions when teams successfully pool resources to solve problems or make decisions. Successful pooling is affected by several factors. One factor is team composition. Teams with heterogeneous members with complementary skills make superior group decisions. Diversity of opinions a major advantage of using teams. If a team is composed of similar members with identical skills and knowledge, there is little benefit to be derived from making group decisions.

Another factor is good communication. Group decisions are better only if the discussion process successfully pools the knowledge and ideas of the team members. However, group discussions

typically focus on shared information rather than on the unique information held by members. Poor communication skills and problems managing group discussions can prevent teams from using their resources. A third factor relates to the need for teams to make decisions. Teams are needed for tasks that are too complex for one individual to perform or problems that are too difficult for one individual to solve. For a simple problem, the issue is whether anyone has the correct answer and whether the team accepts the correct answer. A simple problem does not require that the team spend time making a decision.

Approaches to Group Decision Making

Although there are many approaches a team can employ, teams typically use either

Consultative, democratic, or consensus decision making

In consultative decision making, one person has authority to make the decision, but he or she may ask for advice and comments from team members before deciding. Although this advice has an impact, the leader typically gives more weight to his or her own opinion and the opinions of members with similar views.

The consultative approach is often used in a work team when the leader has management authority and responsibility for the team decision.

In democratic decision making, the team votes on a decision. One of the major advantages of the democratic approach is that it is a quick way of including all team members' opinions. Majority decisions often work better than stricter criteria (such as two-thirds or unanimity). Simple majorities produce high-quality decisions with little cognitive effort.

The consensus approach to decision making requires discussion of an issue until all members have agreed to accept it. Acceptance does not mean that the decision is a member's favorite alternative: It means that the member is willing to accept and support the decision. Consensus decision making might be time consuming, but it is the best way to fully use team resources. When it is successful, it also improves the team operation. The consensus approach should be used for important decisions requiring the full support of the team for implementation. It takes time, energy, and skill to reach consensus, but consensus decisions have a greater likelihood of being implemented by the team.

Decision-Making Problems

There are many different types of problems that can disrupt a team's ability to make a good decision. Disagreements, negative emotions, time pressure, and external stress can cause these problems. Group polarization can affect a group decision by making the result more extreme because of interpersonal processes.

The term *groupthink* describes a number of group decision-making flaws caused by the group's desire to maintain good relations rather than to make the best decision.

Causes of Group Decision-Making Problems:

1. Disagreements

Probably the most common group decision-making problem is premature closure—that is, trying to avoid disagreement by voting to make a quick decision. This technique works for making the decision, but often leads to implementation problems later. Politics, a domineering leader, hidden agendas, poor norms, and

other factors can cause disagreements. Because of the disagreements, there is social pressure for people to agree with each other in a meeting, so misinformation is often not corrected and may be amplified.

2. Impact of Emotions

Emotions have both positive and negative effects on group decision making. Positive emotions can help to improve group discussions and decision making. When team members feel positive they are more likely to share their unique perspective with the team, and they are more likely to ask questions and try to understand other team members' perspectives. Positive emotions encourage team members to feel more confident interacting in the team. This increases the information available to a team when making a decision, which improves the quality of those decisions.

However, negative emotions can create problems for group decision making. When teams face a lot of pressure, they tend to become risk averse and head toward safe, generic solutions that have worked in the past. There is a drive toward consensus that prevents the stating of alternative views, ideas, and perspectives. Team members tend to defer to the team leader. Communications focus on shared knowledge rather than unique perspectives. These factors reduce the amount of team creativity and the quality of decisions.

3. Group Polarization

Although it might be expected that the outcome of group discussions would be a decision that corresponds to the average of the team's initial position, this is not always the case. The effect of a group discussion can lead to a final decision that is more extreme than the average position of its members, which can be either a riskier or more cautious decision, depending on the initial inclination of the team. This phenomenon is called *group polarization*.

Original research by Stoner (1961) showed that groups made riskier decisions than individuals. This was called the "risky shift phenomenon." However, subsequent research showed that this actually was an intensification effect. Groups tend to move toward an extreme and become either more risk oriented or more conservative. The group polarization effect occurs only when the group has an initial tendency, not when there are major differences of opinion among the members. There are several explanations for group polarization that examine the role of normative and informational influences.

4. Groupthink

The most famous type of group decision-making problems is groupthink, a term coined by Janis (1972). Janis used the analysis of historical decisions to show how decision-making processes can go wrong. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002, based on the belief that Iraq possessed WMDs (weapons of mass destruction), is an

example of groupthink. Groupthink occurs when group members' desire to maintain good relations becomes more important than reaching a good decision. Instead of searching for a good answer, they search for an outcome that preserves group harmony. This leads to a bad decision that is then accompanied by other actions designed to insulate the group from corrective feedback.

The external pressure experienced by the group leads to a set of symptoms of groupthink. These symptoms convince the group that it has made a good decision and that everyone in the group agrees with it. Consequently, there is internal pressure on members not to voice their concerns and objections. The collective effect of these symptoms is a poor decision, made without considering alternative options or long-term consequences of the decision.

Group Decision-Making Techniques

In order to eliminate group think and group shift from a group, we can use four different techniques that will help us make a collaborative decision that is best for the group.

1. Brainstorming

- This technique includes a group of people, mostly between five and ten in number, sitting around a table, producing ideas in the form of free association. The main focus is on generation of ideas.
- If more ideas can be originated, then it is likely that there will be a unique and creative idea among them. All these ideas are written on the blackboard with a piece of chalk so that all the team members can see every idea and try to improvise these ideas.

2. Nominal Group Thinking

- This technique is similar to brainstorming except that this approach is more structured. It motivates individual creativity. Members form the group for namesake and operate independently, originate ideas for solving the problem on their own, in silence and in writing. Members do not communicate well with each other so that strong personality domination is evaded.
- The group coordinator either collects the written ideas or writes them on a large blackboard so that each member of the group can see what the ideas are. These ideas are further discussed one by one in turn and each participant is motivated to comment on these ideas in order to clarify and improve them. After all these ideas have been discussed, they are evaluated for their merits and drawbacks and each actively participating member is needed to vote on each idea and allot it a rank on the basis of priority of each alternative solution.
- The idea with the highest cumulative ranking is selected as the final solution to the problem.

3. Didactic Interaction

- This technique is applicable only in certain situations, but is an excellent method when a situation actually demands it. The type of problem should be such that it generates output in the form of yes or no. Say for example, a decision is to be made whether to buy or not to buy a product, to merge or not to merge, to expand or not to expand and so on. These types of decision require an extensive and exhaustive discussion and investigation since a wrong decision can have serious consequences.
- There are many advantages as well as disadvantages of this type of situation. The group that makes the decision is divided into two sub-groups, one in favor of the “go” decision and the opposing in favor of “no go” decision.
- The first group enlists all the “pros” of the problem solution and the second group lists all the “cons”. These groups meet and discuss their discoveries and their reasons.
- After tiring discussions, the groups switch sides and try to find weaknesses in their own original standpoints. This interchange of ideas and understanding of various viewpoints results in mutual acceptance of the facts as they exist so that a solution can be put together around these facts and ultimately a final decision is reached.

4. Delphi Technique

- This technique is the improvised version of the nominal group technique, except that it involves obtaining the opinions of experts physically distant from each other and unknown to each other.
- This isolates group members from the undue influence of others. Basically, the types of problems sorted by this technique are not specific in nature.
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The Delphi technique includes the following steps –

- The problem is first identified and a panel of experts are selected. These experts are asked to provide potential solutions through a series of thoughtfully designed questionnaires.
- Each expert concludes and returns the initial questionnaire.
- The results of the questionnaire are composed at a central location and the central coordinator prepares a second set of questionnaire based on the previous answers.
- Each member receives a copy of the results accompanied by the second questionnaire.
- Members are required to review the results and respond to the second questionnaire. The results typically trigger new solutions or motivate changes in the original ideas.
- The process is repeated until a general agreement is obtained.

5. Ringi Technique

The Ringi technique is a Japanese decision-making technique used for dealing with controversial topics. It allows a group to deal with conflict while avoiding a face-to-face confrontation. (Face-to-face confrontations are considered inappropriate in Japanese culture.) In this approach, a written document presenting the issue and its proposed resolution is developed anonymously. This document is circulated among group members, who individually write comments, edit the document, and forward it to other group members. After completing a cycle, the comments are used to rewrite the document, and it is re-circulated through the group. This process continues until group members stop writing comments on the draft.

Evaluation of Decision-Making Techniques

The group decision-making process is structured by these techniques to eliminate all but task-oriented communication among group members. The Delphi and Ringi techniques use only written communication. The nominal group technique requires each group member to generate ideas independently and then to interact only to choose among alternative ideas. This structuring of the decision-making process allows decisions to be made by larger groups of people who do not have to meet. These approaches can produce decisions that are as good as or better than decisions produced from group discussions, and they can do so more efficiently. In addition, people are satisfied with their levels of participation using these approaches.

TEAM LEADER AND HIS CHALLENGES

A team has many ways of selecting a leader and assigning leadership roles. The leader may be assigned by the organization, the team may be self-managing, or leadership roles may be distributed among team members. What is the best style of leadership? There is no definitive answer to this question, but a number of approaches have been suggested. Situational leadership theory is one approach to helping the leader decide the best way to act, depending on the characteristics of the team members.

Organizations are experimenting with new forms of team leadership. In self-managing teams, many leadership functions are turned over to the teams. Self-managing teams provide a variety of benefits, but they require the development of group process skills to operate effectively. It is apparent that team leadership requires skills and responsibilities that are different from traditional leadership approaches. Team leaders do not manage the team: They help the team solve problems in order to be more effective.

Alternative Designs of Leadership for Team. Team leadership is a process whereby an individual influences the progress of team members toward attainment of a goal. Types of leaders vary by method of selection and the roles they are expected to perform. Often, the person who emerges as the leader of a team may not be the one best suited for the role.

Characteristics of Team Leadership

Although we normally think of a single individual in the position of leader, this is not always the case. Instead of talking about leadership as pertaining to any one person, we need to recognize that leadership is a set of functions that may be performed by many of a team's members.

There are leaderless groups, teams with leaders assigned by their organizations, teams that select their own leaders, and self-managing teams. Most teams have one person assigned to the role of leader. The leader maybe selected by the organization and assigned to the team, the team may elect the leader, or the position of leader may be rotated among the team members.

Leaders vary in the power or authority they possess. When a leader is assigned by an organization, the leader may have the authority to make the team's decisions. It is then up to the leader to decide how team decisions should be made. When the leader is elected or rotated, he or she typically has limited power and serves primarily as facilitator of the group process. A designated leader with organizational power is useful when the task is very complex and structure is needed, when there is significant conflict among team members, or when someone is needed to manage the relationship between the team and other parts of the organization.

A team leader is not the same as a manager. A manager is given power and authority by the organization over subordinates, whereas a team leader typically does not have this type of power. A manager is responsible for the actions of his or her subordinates, whereas it is the team (and not the leader) that is responsible for the actions of its members. A manager has the authority to make decisions, whereas a team leader facilitates decision making. Finally, a manager is responsible for handling personnel issues (e.g., employee hiring, evaluation, reward), whereas team leaders usually do not have the authority to perform these personnel functions.

Shared Leadership

Rather than centralizing the role of leadership, a team's leadership roles may be shared on the basis of different tasks performed by the team. Shared leadership is the notion that leadership functions can be shared or performed by various members of a team. Leaders perform a variety of functions in a team, and these functions do not have to be performed by the same person. The team's task can be divided into specific functions, and the responsibilities for each function assigned to a team member to perform. Team members may be rotated through the different roles to develop the skills within the team. For example, a factory team may divide its task into quality, safety, maintenance, supplies, and administration. Rather than having the team leader assigned responsibility for all of these functions, one team member may be in charge of each function.

Shared leadership focuses on participative decision making, developing social relations and support, and Empowerment. Leadership is located in the connections and relationships among team members rather than the actions of one particular person. Leadership becomes a dynamic, ongoing process of mutual influence that can be performed by any member of the team. The development of shared leadership capacity is an important resource for the team when it faces challenges that no single individual is capable of managing.

Leader Emergence

When no leader is assigned to a group, a leader usually emerges from the group to coordinate its actions. The person who becomes the leader may not be an effective leader. Leaders tend to be taller and older than their followers, but these characteristics are unrelated to effectiveness. Men are five times more likely than women to be group leaders, but gender is unrelated to leader effectiveness. Although task skills relate somewhat to leader effectiveness, physical ability has little relationship to effectiveness.

Personality variables like extroversion have been shown to effect who becomes a team leader.

Extroverts express confidence, dominance, and enthusiasm so they are often initially selected as leaders. However, over time personality becomes less important than task and teamwork related skills. As teams work together, these skills become more important than having certain personality characteristics. The most important predictor of group selection of a leader is the participation rate (sometimes called the “babble effect”). Group members are more likely to select the most frequent communicator as the leader. Unfortunately, the quantity of communication is more important than quality for leadership selection. It appears that people who communicate frequently demonstrate active involvement and interest in the group, and this implies a willingness to work with the group members.

Leader prototype theory provides another way to explain the emergence of leaders with characteristics unrelated to effectiveness. This theory examines the relationship between the leader and the perceptions of team members. Members have certain implicit notions about what constitutes a good leader.

To the extent that the leader meets these expectations, the leader is more influential. Although the specific Traits of good leadership vary in the minds of followers, it is usually assumed that effective leaders are Intelligent, dedicated, and possess good communication skills.

Approaches to Leadership

The four historical approaches to research on leadership have different implications for organizations and teams:

1. Trait or Personality Approach

The trait approach is the oldest model of leadership, with hundreds of studies conducted during the 1930s and 1940s. It assumes that good leaders have a certain set of characteristics. If these characteristics are identified and measured, subsequently, it should be possible to know how to select good leaders.

Many leadership traits have been examined, but research has failed to confirm a strong relationship between traits and leadership. More recent research suggests that sets of traits are associated with good leadership. For example, effective leaders have more drive, honesty, leadership motivation, self-confidence, and intelligence, knowledge of business, creativity, and flexibility. No single trait can predict good leadership, but effective leaders do differ from typical followers in exhibiting higher levels of these characteristics overall. The basic problem with the trait approach is that people who are successful leaders in one situation (e.g., business) are not necessarily successful in others (e.g., politics, religion).

A good example of the problem with the trait approach is the value of intelligence. In a dictatorship (e.g., the military), intelligence is an important characteristic of good leaders. In a democracy (e.g., local politics),

good leaders must be able to easily relate to others and have good communication skills. These communication skills are more important than intelligence.

Motivation is another example of the problem with the trait approach. Successful leaders are motivated, but what type of motivation is important? The difference between successful entrepreneurs of small businesses and managers of large companies is not a difference in the level of motivation: It is a difference in the type of motivation. Successful managers in large organizations have a strong need for power and a moderately strong need for achievement. The power motivation of such managers is focused on building their organizations and empowering their subordinates rather than on gaining personal power and control. By contrast, successful entrepreneurs have a strong need for achievement and independence without an overwhelming need for power.

2. Behavioral Approach

The behavioral approach defines leadership as a set of appropriate behaviors. The goal of this approach is to define how good leaders act rather than focusing on issues, such as intelligence and creativity, most of the research on leader behavior focuses on two issues: decision-making style and task versus social focus. The decision-making approach primarily examined the benefits of authoritarian leadership in comparison with democratic leadership.

Democratic leaders tend to encourage higher morale, job satisfaction, and commitment in their followers. However, democratic decision making can be slow, and leaders may be viewed as weak. Autocratic leaders tend to be more efficient decision makers, but this style can create dissatisfaction and implementation problems among followers.

Behavioral research also examines whether leaders should focus on the tasks or on the social relations among the team members. Is a leader's primary role to organize and manage the task or is it to ensure that social relations are good.

Similar to the issue with the various styles of decision making, the most effective behavioral approach to leadership depends on the situation. If a team is performing a routine task, the leader should focus on social relations, because the team does not need help with the task. If a project team is working on a difficult problem, a good leader helps the team better understand and work on the task. If a team is capable of self management, the leader should ignore both task and social issues and focus instead on concerns outside the team.

3. Situational Approach

Are leaders really important to the success of teams? When are leaders important? These questions are the basis of the situational approach to leadership. The value of this approach is in understanding the situational factors that affect leadership and its alternatives.

When historians study great leaders, they note the relationship between leaders and situations. Charismatic leaders require situations where people have important needs and are searching for others to help resolve those needs.

People often overrate the importance of leaders. Although leaders may have a strong impact on the success of organizations, in most day-to-day operations their impact is considerably less. However, leaders are cognitively important for followers. It is difficult to explain the success or failure of organizations, so leadership becomes a simplified explanation for what has happened and why.

One of the chief values of the situational approach is in examining alternatives to leadership or factors that can substitute for leadership. These factors relate to the characteristics of employees, jobs, and organization. Competent, well-trained, and responsible employees need leaders to a lesser degree. Routine jobs that are highly structured do not require leader supervision. Organizing into teams and developing a cohesive team spirit reduce the need for leaders.

4. Contingency Approach

The contingency approach is the researcher's answer to the problems with leadership research. If one cannot define the traits or behaviors of good leaders separate from the situation, then leadership theories should combine these factors. However, a good research theory may be difficult to use in practice. Contingency theories are complex and more difficult to understand and apply than are other theories.

Contingency theories start by focusing on some characteristic of a situation. Various theories examine the type of task, level of structure, or favorableness of the situation for the leader. The theories then examine some aspect of the leader's personality or behavior, such as interpersonal skills or task orientation. These two sets of factors are linked to show either how the leader should behave depending on the situation or what type of leader would function the best given the situation. For example, because of preference or training, some people tend to be autocratic leaders. Autocratic leaders work well in situations where they have considerable power and followers are motivated to comply. This is why the military trains leaders to handle emergency situations forcefully and selects leaders who can act in this way.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Team problem solving is studied using three different approaches: the methods that teams use to solve their problems, the types of behavior that contribute to effective problem solving, and the techniques used by teams to improve team problem solving. Team problem-solving approaches are based on a rational model of the process that includes six stages: problem definition, evaluation of the problem, generating alternatives, selecting a solution, implementation, and evaluation of the results. In practice, however, this rational approach is rarely followed, and teams often find themselves developing solutions before they understand the problems.

At each stage of the problem-solving process, teams can use a number of techniques to improve their problem-solving abilities. Using these techniques helps teams become more effective as problem solvers.

Approaches to Problem Solving

A problem is a dilemma with no apparent solution, an undesirable situation without a way out, a question that cannot currently be answered, the difference between the current situation and a desired state, or situation team members must manage effectively. The problem can come from the environment or arise from the team. Problems often first surface for a team as symptoms that cause undesirable effects.

In a work environment, a problem for many teams is simply how to complete their tasks or assignments. A team's assignment contains two primary problems: (1) determining the nature of the assignments and how to complete them, and (2) managing problems and obstacles encountered when performing them. These obstacles may be technical issues, conflicting viewpoints, or interpersonal conflicts.

The perfect way to solve a problem is to define it and then decide how to solve it. This may seem obvious, but the biggest problem teams have is generating solutions without first understanding the problem. Defining and evaluating the problem is the most difficult step for teams to perform.

The first step in problem solving is to discuss and document individual views until everyone agrees on the nature of the problem. Teams are often given ill-defined problems and undeveloped criteria for evaluating them. Teams need to challenge the definitions of the problems, searching for their root causes. They also need to define what successful resolutions would look like in order

to evaluate alternative solutions. The result should be agreement on the issues that need resolution and clear statements of the problem.

Teams may rush through the problem definition stage, only to find that they have to return to it during the solution or implementation stage. This is a time-consuming approach to problem solving. Understanding as much as possible about a problem at the beginning can reduce the overall time spent solving the problem.

Another common flaw is ignoring the final stage: evaluating the solution. Often teams are created to solve problems, but are not responsible for implementation or evaluation. Evaluation is ignored because no one wants to present negative information to superiors. Rather than learning from mistakes made, the mistakes are hidden from the team and organization. As a result, they are often repeated because of lack of feedback.

There are three approaches to team problem solving: descriptive, which examines how teams solve problems; functional, which identifies the behaviors of effective problem solving; and prescriptive, which recommends techniques and approaches to improve team problem solving.

Descriptive Approach: How Teams Solve Problems

The descriptive approach examines how teams typically solve problems. Researchers focus on different aspects of the group system in order to understand the problem-solving process. These different perspectives offer alternative ways of understanding the methodology.

One perspective using the descriptive approach is to identify the stages a team goes through during problem solving. This approach is similar to the stages of team development. The four stages a team uses when solving a problem are forming, storming, norming, and performing. In the forming stage, the team examines the problem and tries to better understand the issues related to it. The storming stage is a time of conflict, when different definitions of the problem and preliminary solutions are discussed. Often, the team jumps ahead to arguing about solutions before it has reached agreement on the problem, so it must return to the problem definition stage to resolve this conflict. In the norming stage, the team develops methods for analyzing the problem, generating alternatives, and selecting a solution. The establishment of these methods and other norms about how to operate helps the team members work together effectively. In the performing stage, these methods are used to solve the problem and develop plans to implement the solution.

Functional Approach: Advice on Improving Team Problem Solving

The functional approach tries to improve a team's ability to solve problems by understanding the factors related to effective problem solving and the factors that disrupt team problem solving.

Skilled problem solvers view problems from a variety of viewpoints to better understand the problem.

- Rather than relying on its own opinions, an effective team gathers data and researches a problem before making a decision.
- A successful team considers a variety of options or alternatives before selecting a particular solution.
- An effective team manages both the task and relational aspects of problem solving. It does not let a problem damage the team's ability to function effectively in other areas.
- A successful team's discussion is focused on the problem. Teams that have difficulty staying focused on the issues, especially when there are conflicts, are usually not successful.
- An effective team listens to minority opinions. Often the solution to a problem lies in the knowledge of a team member, but is ignored because the team focuses on the opinions of the majority.
- Skilled problem solvers test alternative solutions relative to established criteria. The team defines what criteria a good solution must meet and uses those criteria when examining alternatives.

Prescriptive Approach: Rational Problem-Solving Model

The functional approach illustrates what can go right (and wrong) with the team problem-solving process. The prescriptive approach presents a strategy that encourages teams to solve problems more effectively. This approach is based on the assumptions that (a) team members should use rational problem-solving strategies, and (b) using a structured approach will lead to a better solution. The value of formal structured approaches to problem solving varies depending on the type of problem. The more unstructured and complex the problem, the more helpful it is if the team uses a structured approach to solve it (Van Gundy, 1981).

Problem Recognition, Definition, and Analysis

Problem recognition, definition, and analysis are key progressions in effective problem solving. However, teams often rush through these stages of the problem-solving process. In their desire to develop solutions quickly, they focus on the symptoms of the problem rather than trying to understand the real causes of the problem (Pokras, 1995).

Problems vary in their levels of severity, familiarity, and complexity. The more severe a problem is, the more likely it is to be identified as a hindrance. Acute problems with identifiable onsets and impacts are often recognized, whereas chronic problems that are less visible are often ignored. Problems that are familiar are more easily recognized. Novel problems are more difficult to interpret, and teams may assume they are unique, one-time events that will go away by themselves.

Teams vary in their levels of desire and ability to identify problems. Team norms have a strong effect on problem identification. Teams with norms supporting communication and positive attitudes toward conflict are more likely to identify and discuss problems. Teams vary in how open they are to the environment. Closed teams that are internally focused are less likely to be aware of problems in the environment. Open teams monitor what is happening in the environment. Also, they are better able to prepare for problems in the future because they identified the issues beforehand.

Team performance affects the problem identification process. A team that is performing successfully will sometimes ignore problems. From their perspective, the problems cannot be very important, given that the team is currently successful. Unsuccessful teams also have a tendency to ignore problems. These teams must focus on their main performance problems. The notion of continuous improvement is a teamwork concept designed to help deal with this issue. In continuous improvement, teams assume that part of their function is to improve operations. In essence, all teams—both successful and unsuccessful—are required to identify problems and work to solve them on an ongoing basis.

Once a team identifies a problem, it may decide not to solve it. There are other alternatives. The team may decide to deny or distort the problem, thus justifying their choice to ignore it. The team may decide to hide from the problem, given that problems sometimes go away by themselves. If the problem is difficult for the team to understand (because of novelty or complexity), it may decide just to monitor the problem for the time being. Working collaboratively to solve a problem requires identification, the belief that the problem is solvable, and the motivation to solve it.

Generating Alternatives and Selecting a Solution

Finding an effective solution depends on developing high-quality alternatives. The ability of a team to accomplish this is related to the knowledge and skills of team members. However, it also depends on the team's climate and built-in constructs. The climate of an effective team encourages open discussion of ideas, where minority ideas are heard and taken seriously by the majority.

Teams sometimes use creativity and other structured techniques to generate alternative solutions to problems. Techniques such as brainstorming and the nominal group technique are used to generate alternatives. An important value of these techniques is that participation by all team members is encouraged. However, these participation techniques are useful only if the team is willing to give divergent ideas a fair evaluation. Too often, conformity pressure leads teams to adopt solutions used in the past.

After generating alternatives, teams must consider how to determine the best solution. Teams should consider the positive and negative effects of each alternative. The ability to implement the solutions must be considered. This involves the ability of teams to enact the solutions and an understanding of how outside groups will respond to the solutions.

Sometimes none of the available alternative solutions is appealing, in which case the team selects the least objectionable proposal. This leads to rationalizing among team members to bolster their belief that the decision is acceptable. Teams may overemphasize the positive attributes of a selected solution and deny its negative aspects in order to justify their choice

After the team has made its decision, it may want to hold a "second chance" meeting to review the decision. Even when the team decides by consensus, it is useful to have a second-chance meeting to air concerns about the decision. The meeting helps prevent factors such as groupthink and the pressure to conform from inappropriately influencing the decision.

Implementation and Evaluation

A solution is not a good one unless it is implemented. This requires commitment from a team to support and enact its solution. A problem-solving team is obliged to think about implementation issues when making a decision. It is not useful to agree on a solution that cannot be implemented. This means that the team should plan how the solution is to be implemented, including consideration of the people, time, and resources needed for implementation. It may be useful to

bring the people affected by the planned solution into the decision making process to encourage their acceptance of the solution.

Evaluation is one of the most overlooked steps of the problem-solving process. Even when teams do a good job of analyzing the problem and developing solutions, there are unforeseen factors that may lead to failure. Lewin's action research model (Lewin, 1951) is a research-based approach to problem solving that emphasizes the importance of the evaluation stage. In this approach, solutions are considered hypotheses that need to be tested. When solutions are implemented, their impacts are evaluated and used to determine their effectiveness and to identify further actions that need to be taken.

Problem-Solving Techniques for Teams

The following sections examine these techniques in more detail.

1. Problem Analysis

Problem solving begins by recognizing that a problem exists, and that most of the real problem lies hidden. Typically, the first encounter with a problem is only with its symptoms. The team must then find the problem itself and agree on its fundamental sources. It should separate the symptoms (which are effects) from the causes. Before using the tools in this approach, team members investigate the problem by gathering more information about it. With this new information, the team can analyze the cause of the problem.

There are several tools that may be useful at this stage (Pokras, 1995). Symptom identification is a technique that has the team tabulate all aspects or symptoms of a problem. In force field analysis, the team analyzes the driving and restraining forces that affect a problem.

2. Criteria Matrix

Techniques to generate alternatives, Once the team has generated alternative solutions, a selection process is required to review and evaluate them. If the team did a good job generating alternatives, they should have a number of options from which to choose. If the team used creativity techniques like brainstorming, there should be many unworkable ideas. Because some approaches obviously are not going to work, they should be eliminated from further analysis. Then the team should review the options and look for ways of combining solutions. After this, the team can develop a criteria matrix to evaluate the alternatives objectively.

A criteria matrix is a system used to rate alternatives. The first step is to decide what criteria to use to rate the alternatives. There are many criteria possible to evaluate alternative solutions,

including cost, effectiveness, acceptability, and ease of implementation. A team may want to use a rating scale for its analysis (e.g., 0 = not acceptable, 1 = somewhat acceptable, 2 = acceptable). Since all evaluation criteria are not of equal importance, it is important to remember to not merely select the alternative with the highest score. For example, one alternative solution may be less expensive to implement, but not as effective. If the team is highly concerned about cost, this may be the preferred alternative. The criteria matrix allows the team to analyze and discuss the relative merits of the alternatives in a structured manner.

3. Action Plans

The implementation stage focuses on generating action plans, considering contingency plans, and managing the project on the basis of these plans. An action plan is a practical guide to translating the solution into reality—a step-by-step road map. It emphasizes the timing of various parts and assigning responsibility for actions. The plan also should establish standards to evaluate successful performance. Events rarely go as planned. The team should establish a monitoring and feedback system to ensure that team members are aware of the progress made. Larger action items should be broken down into stages and monitored. Feedback to the team on progress with individual assignments should be a regular part of team meetings.

4. Force Field Analysis

Force field analysis is an approach to understanding the factors that affect any change program (Lewin, 1951). It examines the relation between the driving and restraining forces for change. The driving forces are what the team wants to achieve and the factors that minimize the problem. The restraining forces are the obstacles that prevent success and the factors that contribute to the problem. This approach can be especially valuable in examining implementation issues.

When implementing a solution to a problem, teams want to increase the driving forces that encourage the change and reduce the restraining forces that prevent the change from occurring. Teams often focus on the driving forces that are promoting the change. Reducing the power of the restraining forces is a necessary precondition for change.

Using Lewin's action research model (1951), teams use group discussions to identify the driving and restraining forces affecting any proposed solution. The team uses this information to decide on strategies for implementation.

CREATIVITY

Developing creative solutions to problems is an important concern for teams; teams can use a number of techniques to stimulate group creativity. However, the dynamics of teams tend to limit creativity because of cognitive, social, and organizational problems. The solution to promoting creativity in teams requires approaches that combine the benefits of individual creativity and team creativity. Organizations can help encourage creativity by providing supportive organizational climates.

Creativity and Its Characteristics

Creativity describes the inventiveness of a creative person; describes some products, things, or ideas that are innovative and creative; and describes the process that produces creative things or ideas.

Most research examines creativity from the individual perspective, trying to find out who is creative by using personality tests or other psychological measures. However, there are problems with this person-oriented approach. Creativity varies in degree and is not simply a personality trait that some people have and others do not. Creativity skills can be enhanced through training for both individuals and teams. Talent, learned skills, and situational factors affect creativity. Creative talent alone is insufficient for solving problems creatively.

Something is creative if it is novel or unique and is appropriate, acceptable, and useful. Novelty is not sufficient: A creative solution also must effectively solve a problem. Because of this, creativity requires a combination of divergent and convergent thinking processes. Divergent thinking generates potential ideas, and convergent thinking analyzes and focuses solutions.

To encourage their own divergent thinking, people must suspend judgment of ideas. Participants in a creative activity should try to generate as many ideas as possible and remain receptive to new ideas.

Taking a systematic approach to selecting a creative solution requires convergent thinking. Evaluation criteria are developed and then used to sort out the many ideas generated. All the alternatives are analyzed to avoid premature acceptance. People need to be realistic and not too critical of the ideas. The overall goal is to analyze and select the best available alternative.

Teams need to have creative members who work together effectively in a supportive organizational context.

Individual Creativity

Individual creativity develops from an interaction of personal and situational factors. People are creative when they have domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and appropriate task motivation.

Domain-relevant skills are the skills, knowledge, and talent people have in a particular application area. People are not creative in all areas—they are creative in areas where they are most skilled.

For example, artists might not be creative bridge designers, and a creative bridge designer might not be artistic.

Individual creativity can be disrupted by several psychological factors, which operate by shifting focus away from the task and toward external issues. Individual creativity may be limited by the use of extrinsic rewards, communication issues and evaluation apprehension,

Group Creativity

Creativity is an important skill to cultivate for both individuals and groups. Groups have been shown to be less creative than individuals in some circumstances. Brainstorming, the best-known technique for encouraging group creativity, is criticized as being ineffective. However, creative teams are sometimes able to overcome these problems. Teams can develop practices that encourage creativity as an ongoing process.

Problems with Group Creativity

When it comes to creativity, groups face many of the same problems as individuals. When people try to creatively solve a problem as a group, they typically produce fewer ideas than the sum of individuals working alone. Even working alone in the presence of others reduces an individual's creativity. This is especially true if the others observe and evaluate what individuals are doing.

Several group dynamic factors limit creativity. Groups may develop negative or critical communication climates that discourage creativity. Interpersonal conflicts in groups may discourage creativity.

Groups consume more time than when individuals work alone, making the process of group creativity slower and less efficient. Finally, conformity pressure and domineering members can hurt creativity in the group process.

Strengths of Team Creativity

Using teams to develop creative solutions to problems has its benefits: Compared to single individuals, teams are able to develop more ideas. The social interaction of working in teams can be rewarding. Teams can create supportive environments that encourage creativity. Diverse teams are more likely than homogeneous teams to develop creative solutions. Teams provide support for the implementation of creative ideas.

One of the problems with brainstorming for creativity is that it discourages criticism. Criticism, feedback on ideas, and debate are activities that encourage team creativity. Teams working on creative tasks need to have the conflict that arises from differences of opinions and ideas. They need to share, select, and combine these different perspectives. However, this criticism must be done in a constructive manner, which implies an environment where team members feel safe to criticize each other.

A team with creative conflicts produces ideas that are more creative. When the team is exposed to contradictory ideas from some members, the thinking of the majority is stimulated, producing ideas that are more creative. Dissent stimulates divergent thinking and encourages the team to view an issue from multiple perspectives. It encourages more original and less conventional thoughts about the issue.

Diversity is another team composition factor that relates to creativity. Diverse teams are more creative because they generate more ideas, try out more novel ideas, and view issues from

multiple perspectives .However, diversity does not always make a team more creative. Creative teams constructively discuss each other's ideas and integrate the inputs from different members. This requires perspective taking, which is trying to appreciate the different perspectives given by other team members. When team members are instructed to engage in perspective taking during team discussions, teams become more creative.

How teams operate can have a positive effect on team creativity. To enhance creativity, brainstorming is better than unstructured group discussion. When trained facilitators run brainstorming sessions, teams generate more ideas that are creative. This creativity enhancement continues to affect the team after the facilitator leaves because the team has learned how to brainstorm more effectively.

Several methods can improve the brainstorming process to further promote creativity. First, facilitators should structure the team interaction to avoid disruptive communications and premature evaluations. Team sessions should be followed by individual sessions. Teams should use organizing techniques to reduce the number of alternatives to evaluate after the idea generation stage. Finally, teams should be diverse. This diversity must be managed to reduce potential conflict, make members aware of the expertise of others, and focus the discussion on the unique contributions of individual members.

One of the values of team brainstorming is the stimulation of ideas. There is a cognitive benefit to being exposed to other people's ideas because creative ideas often occur through unique associations with other ideas. Exposure to other ideas can help a member break out of limiting cognitive categories. This effect is increased if the team has a diversity of knowledge, experience, and perspectives.

Team creativity relates to the individual, the team, and the organization. Are teams more or less creative than individuals? It depends on how the process is managed. The question is really not relevant in many organizational situations. Important problems often require individual and team creativity because the problems are too complex to rely solely on individual creativity.

Creativity as an Ongoing Team Process

Team creativity is often characterized by a diverse group of people generating many ideas through interaction with each other. However, this model of team creativity does not explain how some teams are consistently creative like the animation studio Pixar. Instead of viewing creativity as simply an idea generation activity, highly creative teams view creativity as an ongoing process.

Creativity is more than just generating ideas; it includes the analysis of ideas and the constructive development of ideas into creative processes and products (Fairchild & Hunter, 2013). The creative process takes time and requires nurturing and encouraging environment. It takes time for teams to develop the open and supportive communication climate that supports the types of constructive controversy that lead to ongoing creativity.

Ongoing team creativity is an interactive process that focuses on the conflict between different perspectives .It starts during the initial idea generation stage, but continues throughout the implementation of the idea. Pixar provides a good example of the ongoing team creative process. When animators and technologists start the development process for a new film, they do not plan the entire film at the beginning. Through group discussion, they identify creative ideas and the

teams develop prototypes based on these ideas. These creative ideas come from the integration of art and technology. The teams meet regularly to analyze the prototypes and creatively develop ways to improve on them. Creativity is emphasized throughout the process of developing the film through these feedback interactions.

For this creative synergy to happen, teams require both constructive controversy and psychological safety. Constructive controversy supports creativity because it results in team members sharing a wider range of ideas, more closely analyzing ideas, and developing more original solutions. However, this only occurs when the team has sufficient psychological safety that creates an open learning climate for discussion and innovative thinking. In order for creativity to flourish, team members need to feel comfortable expressing their opinions as well as giving and receiving feedback from others.

Organizational Environment and Creativity

Organizations benefit from creativity. Businesses want to be innovative to create new products and services to expand their operations. Companies get stuck in old patterns of behavior and look for new ideas to help them break out of the rut. The world is a dynamic place with a fast rate of change, and organizations must change creatively to survive. To be more creative, they need to hire creative people, use team creativity effectively, and establish organizational climates that promote creativity.

Organizations must rely on team creativity because the problems they face are too complex for individual solution. Often, creative solutions for problems require a multidisciplinary perspective. The development of the first Macintosh computer is a good example. How can one creatively redesign the personal computer, considering all the electronic, manufacturing, artistic, psychological, and human factors involved? It is not a job for an individual—it is a job for a design team. In order to combine the talents of a variety of fields, team creativity is essential.

Organizations also must develop creative solutions for problems that cut across organizational boundaries. Additionally, this requires a team perspective to fully understand and integrate the issues involved. The use of a team to develop creative solutions for cross-departmental problems encourages support for the implementation of solutions.

Individual and team creativity can survive only in organizational environments that support creativity. Although organizations say that they want to encourage creativity, their actions may not support it. Organizations want both stability and change; this contradiction creates problems. Team creativity requires cooperation, but many organizations encourage competition. There are many things that organizations could do to promote creativity, but there are probably just as many obstacles within organizations that prevent creativity from happening.

To foster creativity, organizations must develop climates that support creative people and teams. Organizational climates should promote both the task and social aspects of creativity. Climates that support the task aspects of creativity provide the freedom to do things differently, empower people to act on their ideas, encourage active participation, and provide support to those involved in creative tasks. Climates that support the social aspects of creativity allow the open expression

of ideas, encourage risk taking, promote acceptance of novel ideas, and reflect confidence in their employees.

When teams are developing creative solutions to problems, they need to interact with the surrounding organization. This can be done informally outside of the team meetings or by bringing outsiders into the team's creativity sessions. While working on creative projects, teams should publicize their working ideas to other members of the organization in order to get ideas, comments, and feedback. It is useful to get outsiders' views to encourage creativity.

Team Creativity Techniques

Developing creative ideas is an important part of a team's work. The tools a team uses to promote creativity can be applied in a variety of ways. Creativity techniques, for example, are useful in all stages of problem solving. The techniques help clarify objectives, define and analyze problems, generate alternative solutions, and prepare for implementation.

Developing creative ideas requires more than just a group session. The process begins by developing an open climate that encourages participation. Team members are more likely to develop creative ideas if they have time to prepare for and research the topic. After generating creative ideas, the team selects the best ideas and refines them. Multiple sessions may be necessary to fully develop useful creative ideas.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming includes a variety of methods for structuring team creativity sessions. Besides classic brainstorming, alternatives include procedures that force team members to combine the ideas of others, use of pictures to "comment" on ideas, and role-playing alternative perspectives such as viewing the problem from the perspective of historic or fictional characters. (How would Einstein try to solve this problem?) Team facilitators who use brainstorming often have techniques to equalize the level of participation from team members.

At the beginning of the brainstorming session, it is useful to have team members silently think about creative ideas related to the topic and to write these ideas down. This individual reflection period before the team discussion helps to generate more ideas and energizes the start of the team discussion.

During the brainstorming session, all team members should try to suggest as many ideas as possible. Every idea is accepted by the team and written down by the recorder. The leader's job is to keep team members on track by refocusing them on the issue. No one is allowed to criticize ideas. Instead, members are encouraged to build on suggestions made by others. It is up to the leader to ensure that no criticisms occur during the brainstorming session.

Nominal Group Technique and Brain writing

The nominal group technique and brain writing are similar approaches that combine the benefits of individual and group creativity. As with brainstorming, they separate the idea generation stage from the evaluation stage. However, in these approaches, individuals generate their ideas in writing rather than in team discussion.

Both techniques start with the same general approach as brainstorming. A team is brought together, and the facilitator announces the question. In the nominal group technique, each participant spends 20 to 30 minutes writing down ideas. After this stage is complete, the ideas are listed for all participants to see, and the group is able to ask clarifying questions about the ideas.

Brain writing has several variations. One approach is to ask members to write down an idea on a sheet of paper and then pass the paper to the person on the right. The next person is required to write a new idea that builds on the previous idea(s). This cycle is repeated until either time is up or the team has exhausted all their ideas. An alternative is for each team member to write down several ideas on a sheet of paper, throw the papers into a central pool, and pull out another member's paper to write on. Again, team members are to build on the ideas presented in the papers they choose. When the team is finished generating ideas, all the lists are combined for team review. A third approach uses idea generation on Post-it Notes. The team's ideas are written on Post-it Notes, then posted on a wall; this encourages playful combination of ideas. Brain writing can also be conducted using a virtual team approach.

Selecting a Solution

One problem with creativity activities like brainstorming is that they can generate many possible options with no easy way to select the best one. However, after a brainstorming session, it is often easy to prioritize the suggestions and focus on a limited number of options.

One way to narrow the focus is by multiple voting. A team reviews the alternatives generated by the brainstorming session and combines items that seem similar. Each team member then selects two to five alternatives that he or she would like to support. When all team members have completed their selections, the votes are tallied and items that received zero to one vote are removed. The alternatives that were selected are discussed, and the team considers new ways of combining or synthesizing alternatives. These steps are repeated until only a few options remain. At this stage, the team can use consensus to select the final alternative.

The Nature of Diversity

Diversity is at the core of teamwork. If people have identical knowledge, skills, or perspectives, then there is little reason to organize them into teams, and it is simpler to just have a supervisor tell the individuals what to do. It is the integration of differences that is the core value of teamwork. But, diversity is also a central challenge for teamwork. How do you get different people to work together smoothly and effectively as a team? From sociological and organizational perspectives, the topic of diversity is increasing in importance. Diversity has many meanings, all of which have different impacts on how teams function.

Why Diversity Is Important Now

Understanding diversity in work teams is important because of the increasing numbers of women and ethnic minorities entering the workforce. Women and ethnic minorities are now in all levels of the organizational hierarchy. Age or generational diversity is also increasing in organizations. People are living longer and retirement ages are being extended. The relationship between younger and older workers is changing as generations are more likely to work together because organizational hierarchies are flatter. New technology has reversed some of the differences between younger and older workers. For instance, younger workers may be more skilled with technology and may serve as mentors for older workers.

Diversity is increasing by design as well. Organizations are recruiting a more diverse workforce to improve relationships with customers. A design team does not create a car for male buyers only; products must be sensitive to all potential customers. In addition, globalization is increasing diversity. As organizations become more global, their workforce must be able to interact in culturally diverse teams.

Types of Diversity

Although we often think of diversity in terms of gender or ethnicity, three types of diversity affect teams in organizations: demographic (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age), psychological (e.g., values, personality, knowledge), and organizational (e.g., tenure, occupation, status). In our society, distinctions of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, and sexual orientation are considered important in many situations, but that is not true in all societies or eras. For example, religion is a more important demographic variable in the Middle East than in the United States.

Psychological diversity relates to differences in people's cognitions and behavior. People vary in their values, beliefs, and attitudes. They may be conservative or liberal, religious or not religious, risk oriented or risk averse. People differ in personality and behavioral styles. People may be competitive or cooperative, assertive or aggressive. Finally, people differ in task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities. Team members may be technical experts, have artistic skills, or communicate well.

The types of diversity vary in how easily they can be observed. Diversity based on age, sex, or race can be considered surface-level factors, as opposed to deep-level factors like psychological variables. Surface-level factors affect people immediately. People who are similar in surface level factors are more likely to be initially attracted to each other and form stronger social attachments.

How Diversity Affects a Team

There are two ways to view how diversity affects a team. The trait approach assumes that diversity affects how people act. In other words, people with different backgrounds have different values, skills, and personalities; these differences affect how they interact in a team. The expectations approach focuses on the beliefs that people have about what other people are like. These expectations change how they interact with people from different backgrounds.

As people work together in a team, they develop a sense of identity with the team, which becomes stronger as the team becomes more cohesive. Over time, members develop emotional bonds, create a common language for communicating, and share experiences. This leads to a convergence of attitudes, beliefs, and values that reduces the importance of background differences among team members.

Problems of Diversity

In diverse teams, members have different approaches to problems and access to different sources of information. This should help improve team performance, but only if the team uses these task-relevant differences. Unfortunately, diversity may lead to misperceptions that reduce communication by minority members and increase emotional tension and conflict within the team. This prevents the team from fully using its resources.

1. Misperception

False stereotypes and prejudices of team members cause diversity problems. People from different backgrounds hold different values and respond to situations differently. These differences in values and behavior can be threatening to a member's sense of what is appropriate. To deal with the psychological anxiety, people may either ignore or misinterpret the contributions of minority members. (Minority in this case means people with different backgrounds from those of most group members.) Over time, minority members respond to this by contributing less to team communication. These members experience causes them to have less impact on the team's decisions. Team members often use gender as an irrelevant cue for expertise. Those who are perceived to have expertise generally have greater influence in decision making and are assigned leadership roles in teams. However, team's members tend to value the expertise of a man above that of a woman, regardless of actual expertise. A recent study showed that the male tendency is to evaluate less educated female teammates more favorably when compared to highly educated female teammates. Additionally, the team gender composition also impacted the extent to which the expertise of highly educated women was used—teams dominated by men used women's expertise less than men.

2. Emotional Distrust

The dividing of a team into in-group and out-group members creates social friction. Power conflicts create a climate of distrust and defensive communication. Rather than forming a social unit, the team may become subdivided into cliques or divided along fault lines. These emotional issues create several group process problems. Diversity may lead to an increase in conflict because people are more distrustful. Not only are there more conflicts, but the conflicts are more difficult to resolve. Emotional distrust prevents the team from forming the social bonds necessary to create a cohesive team. Diversity may prevent the benefits of team cohesion from being realized.

3. Failure to Use Team Resources

The way the team treats minority members not only reduces their input in the team, but may reduce their desire to contribute. Over time, minority members become less committed to the team's goals and less motivated to perform for the team. This in turn is used to justify not rewarding minorities or failing to provide them with opportunities and support to achieve more. Additionally, diversity affects turnover and socialization in work teams. Minority members are more likely to have higher turnover in a team. It is easier for a team to socialize new members into the team if their characteristics are similar to those of the majority.

Causes of Diversity Problems

There are several ways of viewing the causes of diversity problems. One view sees diversity as arising from our cognitive processes and is an artifact of our need for social classification. This misperception creates interpersonal problems in the team. A special case of this is misperceptions by the team leader. An alternative view sees diversity as due to power conflicts arising from intergroup competition. Another view believes that diversity problems rather than being caused by psychological issues reflect power struggles between groups.

Diversity as a Cognitive Process

Diversity is a social construction based on our cognitive processes. People categorize their social world into groups and treat the members of those groups differently based on their categories. These categories are relatively arbitrary. For example, we are more likely to categorize people in ways that are easily observable (e.g., race rather than religion). Once these categories are formed, they have important implications for how people perceive and interact with others. Social perception is the process of collecting and interpreting information about others. The primary reason people categorize others is to simplify the world. Dividing people into categories makes it possible to predict what other people are like. It is a simplification, often not very accurate, but an unavoidable component of human cognition. The problem with social perception is that it leads to premature judgments about what others are really like.

Stereotypes are cognitive categorizations that describe people in preconceived groups. Stereotypes may be positive, negative, or both. This social perception and categorization process, by itself, is not bad. It helps people interact with others. The problem is that the process creates inaccuracies and biases that lead to misperceptions they divide their social worlds into in-groups and out-groups. This cognitive distinction has an emotional component. We view the group we belong to (our in-group) more positively, and we like, trust, and act friendlier toward in-group members. The addition of an emotional component to our categories shows how stereotypes become prejudices and discrimination. Prejudice is an unjustified negative attitude toward a group and its members. Prejudices typically are based on stereotypes.

From this cognitive perspective, the problem of diversity is that we misperceive people. People prejudge others on the basis of their categories rather than on how others actually behave. This causes people to treat others inappropriately, to have poorer communications, and to dislike and distrust others without getting to know them.

Diversity as a Social Process

An alternative view is that diversity problems arise from social competition and conflict. Why are gender and ethnicity important ways of classifying people? To a sociologist, it is because women and minorities are challenging the power position of white males in our organizations and society. Women and minorities are competing for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, office space, project resources) that the majority group wants to control. When groups compete, their members form prejudices about each other. Prejudices arise when the out-group is perceived as a threat to an individual's resources or power.

Diversity affects team interaction by creating power differentials within the team. Many of the negative effects of diversity are a direct result of the impacts of unequal power within the team.

unequal power in a team disrupts its communication process. In teams with unequal power among members, the level of communication is reduced and the powerful members control the communication process. Power differences affect team cohesion because individuals with similar status are more likely to interact with one another and form friendships.

Conflicts in a diverse team can lead to the formation of "faultlines". A faultline occurs when the team becomes divided into opposing sides of an issue due to the formation of subgroups rather than reflecting the actual opinions of team members.

Effects of Diversity

The results of research on the effects of diversity on teams depend on the tasks the teams are performing. Functional diversity has positive effects on team performance, while personal diversity may decrease cohesion and increase conflict in teams. Sometimes organizations create diversity in teams on purpose to achieve a particular goal. Cross-functional teams are a type of diverse team used to deal with complex issues requiring a variety of skills.

Creating a Context to Support Diversity

Diversity is both strength and a problem for teams. When diversity is not handled effectively, it can increase conflict, create emotional problems, and reduce team effectiveness. The key to gaining the value of diversity is to create an environment that supports constructive controversy so that members are able to express their differences in a safe and useful manner. Diversity programs focus on increasing awareness to eliminate misperceptions, improving group process skills, creating a safe environment for communication, and dealing with team and organizational issues.

Increasing Awareness

Organizations try to deal with diversity issues through training programs to increase multicultural awareness. Awareness programs are designed to make people more aware of their assumptions and biases about other groups. The goal is to increase knowledge and awareness of diversity issues, challenge existing assumptions about minority groups, and eliminate stereotypes. Diversity practices that acknowledge differences among cultures (multiculturalism) have a more positive impact on social interaction.

Although emphasizing similarities among team members may increase group harmony, it discourages viewing issues from multiple perspectives. Acknowledging differences among team members encourages viewing issues from multiple perspectives, which improves decision making. Multicultural teams are more likely to be creative when team members recognize and respect the differences among the team.

Informal social contacts can reduce misperceptions, lead to improved understanding of differences, and promote trust. To build this bridge among team members, the team should develop a team culture that spans the differences. Actions as simple as discussing what members have in common and their unique contributions are a way to start the bridging process.

Improving Group Process Skills

Many conflicts in diverse teams are due to miscommunication caused by stereotypes and distrust. To deal with them, team members can be trained to communicate better with one another and to appreciate the unique contributions of other members. Skill-based diversity programs improve people's interpersonal skills to better manage diversity issues.

Creating a Safe Environment

Although diversity can benefit team performance, it does create challenges of collaborating across differences. People often prefer working in homogeneous teams, but the positive conflict that arises from disagreements among diverse team members stimulates team learning, problem solving, and creativity. This positive impact of diversity only occurs if team members are able to disagree with each other in a safe environment.

One of the disappointing findings about team decision making is that teams tend to focus on shared information during discussions rather than on the unique information held by individuals .

Although diverse teams have the potential to perform better than homogeneous teams, this only occurs if the team can gain access to members' unique contributions. The more successful the team is at creating an open communication climate that promotes trust and provides support to members, the more willing members are to risk stating their unique information on a topic.

The key is to create a psychologically safe team environment that encourages communication and collaboration from all team members. Sharing individual perspectives and developing a climate that values cultural differences can encourage this type of collaborative environment. Safe team climates allow differences to be brought to the surface and discussed without fear of retribution. When the team climate encourages safety, the differences within a diverse team can be used to increase team effectiveness.

Improving Organizational Issues

Developing super ordinate goals or strong collective team identities can help diverse teams work more effectively together .When the team has a strong sense of team identity, members are more willing to share ideas and pay attention to the ideas of other team members. Team identification helps members move beyond individual differences and focus on the needs of the team. It takes time to develop shared team values and a team identity that helps the team overcome the challenges of cultural differences.

MODULE 3**TEAM, AND ORGANIZATIONAL, CULTURE**

The shared values, beliefs, and norms of a team, organization, or nation are known as its culture. A team's culture affects how team members communicate and coordinate work. Organizational and international cultures affect the ways that individuality, status, and risk taking are used. These cultural differences affect how teams operate within organizations.

Team Culture

A team's culture is the shared perception of how the team should operate to accomplish its goals. Team norms, member roles, and patterns of interaction are included in the team culture. Teams develop their cultural norms and values from their organization and society.

- A team's culture and its norms often develop through precedent.
- Behavior patterns that emerge early in a team's life define how the team operates in the future.

- The leader also plays a key role in the development of a team's culture.
- Leaders should try to establish an appropriate culture early in the team's life, because it is easier to begin to establish a culture than it is to change an existing one.

***Defining Organizational Culture* “National cultures could be used to describe organizational cultures”.**

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and norms of an organization. An organization's customs, rituals, and traditions help reveal the underlying values that guide organizational decision making. Davis (1984) focuses on the shared meanings and beliefs of organizations because they affect an organization's strategies. Kilmann and Saxton (1983) view culture as norms and behavioral patterns of employees.

Teams and organizational culture have a mutually influencing relationship. Teamwork occurs more easily in some types of organizational cultures than in others. Over time, an organization's work systems tend to become similar with its organizational culture.

Organizations are not uniform and do not necessarily have uniform cultures. Organizations may be viewed as containing networks of groups that develop their own styles of operating and interacting. These are organizational subcultures. Such subcultures arise from mergers and acquisitions, geographic differences in facility locations, or occupational areas in an organization. When the shared beliefs and assumptions held by working groups are similar across organizations, the organizations have strong cultures.

One important cause of subcultures is related to an employee's occupational community. An occupational community refers to the shared knowledge, language, and identity formed by those working in a particular area of specialization. For example; engineers and sales representatives have different occupational communities, and therefore occupy different subcultures within an organization. Even in strong organizational cultures people from engineering and sales use different professional languages and have different styles of interacting with others.

‘Organizational Culture and Teamwork’

“Organizational culture is one of the largest predictors of the successful use of teams by companies”.

An organizational culture that encourages employee involvement and participation is a necessary support for teamwork. In a supportive organizational culture, managers are less likely to resist using teams, and there are better relations between teams and other parts of the organization. Self-managing teams are much more likely to be successful in organizations whose culture supports empowerment and teamwork. Overall, organizational culture is one of the largest predictors of the successful use of teams by companies. Organizational culture defines the norms that regulate acceptable behaviors in an organization.

When these cultural norms conflict with the use of teams, organizations have a difficult time using teams successfully. For example, many organizations do not have open communication; this limits the amount of communication that occurs in a team and the team's ability to relate to other parts of the organization.

Two distinct types of organizational cultures that affect the use of teams: **control cultures and commitment cultures.**

Status and power drive the control strategy. It is hierarchical and tightly controlling. The relations among people are adversarial and untrusting. It is difficult to operate teams in this context.

The commitment strategy reduces the number of organizational levels of authority, adopts methods to encourage open communication and participation. It uses teams and gives them the authority to operate successfully. Teams operate better in a commitment-oriented culture because they are given the resources, training, and power they need to succeed.

Organizational culture is not easy to change.

“Once an organization begins to create an organizational culture that supports teamwork, the culture can support a wide variety of teams. The organizational culture provides the foundation, and from that foundation an organization is able to experiment with developing the types of teams that can successfully fulfill its mission. “

Individualism versus Collectivism

The individualism-collectivism dimension is a predominate component of national cultures that has a strong influence on teamwork. The interactions of individualistic members tend to embody autonomy, privacy, individual recognition, immediate family and self-orientation. Given these traits, people high in individualism are associated with general resistance to working in teams and/or self-management teams. Still, other research shows that individualistic tend to be more creative than collectivist. People from the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand tend to score the highest on individualism.

By contrast, collectivism is associated with loyalty to the group, opposition to other groups, belongingness, cooperation, we-language, relationship-oriented group activities, harmony, disapproving of self-promotion, and following group opinions.

People value the ties between people and are expected to look after one another. Self-interest is subordinate to the interests of the social group or team.

Most of the world is composed of people living in collectivist cultures. India, South Korea, Thailand, and Japan are comparatively more collectivist than the United States.

VIRTUAL TEAMS

*“A virtual team, also known as a geographically dispersed team or a remote team, is a group A **virtual team** is a group of people who participate in common projects by making collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals and objectives.*

***Virtual team management** is the foundation for **managing** remote/telecommunication-based teamwork and relies on communication technology such as email, FAX, and video or voice conferencing services in order to collaborate.*

10 Ways to Successfully Manage Virtual Teams

1. Define work systems.

Different people have different ways of going about tasks. Setting standards can shorten the time needed to achieve the desired result. By setting standards and defining repeatable work systems, the team has generally less questions and gets a feeling for how long certain tasks should take. These work systems need to be both standardized to allow for maximum effectiveness.

2. Establish multiple communication tools.

The benefit of establishing multiple communication tools is two-fold. First of all, your team has a way to communicate something that is urgent to the right person immediately. Secondly, it unifies

processes such as what to use for conference calls, screen recordings, and so on. It is clear what tool is used for what, which contributes to creating that internal feeling of togetherness.

3. Schedule regular meetings.

Scheduling briefings at the same time on the same weekday contributes to creating a routine. Routines provide the team with something they are used to and familiar with. That in return puts the team at ease and reduces stress. Video calls are one of the [best ways](#) to maximize efficiency because they recreate the routine office feeling remote teams are missing out on.

4. Have clear and detailed deliverables.

Simply telling somebody to do something is usually not the popular way to go about [managing teams](#). Micro-managing isn't either which is why some managers avoid giving instructions with too many details. It is better to provide more detailed descriptions of the tasks with examples of what the final result should look like. Give the team the freedom to execute it than less instructions and having to deal with potential misunderstandings.

5. Make sure work hours overlap.

Regardless of what time zones your team members are in, it is recommendable to have at least three to four hours a day where most of the team is online at the same time. Even if some of the team members are unlikely to need each other to complete their tasks, being online at the same time brings the team closer together and is the quickest problem solving solution.

6. Create a professional work environment.

Professional attire and a distraction-free work environment are part of any corporate culture. Additionally, setting professional standards contributes to being efficient and puts people in the right mindset.

7. Choose (video) calls over chatting and emails.

With [Skype](#) and email being available at everyone's fingertips, it is tempting to chat and send a quick email whenever there is something to discuss. This can easily lead to misunderstandings. With virtual teams, video calls or at least regular calls are more than a way to avoid misunderstandings. They connect the team members on a more personal level.

7. Find the right people to work with.

Not everyone fits the team personality-wise. There are quite a few professional personality tests out there, and they can be a great way to determine whether someone is the right fit. If one is not, it is usually best to move on to the next candidate.

9. Establish a meritocratic system.

Meritocracy -- or the process of rewarding and recognizing people based on their skills -- stimulates people to work harder and better. Make sure to set up reward systems to keep your team motivated and to better pinpoint the team members that can take on more responsibility.

10. Use project [management](#) tools.

Project management tools can be ideal to keep track of deadlines. They also send alerts and reminders for deadlines and give you a quick daily, weekly or monthly overview of what needs to

be done, by who, and when. Things like [Google](#) Docs can still be a great addition and the same is valid for time tracking applications.

3 Characteristics of Successful Virtual Teams

Trust – Trust is the foundation of any successful relationship and it's even more important when building relationships virtually. Without the benefit of regular face to face contact (or any face to face contact), virtual teams have to be much more intentional about focusing on building trust.

There are [four core elements](#) of trust: competence, integrity, care, and dependability. Virtual team members can build trust by demonstrating competence in their responsibilities, integrity in their actions, care by developing personal relationships with colleagues, and dependability by following through on commitments.

Attentiveness – It's easy to “check out” or fly under the radar when working on a virtual team. Without the benefit of face to face communication, virtual team members have to work extra hard at being attentive through their verbal and electronic interactions. Leaders of virtual teams have to be diligent about encouraging participation, dealing with conflict, and appropriately rewarding and recognizing team members.

Communication – Body language adds tremendous context to communication with some [studies](#) suggesting it comprises more than 55% of the message transmitted...and virtual teams miss out on that (unless you regularly use webcams which I highly recommend). Virtual team members have to work diligently on their tone of communications (written and verbal) and learn to be more perceptive of the emotional content of the message being communicated.

The 9 challenges of virtual teams

- Differences in **communication** style.
- Lack of structure.
- Not the right tools.
- Distrust.
- Distracting environments.
- Slow response times.
- A lack of office culture.
- Managing the budget.

What makes a virtual team successful?

Successful virtual team players all have a few things in common: good communication skills, high emotional intelligence, an ability to work independently, and the resilience to recover from the snafus that inevitably arise.

Why do virtual teams fail?

Poor management, communications breakdowns, unsuitable or badly integrated team members, ill-equipped staff, personality clashes — there are many reasons why a virtual team can fail.

1. Unsuitable team members:

Not everyone is cut out to be a virtual worker. Not everyone has the personality to work completely alone, apart from the team. Nor has the ability to be focused and motivated to do work without the presence of a manager. Not everyone has the ability to set up an environment away from the office that is conducive to work. It takes a special type of person and set of skills to navigate work environments and be a consistent contributor to a virtual team.

2. Ineffective Leadership.

To be effective, team leaders in a virtual environment must be especially sensitive to interpersonal, communication, and cultural factors to overcome the limitations of distance. Organizations should select team leaders who are comfortable with technology and have the interpersonal skills required to effectively lead in a virtual environment.

Successful team leaders are able to adjust their behavior and leverage technology to get their teams organized, set goals, and establish the direction they need the team to go.

3. Lack of Clear Goals or Priorities.

A lack of clear goals and priorities will inhibit performance. And because it is tougher to communicate with and inform geographically-distributed team members, this can be an even bigger challenge for virtual teams. When new virtual teams are formed, the most effective teams meet face-to-face within the first 90 days to outline team goals and objectives. These kick-off meetings also help to build relationships and outline responsibilities. During the meeting, the team should clarify roles and establish how the team will work together.

4. Lack of Cooperation.

When a diverse group of individuals is asked to work together to accomplish shared objectives, it takes time to build an atmosphere of collaboration. And because there is a lack of face-to-face

contact inherent in virtual teamwork, the process of establishing trust and relationships can be even more arduous.

5. Lack of Engagement.

When working virtually, it can be difficult to assess individual team members' levels of engagement because they are in different locations and rarely meet face-to-face. To avoid this common problem, leaders and team members should proactively look for signs of disengagement.

Team leaders should regularly assess their teams by asking the following questions:

- Are all team members contributing to conversations and projects?
- Are they attending and actively participating in team meetings?
- Are team members motivated to take on new work or are they feeling overwhelmed?
- Are people working well together or is there frequent and unproductive team conflict?
- Looking out for these common red flags can help prevent engagement issues from derailing a team.
- With virtual teams, people can easily become bored and disengaged because there is a lack of dynamic face-to-face interaction and there are more distractions.
- If virtual team leaders constantly assess their team members' levels of engagement and monitor performance to ensure everyone is fully accountable, the team's effectiveness will be much improved.

EVALUATING AND REWARDING TEAM:-

Performance evaluation and reward programs are two of the most effective ways for organizations and leaders to communicate to the team, what is important. As performance management tools, performance evaluation are used to evaluate teams performance.

There are three approaches to teams' performance evaluation.

1. Traditional individual evaluation
2. Team members' evaluation
3. Team evaluation

Organizational performance links to team performance and can be and can be used set and prioritized to direct or re direct the team effort. 28 While most traditional organizations link individual performance evaluation to compensation programs, most team based organizations use team performance evaluation to provide feedback.

TEAM/GROUP PERFORMANCE

Reward programmes and reward performance are used by organisations and leaders to encourage team's effectiveness. To encourage a team , to improve a way it operates and to influence the motivation of individual team members , the level of coordination in the team and the quality of group process.

Depending on task and type of team , organizations and leaders can take three approaches that are individual team and organizational each with it's own advantages and disadvantages to reward performance.

To perform effectively a team requires three types of people with skills . First it needs people with technical skill, second it needs people with the problem solving skill, third team needs people with good listening , feedback , problem solving and other inter personal skill.

The establishment of objective, fair processes and measurable rewards criteria is also closely linked to the success and acceptance of team based reward structure.

Additionally, the organization may evaluate behavioral performance. Such evaluations are utilized to rate actions which are beneficial and detrimental to the organization. The reward system may include pay rate increase, bonus money, promotion or in the form of gift. Team and organizational rewards allows the organization to efficiently manage and accommodate the staffs.

TEAM TRAINING

Team training focuses on developing the skills the team needs to perform its tasks. This includes developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed, practicing those skills, and providing feedback to improve the team's ability to use them. Team training requires identifying the specific knowledge and skills needed for effective performance and then developing approaches for this specific objective. To be effective, team members must understand their roles, coordinate their actions with others, and understand how their actions interact with others.

Teams need training on process improvement skills so they can learn how to improve performance.

HOW A TRAINING PROGRAM STARTS?

A training program starts with a needs assessment to determine a team's training needs and objectives.

The assessment analyzes the goals of the team, the requirements of the members, the tasks they must perform, and the types of coordination needed.

The effectiveness of training programs depends on the method of training, the type of skill to learn, and the training environment.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK TRAINING PROGRAM

TRAINING THE TEAM TOGETHER:

Training of team members should be done with the team as a whole; this develops the team's mental model and transactive memory. Effective teams have a shared understanding of the team's goals, norms, and resources, including understanding of the roles, knowledge, and skills of each team member.

What is team climate?

The team climate refers to the degree to which the team supports attempts to use the newly learned skills. Conducting the training with the people in their assigned teams creates a supportive team climate for new skills performance.

PLANNING FOR THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING:

- Transfer of training refers to the extent that the new skills learned in training are used in the work environment.
- Factors that affect transfer of training include the environment where the training occurs, the time lag between the training and opportunities to apply the skills, cues in the job environment that prompt applying the new skills, and supervisor support for their application.
- Transfer of training is easier when the application environment is similar to the training experience.

TYPES OF TEAM TRAINING**There are two types of team training:****TEAM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TRAINING:**

Team Resource Management (TRM) also called Crew Resource Management is a training program to develop a defined set of teamwork competencies so a team can operate without error under stressful circumstances.

This approach was developed for the aviation industry and has application to other action teams that perform in stressful situations, such as military and surgical teams. TRM begins with a methodology for analyzing the team to identify its mission requirements and coordination demands. This training has been shown to be successful in reducing errors and accidents, improving teamwork, and increasing efficiency.

EXAMPLE- Assertiveness Training.

CROSS-TRAINING:

Cross-training is used to increase the flexibility of team members. In cross-training, team members are trained in the technical skills of two or more jobs, allowing the team to assign members to the tasks that need to be performed. A typical example of cross-training is- A manufacturing team where members learn multiple roles. This allows the team to flexibly respond to changes in the work environment and to personnel changes. Cross-training



programs often use on-the-job training, with experienced team members training other members.

INTERPOSITIONAL TRAINING:

Interposition training is designed to develop shared knowledge structures among team members. This is especially significant for action teams with highly interdependent work arrangements. The goal of interposition training is to allow team members to better understand the working knowledge and roles of other team members and the interconnections among the actions of team members. An example of interpositional training is - Teaching a flight crew to better understand each other's roles and abilities, but not to replace each other's positions.

Developing an organizational culture that supports teamwork is a long-term process.

It is not something that can be dictated by top management or announced as a new organizational program. Changing an organizational culture requires a consistent effort on the part of management to show that employee involvement and teamwork will be valued and rewarded.
