

Chapter 4-Group dynamics and Team Building

Definition-A group refers to two or more persons who interact for a common purpose.

A group is defined as a number of people who communicate with one another over a span of time, face to face.

Group dynamics refers to the study of the forces operating within a group.(Dynamics means force.)

Types of Groups-

▣ **FORMAL GROUPS-** they are deliberately created with structural associations and are formed to accomplish specific goals or carry out specific tasks.(Common motive, hierarchical str. ,standard norms & values)

▣ Functions-

- ▣ 1. They assist in the achieving of the goals, in a better way than the informal organizations.
- ▣ 2. Facilitates the co-ordination of the activities or functions of an organization.
- ▣ 3. They help in establishing logical relationships among people and positions.
- ▣ 4. They assist in the application of the concepts of specialization and division of labor.
5. Creates group cohesiveness as a result of a common set of goals.

2. INFORMAL GROUPS—

▣ It consists of a group of people who relate to each other spontaneously for the purpose of mutual benefit .They exists within the confines of the formal authority structure.

E.g. Interest groups, membership groups (e.g. university), vocational, hobby groups etc.

Other types of Groups are as follows-

We can classify groups in different ways. First, it can be divided into two main parts considering the degree of intimacy as the basis of classification.

1. **Primary group:** There is an intimate face-to-face relationship among the members and the members are having 'we feeling' to the maximum. Family, playgroups and village community come under this category.
2. **Secondary group:** Here the relationships are more or less casual and marked by common interest. Clubs, trade unions etc. are under this category.
3. **In-group/ we group:** Here we identify ourselves with that group which has a common object and common interest. They have a sense of 'we' feeling. The members of the in groups treat others as outsiders. These groups can be formed on the basis of relationship, same country, similar political interests and economic interests etc.
4. **Out-group:** It is the group in which the members are considered as outsiders by us. Groups other than the in-group are generally called out-groups.

On the basis of norms and rules, groups can be categorized into the following types:

1. **Formal group:** It is generally formed on the basis of specific norms, rules and values. The group of students in a classroom comes under the category of formal group. So, school is one of the formal group settings.
2. **Informal group:** The nature of the group is not formed at all. The rules are usually flexible. Play groups, peer group and social clubs etc. are examples of informal groups.
3. **Organized groups:** The group which is formed for specific purpose and is carefully planned is called organized groups. The family, the school etc. are also called organized groups.
4. **Spontaneous groups:** The groups are formed without any careful planning. Audience may be considered as spontaneous group after listening to the speech by a renounced speaker.
5. **Command groups:** Command groups are specified by the organizational chart. It consists of a supervisor and the subordinates that report to the supervisor.
6. **Task groups:** A group of people work together to achieve a common task. In many situations there is a specified time period. This can be referred to as taskforces.
7. **Functional groups:** Functional group is generally created by the organization to accomplish specific goals within an unspecified time frame.

Functional group generally exists after achievement of current goals and objects.

8. **Interest groups:** It usually continues over time and may last longer than general informal groups. It is seen that the interest of the member may not be part of the same organizational department but they are bound by some common interest.

9. **Friendship groups:** It may be of different types. These groups are formed by the members who enjoy similar social activities, political beliefs, religious values and other common bonds.

10. **Reference groups:** This is the group where the people evaluate themselves. Reference groups have a strong influence on members' behavior.

11. **Temporary Group:** Studies indicate that temporary groups come together for ascertain purpose and disburse after the task is over.

Functions of informal groups-

1. The management should try to integrate the formal and the informal groups for effective management and get the work done. It acts as a means of communication, establishing norms of conduct between the bosses and the subordinates.
2. These groups are formed naturally in a work environment which appears in response to the needs of social contact.
3. Informal groups are an outlet for affiliation needs i.e. needs for friendship, support and love as wells the security needs.
4. The various interest groups which are formed break the monotony of work and create interest in the daily work.
5. It helps in confirming a sense of identity for the individual and also in maintaining self-esteem.
6. Confirming individual thoughts, perceptions, testing reality.
7. A means of getting job done, helping out .The job of the managers become easy if they can understand the potential of the informal groups.

CHARACTERISTICS/ELEMENTS OF GROUP BEHAVIOUR-(for both types of groups)

1. **MEMBERSHIP IN THE GROUP**-It is a process in which individuals are granted membership primarily on the basis of commonality of interests and willingness to be part of it. Individuals may be part of more than one group in a formal or an informal group.
2. **EMERGENT LEADERSHIP**-the members of the group will choose a leader which emerges from within .The leader is chosen because of his ability to perform, respect and authority is granted to him. The leader influences the members to achieve goals, provides them the direction. He uses his power and charisma to get the work done, which are the qualities of an effective leader.
3. **FORMAL HIERARCHY**-All the groups have a certain degree of formal organizations with a hierarchy. Groups may not be completely formal, but informal groups do develop within them.
4. **GROUP ACTIVITY/TASK**- A group does something which may be related to its job or unconnected with it.e.g.it may go for outing from the office. It undertakes these tasks to serve some ends in purpose. It satisfies the social and the affiliation needs.
5. **SOCIAL INTERACTION**- All people interact with one another. When such interaction takes place, there is a social transaction, in which one person responds to another. People get influenced by each other, generate ideas through interactions. Eg.committees are set up which perform special functions.
6. **GROUP NORMS**-each informal group characteristically establishes group behavior standards or norms, beliefs, traditions and attitudes to which it expects its members to conform. The more an individual complies with the norms the more one is accepted by the groups. Norms could be social,(e.g. wearing a uniform or a necktie) moral or institutional in nature.
7. **MEMBER SATISFACTION**-The end result of the group should be member satisfaction. A member's perception of freedom to participate influences

need satisfaction. Also if he progress and achieves goals in the group it gives him satisfaction and he sticks around in the group.

8. **GROUP COHESIVENESS**-The term implies “solidarity”.It is important for not only the existence of the group, but also for the achievement of the group’s objective. Cohesion is the force that keeps together the members of the groups and is one of the most important characteristic of groups. .It has a direct bearing on the group behavior. It reinforces the element of commonality in the group. Members adjust themselves to common attitude and work behavior of the group. Determinants of Cohesiveness are-

- a. The success and the cohesiveness are inter- related. Failure in achieving a goal discharges cohesiveness. Cohesive groups are more likely to attain accomplishment of goals or achieve targets.
- b. As the size of the group increases the cohesiveness decreases, as it becomes bigger subgroups are formed. Smaller groups are closer and interact better.
- c. Cohesiveness is the result of a certain similarity among members; it could be of similar sex, age, social background etc. When there is an external threat the groups breaks.
- d. Individual characteristics like cooperativeness, maturity etc. tends to develop cohesiveness.
- e. There is a significant amount of communication and interaction among participating members.
- f. There should be a effective leader who helps in building and maintaining group cohesiveness.

The various stages in the development of groups are as follows-

1. Forming

This is the first stage in the formation of groups. The individual's behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others, and avoid controversy or conflict.

The team meets and learns about the opportunities and challenges, and then agrees on goals and begins to tackle the tasks. Team members tend to behave quite independently. Team members are usually on their best behavior but very focused on themselves. Mature team members begin to model appropriate behavior even at

this early phase. Supervisors of the team tend to need to be directive during this phase.

The forming stage of any team is important because, in this stage, the members of the team get to know one another, exchange some personal information, and make new friends. This is also a good opportunity to see how each member of the team works as an individual and how they respond to pressure.

2. Storming-

Every group will next enter the storming stage in which different ideas compete for consideration. The team addresses issues such as what problems they are really supposed to solve, how they will function independently and together and what leadership model they will accept. Team members open up to each other and confront each other's ideas and perspectives. In some cases storming can be resolved quickly. In others, the team never leaves this stage. The maturity of some team members usually determines whether the team will ever move out of this stage.

The storming stage is necessary to the growth of the team. It can be contentious, unpleasant and even painful to members of the team who are averse to conflict. Tolerance of each team member and their differences should be emphasized. Without tolerance and patience the team will fail. This phase can become destructive to the team and will lower motivation if allowed to get out of control. Some teams will never develop past this stage.

Supervisors of the team during this phase may be more accessible, but tend to remain directive in their guidance of decision-making and professional behavior. Normally tension, struggle and sometimes arguments occur.

3. Norming

The team manages to have one goal and come to a mutual plan for the team at this stage. Some may have to give up their own ideas and agree with others in order to make the team function. In this stage, all team members take the responsibility and have the ambition to work for the success of the team's goals.

4. Performing

It is possible for some teams to reach the performing stage. These high-performing teams are able to function as a unit as they find ways to get the job done smoothly

and effectively without inappropriate conflict or the need for external supervision. By this time, they are motivated and knowledgeable. The team members are now competent, autonomous and able to handle the decision-making process without supervision. Dissent is expected and allowed as long as it is channelled through means acceptable to the team.

Supervisors of the team during this phase are almost always participative. The team will make most of the necessary decisions. Even the most high-performing teams will revert to earlier stages in certain circumstances. Many long-standing teams go through these cycles many times as they react to changing circumstances. For example, a change in leadership may cause the team to revert to storming as the new people challenge the existing norms and dynamics of the team.

Advantages of Using Groups/Reasons

- 1. Affiliation-**People join a group because it gives them a chance to interact with various individuals. The intent of affiliation is satisfied by interaction on the job.
- 2. Security-** by joining the group, an individual acquires a sense of security.
- 3. Esteem-** An individual often requires recognition from outsiders. A group provides an atmosphere of safety, and self-expression.
- 4. Power-** by joining the group, an individual gets power. The members collectively always enjoy more power than individually.
- 5. Identity-** a person gets an identity buy joining the group. Group serves as a basic of comparison with others.
- 6. Rewards-**as a member of the group, an individual may get many rewards in the form of recognition, status, and friendship. etc
- 7. Accomplishment-** An individual may join the group to share knowledge of others.

Greater knowledge information, broader perspective, more alternatives, better quality, creativity, better understanding & participation etc.

Disadvantages-

- Time consuming,
- Costly,

- Individual opinions ignored
- Dominating personalities
- No clear focus on decisions
- Disagreement etc.

TEAMS-

A team 'is a small number of employees with complementary competencies (abilities, skills and knowledge) who are committed to common performance goals and working relationships for which they hold themselves mutually accountable'.

Two or more people who are interdependent, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves as (and who are seen by others as) an intact social entity in a larger social system are also called as "Teams".

When teams are formed, its members must have (or quickly develop) the right mix of complementary competencies to achieve the team's goals. Also its members need to be able to influence how they will work together to accomplish those goals.

Team Empowerment

The term "team empowerment" refers to the degree to which its members perceive the group as –

1. Capable of being effective (potency).
2. Performing important and valuable tasks (meaningfulness).
3. Having independence and discretion (autonomy) in performing the work, and
4. Experiencing a sense of importance and significance (impact) in the work performed and goals achieved.

Types of teams

1. Functional teams:

They usually represent individuals who work together daily on a cluster of ongoing and independent tasks. Functional teams often exist within functional departments – marketing, production, finance, auditing, human resources and the like.

2. Problem solving teams:

They focus on specific issues in their areas of responsibility, develop potential solutions, and often are empowered to take actions within defined limits. Such teams frequently address quality or cost problems.

3. Cross-functional teams:

They bring together the knowledge and skills of people from various work areas to identify and solve mutual problems. They draw members from several specialties or functions and deal with problems that cut across departmental and functional lines to achieve their goals.

They are often more effective in situations that require adaptability, speed and a focus on responding to customer needs.

4. Self-managed teams:

They normally consist of employees who must work together effectively daily to manufacture an entire product (or major identifiable component) or service.

These teams perform a variety of managerial tasks, such as,

- Scheduling work and vacations by members,
- Rotating tasks and assignments among members,
- Ordering materials,
- Deciding on team leadership,
- Setting key team goals,
- Budgeting
- Hiring replacements for departing team members, and
- Evaluating one another's performance.

Self-managed teams are a new form of team that rose in popularity with the Total Quality Movement in the 1980s. Unlike manager-led teams, these teams manage themselves and do not report directly to a supervisor. Instead, team members select their own leader, and they may even take turns in the leadership role. Self-managed teams also have the power to select new team members. As a whole, the team shares responsibility for a significant task, such as assembly of an entire car.

The task is ongoing rather than a temporary task such as a charity fund drive for a given year.

Self-managed teams are empowered teams, which mean that they have the responsibility as well as the authority to achieve their goals. Team members have the power to control tasks and processes and to make decisions. Research shows that self-managed teams may be at a higher risk of suffering from negative outcomes due to conflict, so it is important that they are supported with training to help them deal with conflict effectively.

Functional, Problem solving, Cross-functional and Self-managed teams are increasingly able to operate as “virtual teams”.

A “virtual team” is a group of individuals who collaborate through various information technologies on one or more projects while being at two or more locations. Their team members may be from one or multiple organizations.

Development stages of teams

The formation of effective teams is not automatic. Various conditions for failure or progress occur throughout a team’s development. To provide a sense of these conditions, we present a basic five stages developmental sequence that teams may go through: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning.

Team Empowerment-

An empowered employee has the authority and responsibility to make decisions, rather than needing to get approval or instructions from a manager. In an empowered team, each teammate has a voice in group decisions. The team self-organizes around a leader instead of reporting to a manager, and may make changes to their project or product at will. An organization structured around empowered teams will have a relatively flat hierarchy and a high proportion of well-educated, highly trusted employees.

Characteristics

Team empowerment incorporates four elements: potency, meaningfulness, autonomy and impact. A potent team believes in its own power and effectiveness. Meaningfulness is a measure of how much the employees care about the results of their work or find it rewarding. A team is autonomous to the extent that it is free to make decisions and impact measures how much the team contributes to the company.

It is possible to have team empowerment even without much individual empowerment. Similarly, individual employees in a functional division such as marketing or accounting may be empowered, but this does not necessarily constitute an empowered team.

Significance

Empowered teams are usually project-based and cross-discipline; they may be developing a new product, establishing a company policy or conducting an audit. While they don't have a dedicated manager within the team, they may utilize the skills of a project manager to help coordinate tasks and timelines. Rules are not imposed upon them from above, but they are far more effective when they establish strict rules within the team regarding how decisions are made and communicated, and who is responsible for implementing them.

Advantages

Empowered teams often have high morale, and may cost the company less due to not requiring a dedicated manager. Highly qualified knowledge workers can produce more effective and efficient results, since each individual can contribute his expertise without funneling information through a manager. For projects that directly affect a company's customer, an empowered team can be an excellent resource for customer service, as the team will take responsibility for informing and pleasing the client.

