

Question 1

- a. Briefly describe 3-4 benefits you have experienced during your telecommuting (Work From Home) experience this year, keeping in view the course material on this topic. (4 marks)**

Ans: The benefits I've experienced during work from home, especially in this pandemic situation, are as follows:

1. **Maximum avoidance from health risk:** Since going to office involved interacting with lots of people, work from home saved me from this unwanted interaction during health risk situation.
2. **Reduced expense on conveyance:** The amount spent on petrol every month was saved.
3. **Ease in childcare:** I was able to spend time with my kids at home. I was not worried for their childcare related matters.
4. **Work control:** I was able to control my work more efficiently based on my schedule. I took breaks in between where needed and continued as per my own ease most of the time.

b. Also mention 4 drawbacks. (4 marks)

Ans: The drawbacks of work from home that I experienced are as follows:

1. **Missing/delayed IT Support:** IT department support related to hardware/software for my office workstation was sometimes delayed which cause bit trouble. Issues with internet bandwidth/speed were also faced during calls and meetings.
2. **Isolation:** I sometimes felt isolated or the feeling of loneliness was adamant specially during the occasions when across teams co-ordination was required or when I needed to communicate to my team members.
3. **Missing non-verbal communication:** The very important and useful aspect of communication i.e. non-verbal communication was almost totally missing due to work from home. Only few non-verbal clues could be observed during audio calls, which made things bit difficult.
4. **Exploitation:** During some instances, it appeared that work from home was being misused by the people working with me. They took long un-informed breaks and were sometimes missing from important meetings.

c. What 2-3 recommendations would you give for improvement? (3 marks)

Ans: My recommendations are as follows:

1. **Active IT Support Department:** IT support department which handles hardware/software installation related issues need to be more active.
2. **Better internet package:** Organizations need to provide better internet package to employees as all work is dependent on the internet device and its bandwidth during work from home.
3. **Team collaboration:** Better virtual team collaboration techniques need to be adopted by the organizations. For example, better team collaboration tools which handle totally virtual teams aspect well.

Question 2

2. Referring to the various stressors, conflicts, their effects and coping strategies discussed in the course

- a. Give a personal example of 4 different stressors or conflict, from your experience. Mention the type (stressor or conflict) and its level before giving the example. (4 marks)**

Ans: 4 different stressors/conflicts from my experience are as follows:

1. **Stressor (Organizational) - Downsizing:** The first stressor from my experience is Downsizing which is an organizational stressor. My organization downsized due to some business losses at the start of this year. The business loss directly affected the team I was leading as a QA Architect. Several people had to lose their jobs due to downsizing which caused stress for me.
2. **Stressor (Group) - Lack of group cohesiveness:** The second stressor from my experience is lack of group cohesiveness. This was specially stressing for me because the production QA and development QA teams working with me under same project were fighting almost weekly on major or minor issues. The groups were lacking support and interconnectivity with each other.
3. **Conflict (Intergroup) - Competition for Resources:** I experienced conflict due to Competition for Resources. A very good resource working under another team wanted to work with Automation Team lead by me. After discussions with the other team lead and mutual agreement with consent of our Director, it was decided that 50% of her allocation would be with my team. I trained the resource for around a month and when I expected some productivity, the other team wanted to get the resource allocated on their tasks with 100% allocation due to absence of another resource. This situation caused a serious conflict over competition for resources.
4. **Conflict (Intergroup) - Task Interdependence:** Another conflict I recently experienced was due to task interdependence. My automation team needs automation test cases written and provided to us by the project team for which we are doing automation. Hence, test cases are pre-requisite for my team's work. This task interdependence caused conflict because the project team delayed providing the test cases on time on quite a few occasions (sometimes due to their busy schedule and other times due to their lack of interest), which caused delay in my team's targets achievement.

- b. Give 3 examples of effects that you may have experienced from stress and/or conflict. (3 marks)**

Ans: 3 examples of effects of stress/conflict that I experienced are as follows:

1. **Turnover:** Due to extreme work stress and burnout, I had to leave my job. I intentionally took a one-year break in order to cope with the stress I had to face due to overburden and mis-management.
2. **Lowered self-esteem:** Due to unwanted conflicting situations and stressors, I had to face lowered self-esteem. I had to work on it later to improve it by consoling myself.
3. **Job dissatisfaction:** I have been enjoying my job, as it's a field of interest for me. But at times, due to various stressors, I have been dissatisfied with my job too. So much so that I have thought of changing my career to something less stressing.

- c. Mention 3 effective coping strategies that you have used or think you can use to reduce these effects. (3 marks)**

Ans: 3 effective coping strategies that I have used/thought of using to reduce these effects are as follows:

1. **Relaxation:** I have been using some hobbies of mine as relaxing mediums from job stressors/conflicts. These include reading and gardening.
2. **Behavioral Self Control:** I have been learning to improve the self-control specially related to behavior in difficult situations. Some lessons learnt during the bitter experiences (i.e. trying to stay calm no matter what happens) have actually helped me in improving self-control.
3. **Exercise:** I have also used exercise as a medium to reduce work stress. It has been effective sometimes.

Question 3

3. Assuming that you work in a gender diverse environment, briefly describe ten things you would do or not do, in keeping with the Islamic perspective on gender diversity. (10 marks)

Ans: Ten things that I would do or not do in a gender diverse environment keeping Islamic perspective in mind are as follows:

1. I will obey my husband and will please him and this aspect of my personal life will not be effected by the fact that I am working in a gender diverse environment.
2. I will avoid annoyance, negativity and hatred towards my colleagues, no matter if they are male or female, and will try to resolve the conflicts (if any) in a positive way.
3. I will trust my husband working in a gender diverse environment and will expect the same from my husband.
4. In case I have to travel to another city or another country for one day and night or more due to my work responsibilities, I will not travel without Mahram.
5. I will dress appropriately according to Islamic guidance in a gender diverse environment (or in any case), which prohibits display of beauty.
6. I will avoid perfume and will keep safe distance with others during office hours while performing my official duties.
7. I will keep my eyes lowered and will avoid gaze during my official interactions.
8. I will keep the discussions limited strictly to the work related items and won't discuss or disclose anything very personal to my office colleagues.
9. I will pray during office hours in girls' common room.
10. I will not try to behave like men in any case during my official duties or afterwards.

Question 4

a. What have you understood to be the main concepts of the Care and Growth model of leadership? (6 marks)

Ans: The major concepts of Care & Growth model of leadership, which I have understood and which have helped me/will help me professionally as well, are as follows:

1. The outcome or product of leadership is *people* not tasks. Hence, leadership is not about obtaining results by using people. In contrast, it is about nurturing *people* through tasks. And it is possible if Care & Growth is involved in daily interactions with people.
2. In Care & Growth model, the relationship of power between leader and followers is very important. This relation is not regarding price of labor or the work they do. It is regarding genuineness of relationship, which is possible if the aim of the relationship is the empowerment and enablement of subordinates.
3. The relation of leader and followers is the genuine one if the leader is empowering his/her followers by creating conditions where followers can grow and by removing the blockers and hurdles from their way of growth.
4. Care & Growth is about step-wise suspension of control and not a sudden handover of control.
5. An ideal mature Care & Growth model leader is there to GIVE and contribute instead of GAIN and accumulation. He has 'Want to' relation with his followers instead of 'Have to'.
6. As a sub-ordinate, I need Care, Means, Ability, Recognition, Reward, Censure and Discipline from my leader, where applicable, to enhance my contribution and skills. As a leader, I need to give all of these to my sub-ordinate to achieve exceptional people.

b. Also briefly discuss 4 of the similarities and differences (at least one of each) between this model and the other models of leadership studied in the course. (4 marks)

Ans: The similarities and differences between Care & Growth model and other leadership models/theories are as follows:

1. Charismatic Leadership Theories:

- a. **Similarity:** Charismatic Leadership Theories suggest that charismatic leaders set personal examples for their sub-ordinates. They are socially sensitive and empathetic. This attribute of Charismatic Leadership Model is similar to that of Care & Growth leadership model in the sense that if a leader is not sensitive or empathetic towards its sub-ordinates, he will not be able to understand the actual barriers, which he needs to resolve in order to make the sub-ordinates empowered.
- b. **Difference:** Charismatic Leadership model does not explicitly mention Growth aspect of sub-ordinates while is an explicit part of Care & Growth model.

2. The Leader-Member Exchange Model (LMX):

- a. **Difference:** The Leader-Member Exchange Model (LMX) of leadership suggests the leader might develop 'in-group' and 'out-group' of sub-ordinates and treat them accordingly. There is no such in-group or out-group described in Care & Growth leadership model. The Care & Growth leadership model does not visible divide the followers in any group and appears to treat them equally.

- b. **Similarity:** LMX suggests that the leaders and their followers develop two person relationships, which affect the behaviors of both. This can be considered a similarity between Care & Growth model and LMX because Care & Growth model also focuses on the two-way relationship in leadership.

3. Traditional Theories of Leadership:

- a. **Difference:** Among the traditional theories of leadership, The Great person theory suggests that leaders are born not made. In contrast, Care & Growth model describes maturity as something, which increases with the age. With maturity comes the realization of giving, as a leader, instead of gaining. Hence, in this sense, Care & Growth model does not limit leadership to only he people born with associated qualities. It suggests that leadership can be learnt and improved with personal experiences as the time passes. The theory also doesn't give importance to followers, which are an important aspect of Care & Growth model.
- b. **Similarity:** The situation part of traditional leadership theories has some similarity with Care & Growth model because in Care & Growth model, the leader can provide support to his subordinates depending on the intensity of the situation. In some cases, they will be able to handle it independently while in other cases, they will need explicit support from their leader.

4. Trait Theory of Leadership:

- a. **Difference:** Trait Theory of Leadership gives most important to Extraversion personality trait for a person to be a leader. Care & Growth model of leadership does not limit the good leaders to extroverts only. Care & Growth model gives importance to the intention of the person, no matter if the person is extrovert or introvert. This seems a big difference between Train Theory of leadership and Care & Growth model.
- b. **Similarity:** Trait Theory of Leadership gives explicit importance to the trait of 'conscientiousness' or care, which is a basic building block of Care & Growth model. So in this way, both models have some similarity.
