Groups and Teams

Learning Objectives

- **Describe** the basic nature of groups: the dynamics of group formation and the various types of groups.
- **Discuss** the implications that research on groups has for the practice of evidence-based management.
- **Explain** the important dynamics of informal groups and organizations.
- **Analyze** the impact of groupthink.
- **Present** the team concept and its practice.

This chapter approaches organizational behavior dynamics from the perspective of the group—both informal and formal—and the popular team concept and practice. The first section examines the way groups are formed, the various types of groups, some of the dynamics and functions of groups, and the findings of research on groups. The next section explores the dynamics of informal roles and organization. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the impact of groupthink. The balance of the chapter is devoted specifically to teams. The distinction is made between work groups and teams, and specific attention is devoted to self-managed and cross-functional teams. The way to make these teams more effective through training and evaluation is discussed.

THE NATURE OF GROUPS

The group is widely recognized as an important sociological and social psychological unit of analysis in the study of organizational behavior.[1] Studying groups is especially valuable when the dynamics are analyzed. Group dynamics are the interactions and forces among group members in social situations. When the concept is applied to the study of organizational behavior, the focus is on the dynamics of members of both formal or informal work groups and, now, teams in the organization.

The use of work groups and teams is soaring. Although they were first used in corporate giants such as Toyota, Motorola, General Mills, and General Electric, surveys now indicate that virtually all organizations use groups and teams to varying degrees. Yet, as with many other areas of organizational behavior, the study and application of groups and teams are receiving increased research attention to make them more effective.

A recent review of this group/team literature concluded that "considerable theoretical and empirical progress has been made on this topic, with an underlying focus on understanding and modeling anticipated benefits, in terms of both motivation/satisfaction and performance."[2] However, despite this progress, there are still many challenges remaining in understanding and effectively using groups and teams in today's and future organizations. For example, today's economic and social environment surrounding

groups is rapidly changing. In the social environment, Generation Xers and now what are called the "Echo Generation" (the offspring of the now aging "Baby Boomers") may be difficult to manage in groups because they have low needs for group affiliation, high needs for individual achievement, and "doing their own thing." The solution may be found in the careful construction of rewards and performance measures in order to obtain cooperation and collaboration.[3] After first providing the basic foundation for understanding all aspects of groups, the remainder of the chapter will focus on teams in today's workplace.

The Meaning of a Group and Group Dynamics

Instead of quickly moving to teams per se, the discussion begins with groups and their dynamics, an understanding of which is basic to the field of organizational behavior. The term *group* can be defined in a number of different ways, depending on the perspective that is taken. A comprehensive definition would say that if a group exists in an organization, its members:

1. Are motivated to join
2. Perceive the group as a unified unit of interacting people
3. Contribute in various amounts to the group processes (that is, some people contribute more time or energy to the group than do others)
4. Reach agreements and have disagreements through various forms of interaction[4]

Just as there is no one definition of the term *group*, there is no universal agreement on what is meant by *group dynamics*. Although Kurt Lewin, widely recognized as the father of group dynamics, popularized the term in the 1930s, through the years different connotations have been attached to it. One normative view is that group dynamics describes *how* a group *should* be organized and conducted. Democratic leadership, member participation, and overall cooperation are stressed. Another view of group dynamics is that it consists of a set of *techniques*. Here, role playing, brainstorming, focus groups, leaderless groups, group therapy, sensitivity training, team building, transactional analysis, and the Johari window are traditionally equated with group dynamics, as are the more modern self-managed and virtual teams. An example of a recent group technique is called "creative abrasion," which is the search for a clash of ideas rather than "personal abrasion," or the clash of people. The goal here is to develop greater creativity from the group.[5] A third view is the closest to Lewin's original conception. Group dynamics are viewed from the perspective of the internal nature of groups, how they form, their structure and processes, and how they function and affect individual members, other groups, and the organization. The following sections are devoted to this third view of group dynamics and set the stage for the discussion of work teams.

The Dynamics of Group Formation

Why do individuals form into groups? Before discussion of some very practical reasons, it would be beneficial to examine briefly some of the classic social psychology theories of group formation, or why people affiliate with one another. The most basic theory explaining affiliation is *propinquity*. This interesting word means simply that individuals affiliate with one another because of spatial or geographical proximity. The theory would predict that students sitting next to one another in class, for example, are more likely to form into a group than are students sitting at opposite ends of the room. In an organization, employees who work in the same area of the plant or office or managers with offices close to one another would more probably form into groups than would those who are not

physically located together. There is some research evidence to support the propinquity theory, and on the surface it has a great deal of merit for explaining group formation. The drawback is that it is not analytical and does not begin to explain some of the complexities of group formation and the modern development of globalization and electronic, online networking and telecommunicating (i.e., virtual teams that are linked in cyberspace rather than physical proximity). These recent developments give new meaning to spatial or geographic proximity. Some theoretical and practical reasons for group formation need to be further explored.

Theories of Group Formation

A more comprehensive theory of group formation than mere propinquity comes from the classic theory of George Homans based on activities, interactions, and sentiments.[6] These three elements are directly related to one another. The more activities persons share, the more numerous will be their interactions and the stronger will be their sentiments (how much the other persons are liked or disliked); the more interactions among persons, the more will be their shared activities and sentiments; and the more sentiments persons have for one another, the more will be their shared activities and interactions. This theory lends a great deal to the understanding of group formation and process. The major element is *interaction*. Persons in a group interact with one another not just in the physical propinquity sense or increasingly electronically, but also to accomplish many group goals through cooperation and problem solving.

There are many other theories that attempt to explain group formation. Most often they are only partial theories, but they are generally additive in nature. One of the more comprehensive is Theodore Newcomb's classic *balance theory* of group formation.[7] The theory states that persons are attracted to one another on the basis of similar attitudes toward commonly relevant objects and goals. Figure 11.1 shows this balance theory. Individual X will interact and form a relationship/group with individual Y because of common attitudes and values (Z). Once this relationship is formed, the participants strive to maintain a symmetrical balance between the attraction and the common attitudes. If an imbalance occurs, an attempt is made to restore the balance. If the balance cannot be restored, the relationship dissolves. Both propinquity and interaction play a role in balance theory.

Still another theoretical approach to group formation from social psychology is *exchange theory*.[8] Similar to its functioning as a work-motivation theory, discussed in

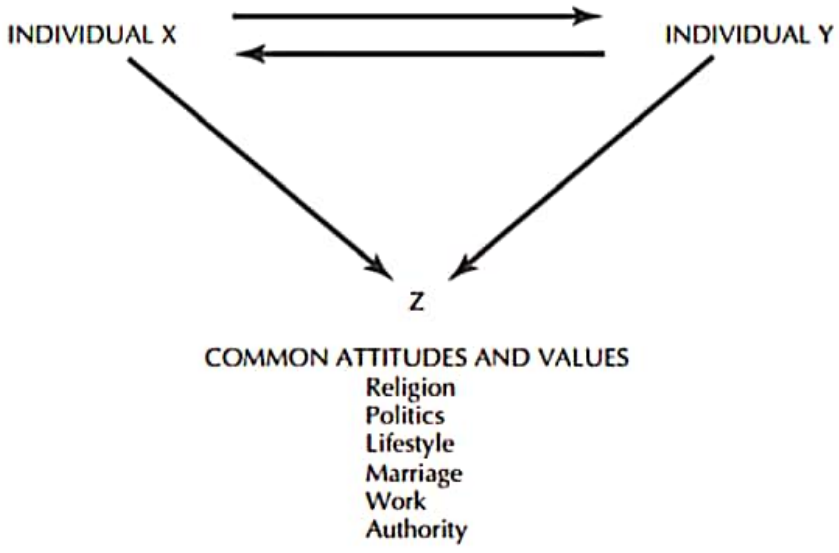

FIGURE 11.1
A Balance Theory of Group Formation

Chapter 6, exchange theory of groups is based on reward-cost outcomes of interaction. A minimum positive level (rewards greater than costs) of an outcome must exist in order for attraction or affiliation to take place. Rewards from interactions gratify needs, whereas costs incur anxiety, frustration, embarrassment, or fatigue. Propinquity, interaction, and common attitudes all have roles in exchange theory.

Besides these classic social psychology explanations for group formation, there are also some generally recognized identifiable stages of group development.[9] These well-known stages can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. *Forming.* This initial stage is marked by uncertainty and even confusion. Group members are not sure about the purpose, structure, task, or leadership of the group.
2. *Storming.* This stage of development, as indicated by the term, is characterized by conflict and confrontation. (In the usually emotionally charged atmosphere, there may be considerable disagreement and conflict among the members about roles and duties.)
3. *Norming.* Finally, in this stage the members begin to settle into cooperation and collaboration. They have a "we" feeling with high cohesion, group identity, and camaraderie.
4. *Performing.* This is the stage where the group is fully functioning and devoted to effectively accomplishing the tasks agreed on in the norming stage.
5. *Adjourning.* This represents the end of the group, which in ongoing, permanent groups will never be reached. However, for project teams or task forces with a specific objective, once the objective is accomplished, the group will disband or have a new composition, and the stages will start over again.

Practicalities of Group Formation

Besides the conceptual explanations for group formation and development, there are some very practical reasons for joining and/or forming a group. For instance, employees in an organization may form a group for economic, security, or social reasons. Economically, workers may form a group to work on a project that is paid for on a group-incentive plan such as gainsharing (covered in Chapter 4),[10] or they may form a union to demand higher wages. For security, joining a group provides the individual with a united front in combating indiscriminant, unilateral treatment. For example, one study found that minority employees' obtaining membership in a network group proved to be useful in retaining them.[11] However, the most important practical reason individuals join or form groups is that groups tend to satisfy the very intense social needs of most people. Workers, in particular, generally have a very strong desire for affiliation. This need is met by belonging to a group or becoming a member of a team. Research going as far back as the Hawthorne studies revealed that the affiliation motive has a major impact on human behavior in organizations, and social identity and effectiveness as an important group process in organizations has been verified over the years.[12]

An alternative model that has more recently been proposed as an explanation for group formation processes is called the *punctuated equilibrium model.*[13] According to this approach, groups form in a first phase in which a target or mission is set and then are not altered very easily, due to a process called inertia, or systematic resistance to change. At some midpoint, the second phase begins. This phase commences when group members suddenly recognize that if they don't change tactics, the group's goal or mission will not be accomplished. This "midlife crisis" in the group's existence is exemplified by changes made in tactics followed by bursts of activity and energy designed to complete the task. The name of the model is derived from the equilibrium that exists in the first half of the group's life and the punctuated efforts and behavioral modifications in the second phase. Although there is just preliminary research on the punctuated equilibrium model, it has considerable

intuitive appeal based on the common experiences most people have had in working on group projects.

Models of the dynamics of group formation and functioning should progress further when issues such as demographic diversity and globalization are incorporated. One analysis noted that "fault lines" within groups may form around individual member characteristics and lead to subgroup conflicts among members.[14] Diversity is the primary source of differences in member characteristics leading to such conflict. Another study found that at first greater demographic heterogeneity led to group norms emphasizing lower cooperation. However, over time, if team norms among those more demographically different from their work group changed more, then the norms became more cooperative as a function of contact with other members.[15] On the international front, another study notes that group efficacy (see Chapter 7 on efficacy, conceptually close to what is termed "collective efficacy" or "group potency") or the group's belief in its ability to perform effectively, as well as actual performance, may be impacted by intercultural variables such as collectivism and task uncertainty.[16] Further, there may be a relationship between personal self-efficacy and collective efficacy. For example, one study by Bandura and his colleagues revealed that socioeconomic status enhanced perceived personal self-efficacy, which in turn contributed substantially to a sense of collective efficacy to effect social change through unified action.[17]

Types of Groups

There are numerous types of groups. The theories of group formation that were just discussed are based partly on the attraction between two persons—the simple dyad group. Of course, in the real world groups are usually much more complex than the dyad. There are small and large groups, primary and secondary groups, coalitions, membership and reference groups, in- and out-groups, and formal and informal groups. Each type has different characteristics and different effects on its members.

Primary Groups

Often the terms *small group* and *primary group* are used interchangeably. Technically, there is a difference. A small group has to meet only the criterion of small size. Usually no attempt is made to assign precise numbers, but the accepted criterion is that the group must be small enough for fairly constant interaction and communication to occur face-to-face or, in recent times, electronically. In addition to being small, a primary group must have a feeling of comradeship, loyalty, and a common sense of values among its members. Thus, all primary groups are small groups, but not all small groups are primary groups.

Two examples of a primary group are the family and the peer group. Initially, the primary group was limited to a socializing group, but then a broader conception was given impetus by the results of the Hawthorne studies (see Chapter 1). Work groups definitely have primary group qualities. Research findings point out the tremendous impact that the primary group has on individual behavior, regardless of context or environmental conditions. An increasing number of companies have begun to use the power of primary groups by organizing employees into *self-managed teams.* Importantly, these teams are natural work groups with all the dynamics described so far. The team members work together to perform a function or produce a product or service. Because they are self-managing, they also perform functions such as planning, organizing, and controlling the work. For example, at 3M self-managed teams are empowered to take corrective actions to resolve day-to-day problems; they also have direct access to information that allows them to plan, control, and improve their operations. Importantly, however, such self-managed

teams do not necessarily always make consensus decisions. As one executive recently observed:

> My feeling is that you try to make a decision by consensus, you water it down to the lowest level. Virtually none of our decisions are consensus—even choosing where to go for dinner, because I can't get everyone to agree. The bar is: Can you live with it?[18]

The last part of the chapter discusses this team concept and practice in detail.

Coalitions

Although recent research indicates that the social structure will affect the increasingly popular strategic alliance formation patterns between organizations,[19] at a more micro level, coalitions of individuals and groups within organizations have long been recognized as an important dimension of group dynamics. Although the concept of coalition is used in different ways by different theorists, a comprehensive review of the coalition literature suggests that the following characteristics of a coalition be included:[20]

1. Interacting group of individuals
2. Deliberately constructed by the members for a specific purpose
3. Independent of the formal organization's structure
4. Lacking a formal internal structure
5. Mutual perception of membership
6. Issue-oriented to advance the purposes of the members
7. External forms
8. Concerted member action, act as a group

Although the preceding have common characteristics with other types of groups, coalitions are separate, usually very powerful, and often effective entities in organizations. For example, a study found that employees in a large organization formed into coalitions to overcome petty conflicts and ineffective management in order to get the job done.[21]

Other Types of Groups

Besides primary groups and coalitions, there are also other classifications of groups that are important to the study of organizational behavior. Two important distinctions are between membership and reference groups and between in-groups and out-groups. These differences can be summarized by noting that membership groups are those to which the individual actually belongs. An example would be membership in a craft union. Reference groups are those to which an individual would like to belong—those he or she identifies with. An example would be a prestigious social group. In-groups are those who have or share the dominant values, and out-groups are those on the outside looking in. All these types of groups have relevance to the study of organizational behavior, but the formal and informal types are most directly applicable.

There are many formally designated work groups, such as committees, in the modern organization. The functional departmental committees (finance, marketing, operations, and human resources) and now cross-functional teams are examples, as are standing committees such as the public affairs committee, grievance committee, executive committee, and even the board of directors.[22] In today's mergers and acquisitions environment and global economy, a new type of committee or team has emerged. Called "factional" groups or teams, these have members that come from a limited number (usually just two) of entities such as merger integration teams, bilateral task forces, and joint venture teams.[23] When these formal committees meet, they are often frustrating to the members. In fact, one

survey found only 42 percent felt that the meetings were productive.[24] To get around some of these problems, in recent years the perspective and function of such groups have shifted to teams that have now become the most important type of group in today's organizations.

Informal groups form for political, friendship, or common interest reasons. For political purposes, the informal group may form to attempt to get its share of rewards and/or limited resources. Friendship groups may form on the job and carry on outside the workplace. Common interests in sports or ways to get back at management can also bind members into an informal group. The dynamics of these informal groups are examined in more detail in an upcoming section.

Implications from Research on Group and Team Dynamics

Starting with the Hawthorne studies discussed in Chapter 1, significant research has been abundant on groups and teams that indirectly contribute to the better understanding of organizational behavior.[25] In general, it can be concluded from research over the years that groups have a positive impact on both individual employee effectiveness (help learn about the organization and one's self, gain new skills, obtain rewards not available to individuals, and fulfill important social needs) and organizational effectiveness (strength in numbers of ideas and skills, improved decision making and control, and facilitating change as well as organizational stability).[26]

In addition to the somewhat general conclusions, there are also more specific research findings from social psychology that seem to have particular relevance to organizational behavior. For example, a meta-analysis of a number of studies over the years found that group cohesiveness has a highly significant positive effect on performance.[27] However, of even more importance to group performance may be leadership. For example, a highly cohesive group that is given positive leadership may have the highest possible productivity. On the other side of the coin, a highly cohesive group that is given poor leadership may have the lowest possible productivity.[28] A highly cohesive group is analogous to a time bomb in the hands of management. The direction in which the highly cohesive group goes, breaking production records or severely restricting output, depends on how it is led. The low-cohesive group is much safer in the hands of management. Leadership will not have a serious negative or positive impact on this group. However, the implication is that if management wishes to maximize productivity, it must build a cohesive group and give it proper leadership and, importantly, over time this highly cohesive group may become self-managing.

Recent work by widely recognized groups expert Richard Hackman supports this important role that leadership plays in group performance. In Hackman's book summarizing his extensive research, he notes: "work teams can, and sometimes do, perform much better than traditionally designed units. But they also can, and sometimes do, perform much worse."[29] He concludes that there is no magical solution for group effectiveness, but the leader can create the conditions that promote group effectiveness. Specifically, these conditions (induction) the leader can control include (1) setting a compelling direction for the group's work; (2) designing and enabling group structure; (3) ensuring that the group operates within a supportive context; and (4) providing expert coaching.[30] Other recent research studies also support the impact that leadership can have in work-group performance.[31]

In other words, Hackman's and others' theory-building and field research findings indicate there are some interesting insights and points of departure for organizational behavior analysis that can come out of classic social psychology theories and research. The same is true for the historically important Hawthorne studies, where both the relay room operatives and the bank wirers were highly cohesive work groups. As is brought out in Chapter 1, a possible explanation of why one highly cohesive work group (the relay room

TABLE 11.1
Factors That Increase and Decrease Group Cohesiveness

Factors That Increase Group Cohesiveness	Factors That Decrease Group Cohesiveness
Agreement on group goals	Disagreement on goals
Frequency of interaction	Large group size
Personal attractiveness	Unpleasant experiences
Intergroup competition	Intragroup competition
Favorable evaluation	Domination by one or more members

Source: Adapted from Andrew D. Szilagyi, Jr., and Marc J. Wallace, Jr., *Organizational Behavior and Performance*, 5th ed., Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, Glenview, Ill., 1990, pp. 282–283.

workers) produced at a very high level and the other highly cohesive group (the bank wirers) produced at a very low rate is the type of supervision (or leadership) that was applied. In other words, both leadership and group dynamics factors, such as cohesiveness, can have an important impact on group performance in organizations. Table 11.1 briefly summarizes some of the major factors that can increase and decrease group cohesiveness. In addition to the leadership implications, there are some recent research findings regarding the effects of time on group cohesion. In one study, a longer time together gave group members the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions. Importantly, for today's environment for groups, surface-level diversity issues (age, gender, race differences) were found to weaken over time, whereas deep-level diversity differences (attitudes and values) became stronger.[32]

Group/Team Effectiveness

Besides the basic research coming out of social psychology, a more applied focus on the impact that groups/teams have on employee behavior, especially the contribution to satisfaction and performance, has also received attention. The following is an overall summary of the way to use groups to enhance satisfaction and performance:[33]

1. Organizing work around intact groups
2. Having groups charged with selection, training, and rewarding of members
3. Using groups to enforce strong norms for behavior, with group involvement in off-the-job as well as on-the-job behavior
4. Distributing resources on a group rather than an individual basis
5. Allowing and perhaps even promoting intergroup rivalry so as to build within-group solidarity

A review of the research literature determined three factors that seem to play the major role in determining group effectiveness: (1) task interdependence (how closely group members work together); (2) outcome interdependence (whether and how group performance is rewarded); and (3) potency (members' belief that the group can be effective).[34]

To assess group or team effectiveness first requires careful specification of criteria. Effective groups are characterized as being dependable, making reliable connections between the parts, and targeting the direction and goals of the organization. This is accomplished when members "buy in," achieve coordination, have the desired impact, and exhibit the kind of vitality that sustains the organization over time as the environment shifts or changes.[35] Factors that affect the success level of any given group include the type of task being performed and the composition of the group itself. Teams with self-leadership have been found to have varying levels of success, depending on whether the group's task is primarily conceptual or primarily behavioral in nature.[36] The composition of the group has been found to be optimal when there is a mix of member types. Groups with only one type, such as task "shapers" (those who define group tasks) are less successful than those

with shapers, coordinators, completer-finishers, and team players.[37] Another recent study on group composition found that members who had higher cognitive ability, achievement, and openness had superior performance.[38]

Well-known leadership guru Warren Bennis argues that effective groups have shared dreams and manage conflict by abandoning individual egos in the pursuit of a dream. They also are protected from the "suits," or corporate leaders, have real or invented enemies, see themselves as underdogs who are winning, and pay a personal price to succeed.[39] Their leaders provide direction, meaning, trust, and hope and display a bias toward action, risk taking, and urgency. Others suggest that "hot groups," those that accomplish breakthrough performance, are ones in which members see distinction and importance in their work, that the tasks captivate members, and that the tasks take priority over interpersonal relationships. Building hot groups requires less micromanaging, more informal (as opposed to formal) feedback, and role modeling of successful hot group behaviors by experienced members working with other new groups. Leadership in this approach is less intrusive and emphasizes group rather than individual rewards, and, as a result, groups can "turn on a dime" and get things done more quickly.[40]

Some aspects of effectiveness may be influenced by how groups form. When they are established, social comparisons and competition exist between members. These may have an impact on the organizational citizenship behaviors (see Chapter 5) exhibited by group members. Citizenship behaviors include altruism, conscientiousness (or being a "good soldier"), courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue, which are also involved in looking out for the welfare of the group and the organization. Perceptions of fairness[41] and group norms,[42] in group practices may impact such citizenship behaviors, which in turn help maintain the group's performance levels.

Group effectiveness may also be influenced by the conditions of adaptation to nonroutine events. Previous group literature suggested three behaviors as keys to adapting to unusual circumstances or events: (1) information collection and transfer, (2) task prioritization, and (3) task distribution. In one study of airline crews using flight simulations, it was found that the timing of key adaptive group behaviors was more strongly associated with performance than the behaviors themselves.[43] In other words, information must be collected at the right time, prioritized properly, and tasks divided in a frame that allows for successful adaptation to unusual events.

THE DYNAMICS OF INFORMAL GROUPS

Besides the formally designated groups and teams, as indicated, informal groups in the workplace also play a significant role in the dynamics of organizational behavior. The major difference between formal and informal groups is that the formal group has officially prescribed goals and relationships, whereas the informal one does not. Despite this distinction, it is a mistake to think of formal and informal groups as two distinctly separate entities. The two types of groups coexist and are inseparable. Every formal organization has informal groups, and every informal organization eventually evolves some semblance of formal groups.

Norms and Roles in Informal Groups

With the exception of a single social act such as extending a hand on meeting or responding to an e-mail or text message, the smallest units of analysis in group dynamics are norms and roles. Many behavioral scientists make a point of distinguishing between the two units, but conceptually they are very similar. *Norms* are the "oughts" of behavior. They are prescriptions

for acceptable behavior determined by the group. Norms will be strongly enforced by work groups if they:

1. Aid in group survival and provision of benefits
2. Simplify or make predictable the behavior expected of group members
3. Help the group avoid embarrassing interpersonal problems
4. Express the central values or goals of the group and clarify what is distinctive about the group's identity[44]

A role consists of a pattern of norms; the use of the term in organizations is directly related to its theatrical use. A role is a position that can be acted out by an individual. The content of a given role is prescribed by the prevailing norms. Probably *role* can best be defined as a position that has expectations evolving from established norms. Some informal roles found in work groups include the following:

1. The *boundary spanner* who acts as a facilitator and bridge between units or groups which would not otherwise interact.
2. The *buffer* who protects and filters negative or disappointing news or information that might cause group members to be upset and cause morale to suffer.
3. The *lobbyist* who promotes and tells others how successful and important the group is to outsiders.
4. The *negotiator* who is empowered by the group to act on its behalf to get resources and make deals.
5. The *spokesperson* who is the voice of the group.[45]

These informal roles wield considerable power in organizations and are recognized by effective managers. As indicated in the accompanying OB in Action: The Office Chart That Really Counts, an increasing number of firms and their managers are determining informal networks to assist them.[46]

The Informal Organization

Like the formal organization, the informal organization has both functions and dysfunctions. In contrast to formal organization analysis, the dysfunctional aspects of informal organization have received more attention than the functional ones. For example, conflicting objectives, restriction of output, conformity, blocking of ambition, inertia, and resistance to change are frequently mentioned dysfunctions of the informal organization. More recently, however, organizational analysis has begun to recognize the functional aspects as well. For example, the following list suggests some practical benefits that can be derived from the informal organization:[47]

1. Makes for a more effective total system
2. Lightens the workload on management
3. Fills in gaps in a manager's abilities
4. Provides a safety valve for employee emotions
5. Improves communication

Because of the inevitability and power of the informal organization, the functions should be exploited in the attainment of objectives rather than futilely combated by management. As one analysis of leadership points out: "Informal social networks exert an immense influence which sometimes overrides the formal hierarchy. . . . Leadership goes beyond a person's formal position into realms of informal, hidden, or unauthorized influence."[48]

THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF GROUPS AND TEAMS

So far, the discussion has been mostly about the positive impact and the functional aspects of groups and teams. However, there are a number of recognized dysfunctions that should also be recognized. Of particular interest in work groups and teams are norm violation and role ambiguity/conflict, groupthink, risky shift, and social loafing.

Norm Violation and Role Ambiguity/Conflict

Group norms that are violated can result in antisocial behaviors. At the extreme, these include sexual harassment and theft. Others include lying, spreading rumors, withholding effort, and absenteeism. One study found group members who are chronically exposed to antisocial behaviors are more likely to engage in them, and dissatisfaction with coworkers may also rise, especially when those coworkers exhibit more antisocial activities than the person in question.[49]

There may also be gaps between the prescribed role as dictated by norms and the individual's reaction to the role. *Role ambiguity* occurs when the individual employee is unclear about the dictates of a given situation, or, in more common terms, "doesn't know what he's supposed to be doing." Unclear job descriptions, incomplete orders given by a manager, and inexperience all contribute to role ambiguity. Such ambiguity can affect the person's ability to function effectively in a group or team. Also, *role conflict* occurs when the employee or team member is: (1) asked to perform conflicting tasks or (2) required to perform a task that conflicts with his or her own personal values. In group settings, the odds of role conflicts increase, especially when the group engages in unethical or antisocial behaviors and when the members of the group stress one set of norms while the leader and rules of the formal organization emphasize others.

The Groupthink, Conformity Problem

A dysfunction of highly cohesive groups and teams that has received a lot of attention has been called *groupthink* by well-known social psychologist Irving Janis. He defines it as "a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment that results from in group pressures."[50] Essentially, groupthink results from the pressures on individual members to conform and reach consensus. Groups and teams that are suffering from groupthink are so bent on reaching consensus that there is no realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action in a decision, and deviant, minority, or unpopular views are suppressed.

Janis has concluded that a number of historic fiascos by government policy-making groups (for example, Britain's do-nothing policy toward Hitler prior to World War II, the unpreparedness of U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, and the escalation of the Vietnam war) can be attributed to groupthink. The Watergate affair during the Nixon administration, the Iran-Contra affair during the Reagan administration, the Whitewater affair in the Clinton administration, and the Iraq War in the Bush administration are also examples. Although retrospective analysis questions the groupthink conclusion of the now over a decade ago space shuttle *Challenger* disaster,[51] and attention has shifted to analyzing what went wrong with the *Columbia* tragic disintegration when it began reentering the Earth on February 1, 2003, through the years the decision process by which NASA launched *Challenger* on its fateful mission has been analyzed in terms of the characteristics of groupthink. For example, conformity pressures were in evidence when NASA officials complained to the contractors about delays. Other symptoms of groupthink shown in Table 11.2, for example, illusions of invulnerability and unanimity and mind-guarding by management's treatment and exclusion of input by the engineers, have commonly been used in analyzing the *Challenger* launch decisions.

TABLE 11.2
Symptoms of Groupthink

1. There is the *illusion of invulnerability.* There is excessive optimism and risk taking.
2. There are *rationalizations* by the members of the group to discount warnings.
3. There is an unquestioned belief in the group's *inherent mortality.* The group ignores questionable ethical or moral issues or stances.
4. Those who oppose the group are *stereotyped* as evil, weak, or stupid.
5. There is *direct pressure* on any member who questions the stereotypes. Loyal members don't question the direction in which the group seems to be heading.
6. There is *self-censorship* of any deviation from the apparent group consensus.
7. There is the *illusion of unanimity.* Silence is interpreted as consent.
8. There are *self-appointed mindguards* who protect the group from adverse information

Source: Adapted from Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2nd ed., Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1982, pp. 174–175.

Although historically notorious news events can be used to dramatically point out the pitfalls of groupthink, it may also occur in committees and work groups in business firms or hospitals or any other type of organization. Initially, there was at least some partial support of the groupthink model when applied to areas such as leader behavior and decision making[52] and has been used to analyze the ethical problems in recent years at firms such as WorldCom.[53] However, recently there have been criticisms of the groupthink model coming from the organizational behavior literature. First of all, there has been very little research conducted to test the propositions of groupthink, most notably because it is so difficult to incorporate all of the items mentioned as the indicators of the phenomenon into one study. Further, some of the results provide only very limited evidence for the model, and the continued uncritical acceptance of groupthink may be an example of groupthink itself.[54] At this point, some organizational behavior theorists/researchers are calling for either elimination of the groupthink model, reformulation of how it works, or revitalization of the approach used.[55] One such approach would be to integrate the assumptions into the general group decision-making and problem-solving literature to see if they would provide support for conformity/groupthink. These analyses suggest that the popularity of the groupthink model may come from its intuitive appeal rather than research support. Under an evidence-based approach as outlined in Chapter 1, studies should be used to replicate the research in order to confirm previous findings, and these studies should be cumulative over time. Without this type of research rigor, unconditional acceptance of any model or theory may exist, even when empirical findings are sketchy at best.

Risky Shift Phenomenon

Even before excessive risk taking was brought out by groupthink, the so-called risky shift phenomenon of groups was recognized. Research going back many years has shown that, contrary to popular belief, a group may make more risky decisions than the individual members would on their own.[56] This conclusion, of course, must be tempered by the values attached to the outcomes, but most of the research over the years finds that group discussion enhances the initial tendency of individual members in a given direction.[57] Called group-induced attitude polarization, this means that, for example, if an employee has a prounion (or antiunion) attitude before group discussion, the group discussion results in an even more extreme attitude in the same direction.

Dysfunctions in Perspective

Such symptoms as risky shift, polarization, and the others found in groupthink should make groups take notice and be very careful of the dysfunctions of groups.[58] To help overcome the potentially disastrous effects, free expression of minority and unpopular viewpoints should be encouraged and legitimatized. Companies such as General Electric,

Bausch & Lomb, Apple Computer, Johnson & Johnson, and United Parcel Service are known for not only tolerating, but formally encouraging, conflict and debate during group/team work and committee meetings. The head of a consulting team recently described their group meetings as follows:

> Remember that this is not Pleasantville. We're not all sitting around a table agreeing on things. That's not the way it works. I was with my own core group of consultants this Saturday, in my office, discussing some contentious issues we had to deal with as a firm. In the end, we assigned a subteam to handle the issue—and I'm not on it. That tells me that it's working; that's what's supposed to happen.[59]

Although many studies show that successful companies advocate such open conflict and healthy debate among group members, other studies point to the value of consensus. This apparent contradiction may be resolved by recognizing the following:

> Consensus may be preferred for smaller, non-diversified, privately held firms competing in the same industry while larger firms dealing with complex issues of diversification may benefit from the dissent raised in open discussions. Larger firms in uncertain environments need dissent while smaller firms in more simple and stable markets can rely on consensus.[60]

Social Loafing

Another more recently recognized dysfunction associated with groups and teams is called social loafing. This problem occurs when members reduce their effort and performance levels when acting as part of a group. Primary causes include lack of performance feedback within the group, tasks that are not intrinsically motivating, situations in which the performances of others will cover for the reduced effort given by some members, and the "sucker effect" of not wanting to do more than the perception of effort being given by others. An example of a "slacker teammate" problem was described by another team member as follows:

> My teammate is very good in front of customers, but otherwise he does little to no work. I pick up the slack, because our team results are what I'm evaluated on. And when I've spoken to my teammate about the problem, he says "I'm the front man, and you're the back-end guy." I am tired of doing literally all the work on our customer projects and being seen as my slacker teammate's first mate. I am pretty certain that my boss will not want to hear from me about my team problem, because he [my boss] believes that working through team issues is part of our responsibility.[61]

There is a cultural component inherent in such social loafing. Research has found that cultures dominated by individual, self-interest values, such as the above example, are more likely to have groups that experience loafing. On the other hand, more collectivist cultures, which are dominated by a "we feeling" and group goals, lead to a stronger focus on the collective good and therefore may endure less loafing by group members.[62]

Social loafing is more likely to appear in large teams, where individual contributions are more difficult to identify. To reduce the impact of members shirking their duties and to ensure that they are fully contributing members of the team, it has been suggested to keep teams smaller in size, specialize tasks so that individual member contributions are identifiable, measure individual performance, and select only motivated employees when building teams.[63]

WORK TEAMS

The discussion so far on group and team dynamics serves as the background and foundation for a specific focus on work teams. Work teams have become so popular in today's organizations that they deserve special attention. The term *team*, of course, is not new to organizations, and teamwork has been stressed throughout the years. For example, the well-known

quality guru Joseph Juran first took his "Team Approach to Problem Solving" to the Japanese in the 1950s and then in the 1980s to the United States. Today, teams are becoming increasingly popular. Estimates of the prevalence and type of teams among *Fortune* 1000 companies are as follows:

1. Almost all use project teams (diverse managerial/professional employees working on projects for a defined, but typically extended, period of time).
2. A large majority use parallel teams (employees working on problem-solving or quality teams in parallel to the regular organizational structure).
3. A majority use permanent work teams (self-contained work units responsible for manufacturing products or providing services).[64]

After first defining what is meant by a team and critically analyzing self-managed teams found in today's organizations, the chapter covers ways to develop self-managed teams and make them more effective.

The Nature of a Team

Although the term *team* is frequently used for any group, especially to get individuals to work together and to motivate them, some team experts make a distinction between teams and traditional work groups. For example, the authors of a book on the use of teams for creating high-performance organizations note that the difference between a work group and a team relates to performance results. They note:

> A working group's performance is a function of what its members do as individuals. A team's performance includes both individual results and what we call "collective work-products." A collective work-product is what two or more members must work on together . . . [it] reflects the joint, real contribution of team members.[65]

They go on to note these specific differences between work groups and teams:

1. The work group has a strong, clearly focused leader; the team has shared leadership roles.
2. The work group has individual accountability; the team has individual and mutual accountability.
3. The work group's purpose is the same as the organization's; the team has a specific purpose.
4. The work group has individual work-products; the team has collective work-products.
5. The work group runs efficient meetings; the team encourages open-ended, active problem-solving meetings.
6. The work group measures effectiveness indirectly (for example, financial performance of the overall business); the team measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products.
7. The work group discusses, decides, and delegates; the team discusses, decides, and does real work.[66]

The point is that teams do go beyond traditional formal work groups by having a collective, synergistic (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts) effect.

The use of teams to produce products started in well-known, quality-conscious corporate giants, such as Toyota in Japan and Motorola and General Electric in the United States, and has quickly spread. Companies as different as Xerox (office equipment), Monsanto (chemicals), Hewlett-Packard (computers), and Johnsonville Sausage use self-managed, sometimes called autonomous, teams. As with other early popular management approaches, such as MBO (management by objectives) or TQM (total quality management), after the initial excitement,

productivity by establishing cross-functional teams to manage and improve the core processes that affect both external customers and mission performance. At Massachusetts General, one of the nation's most prominent hospitals, doctors on the emergency-trauma team have created a "seamless" approach between the various functions for treating critical patients who are brought in with life-threatening gunshot and knife wounds. The accompanying OB in Action: Greater Productivity through Cross-Functional Teams provides details on these and other examples.

The key to ensuring successful performance of cross-functional teams is found in two sets of criteria: one inside the team and one in the organization at large. To improve coordination with cross-functional teams, organizations can carry out five steps. These include: (1) choosing the membership carefully, (2) clearly establishing the purpose of the team, (3) ensuring that everyone understands how the group will function, (4) conducting intensive team building up front so that everyone learns how to interact effectively, and (5) achieving noticeable results so that morale remains high and the members can see the impact of their efforts.[68] There is also research evidence that overall functional breadth and cross-training of team members enhances information sharing, team interaction, and team performance.[69]

Virtual Teams

With the advent of advanced information technology, increasing globalization, and the need for speed, the requirement that groups be made up of members in face-to-face interaction is no longer necessary. Members can now communicate at a distance through electronic means, such as e-mail, texting, chat rooms, blogs, phone and video conferencing, satellite transmissions, and websites. Members performing knowledge-based tasks in remote locations can become members of so-called virtual teams. Also, those performing in telecommuting jobs often bear responsibilities to serve on virtual teams. Virtual teams are increasingly evident in global, partnered operations and even everyday activities. Recent research projects that over the next several years almost three-fourths of the U.S. population will spend 10 times longer per day interacting virtually.[70]

Virtual teams have reached the point where they can become operationally defined and have theory-building[71] and growing research supporting improved applications. A comprehensive definition would be that "virtual teams are groups of people who work interdependently with shared purpose across space, time, and organization boundaries using technology to communicate and collaborate."[72] Although most closely associated with technical or operations teams, virtual teams can now be found throughout an organization. For example, IBM has a top management virtual team that has responsibility for driving the overall mission and strategy throughout the firm. This IBM virtual team has 28 members from all divisions and is available "on-demand" for any purpose.

From research, a key to effective virtual teams has been the importance of choosing the appropriate communication media to fit the requirements of the task and the message.[73] For example, for complex tasks like determining strategy, the medium for effective virtual teams should be *synchronous technologies*, which allow members to interact at the same time, or in real time. Audio and videoconferencing are examples of synchronous technologies, whereas asynchronous technologies, such as e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, group calendars, bulletin boards, and Web pages may be used when delayed interaction is acceptable for low-task complexity. The low cost of e-mail makes it an excellent candidate for collecting data, generating ideas, and sometimes for negotiating technical and interpersonal conflicts.[74] Virtual teams can be effective because they are flexible and are driven by information and skills rather than time and location.[75] However, caution must also be paid when assembling a virtual group. Internet chat rooms, for example, may create more work

and result in poorer decisions than face-to-face meetings and telephone conferences unless there is adequate training and some experience with the technology.[76] In total, there is little question that virtual teams will continue to rapidly escalate in usage, but the challenges to make them effective must be met with more research and skillful application.

Self-Managed Teams

Teams are being set up or are evolving into being self-managed as part of the empowerment movement (see Chapter 10) and the more egalitarian cultural values in an increasing number of organizations. A self-managed work team can be defined as "a group of employees who are responsible for managing and performing technical tasks that result in a product or service being delivered to an internal or external customer."[77] For example, at Hewlett-Packard and Harley-Davidson, self-managed teams are empowered to hire, organize, and purchase equipment without managements direct approval. The results from these teams have reportedly been very positive.[78]

Although there has been considerable such testimonial evidence of the value of self-managed teams, supporting research and documented experience have also emerged. To date, both the research and the practice literature has been quite favorable to self-managed teams. For example, recent studies of the empowerment of self-managed teams found increased job satisfaction, customer service, and team organizational commitment[79] and the facilitation of emergent leadership.[80] Also, a comprehensive meta-analysis covering 70 studies concluded that self-managed teams had a positive impact on productivity and specific attitudes related to the team, but not on general attitudes, absenteeism, or turnover.[81] This finding on the impact on productivity is impressive, and more recent studies also find a more favorable impact on attitudes as well,[82] but there are still practical problems to overcome. For example, an in-depth interview survey of 4,500 teams at 500 organizations uncovered a host of individual and organizational factors behind self-managed team ineffectiveness.[83] Individual problems included the following:

1. Team members aren't willing to give up past practices or set aside power and position.
2. Not all team members have the ability, knowledge, or skill to contribute to the group. Team functioning slows because some members shoulder more responsibility than others.
3. As team members, workers often face conflicts or challenges to their own personal beliefs. What works for the group often does not work for the individual.[84]

Organizational-level problems uncovered by this survey included compensation and reward systems that still focused solely on individual performance; thus there was little incentive for teams to perform well.[85] A survey of 300 large companies found that only 9 percent of them were pleased with their team-based compensation.[86] One of the major problems resulting in such dissatisfaction is that with the proliferation of short-term, virtual, and cross-functional teams, members are not able to go through the gradual process of gaining confidence in one another's competence, honesty, and dependability. In other words, there is too often a lack of trust, which research indicates leads to dissatisfaction with team-based pay.[87] The next and final section explores how to make all types of teams more effective.

How to Make Teams More Effective

The effectiveness of teams may be measured based on the extent to which the team achieves its objectives and performs on behalf of the overall organization. Previous research has, at times, failed to note the ways in which teams are embedded in overall organizations.[88] Consequently, studies of team effectiveness may not have revealed a complete picture of the nature of team success.

For teams to be more effective, they must overcome some of the problems and dysfunctions that groups in general encounter (see this summary above). Long-standing models of team effectiveness include creating the right environment where support, commitment, goals, reward systems, communication systems, and physical space are all in sync to allow the team to work in a productive atmosphere.[89] Tasks should be designed to be interdependent, team size should be kept as small as possible, and members should be selected based on both being motivated and competent. Further, team cohesion should be built by either establishing homogenous groups or overcoming potential problems associated with diversity, by encouraging interaction and contact, and by making the group seem somewhat "exclusive," so that the members are happy to be included.[90] Also, team success naturally tends to build greater cohesion, as does the presence of external competition and challenges. In particular, there is now enough research evidence and practical experience to indicate the following ways to enhance team effectiveness: (1) team building, (2) collaboration, (3) leadership, and (4) understanding of cultural issues in global situations.

Team Building

Team building begins with the understanding that work groups require time and training before they develop into productive and cohesive units. There seems to be a learning curve in building an effective team.[91] Exceptions to this learning curve would be: a study of professional basketball teams found that over a very long time period there was actually a negative correlation (an inverse relationship) of earlier performance with later performance,[92] and the analysis of hijacked United Flight 93 on September 11th that crashed into the Pennsylvania field also suggests that a long development process is not always needed. Although an FBI report suggested that a terrorist ordered the jet to be crashed because of the heroic passenger uprising,[93] at least one recent analysis indicates the passengers and crew formed an effective team on the spot to bring the plane down and thus solve a very serious, complex problem. The key was that conventional wisdom about the need for a learning curve was violated in these brief fateful moments when "the passengers and crew responded in a way once thought possible only for a well-formed team—one that had matured through several developmental stages. Yet no passenger had prior experience with hijacking, and crew training had focused on compliance, not response."[94] Traditionally, however, at least in normal work teams, effective ones do seem to develop over time.

At first, some employees may be unwilling to join or buy into the group. Only when they see success and team member satisfaction will this feeling change. Once established, some form of accountability must be present. Managers should expect to see some uncertainty in the team, which may last for up to two years, and during that time there may even be a dip in productivity. As the team matures, members learn the basics of team work, understand their roles more clearly, make more effective group decisions, and pursue group goals.[95]

Effective team building establishes a sense of ownership[96] and partnership[97] and allows members to see the team as a unit and as an attractive work arrangement.[98] Team building succeeds when individuals share collective intelligence[99] and experience a sense of empowerment[100] and engagement.[101] Team building involves rapid learning, which takes place when there is a free-flowing generation of ideas.[102] When there is educational diversity among the team members, there is research evidence this will positively influence the range and depth of information use, but may detract from the integration of the information available to the team.[103] Quality team-building programs must fit with the corporate culture, have well-designed goals, allow members to translate skills to the workplace, often take place in a separate environment, and may even move employees outside of a comfort zone, but not so much that they cannot learn. Programs such as rope climbing and even cooking classes may help members of some teams bond and learn to work together.[104]

TABLE 11.3
Training Guidelines for Developing Effective Self-Managed Teams

Steps of Training	Summary
1. Establish credibility.	The trainers must first establish their knowledge and believability.
2. Allow ventilation.	The trainees must have their anxieties and unresolved issues cleared before starting.
3. Provide an orientation.	The trainers should give specific verbal directions and provide clear expectations and models of behavior.
4. Invest in the process.	Early on, have the team identify its problems and concerns.
5. Set group goals.	The trainees create, through consensus, their own mission statement and then set goals and specific activities and behaviors to accomplish these goals.
6. Facilitate the group process.	The trainees are taught about how groups function and are given techniques, such as nominal grouping and paired comparison.
7. Establish intragroup procedures.	This involves setting up a meeting format that might include reporting minutes, making announcements, discussing problems and issues, proposing solutions, taking action, and making new assignments.
8. Establish intergroup processes.	Although the team is self-managed, leaders must be selected in order to interact with others, such as supervisors, managers, and other teams.
9. Change the role of the trainers.	As the team becomes more experienced and empowered, the trainers take on a more passive role.
10. End the trainers' involvement.	At this point, the team is on its own and is self-managing.

Source: Adapted from Paul E. Brauchle and David W. Wright, "Training Work Teams," *Training and Development*, March 1993, pp. 65–68.

An example of an effective team training approach would be the 10-step model shown in Table 11.3. GE, in its Electrical Distribution and Control Division, has successfully used this training model. According to the trainers, the trained GE teams "are made up of dedicated people who enjoy working together, who maintain high standards, and who demonstrate high productivity and commitment to excellence."[105]

Besides going through the steps of training, teams also must be monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis. Five key areas that should be monitored and measured include: (1) the team's mission, (2) goal achievements, (3) feelings of empowerment, (4) communications, and (5) roles and norms that are positive.[106]

Team-building processes can take place in levels as high as corporate boards. To do so, members should be emotionally intelligent (see Chapter 7), rather than just have raw intelligence (i.e., IQ), and feel they are part of a real team with clear, stable boundaries requiring interdependent tasks.[107] Members must learn to do what they promise, even when it means a personal sacrifice may be involved.[108] Boards that function as effective teams can create a major competitive advantage for the firm[109] and ethical corporate governance.[110]

Collaboration

Effective group leaders do not act alone. They assemble a group of highly talented people and figure out how to get the most creative efforts out of everyone by effectively organizing their collaborative efforts.[111] Perhaps one of the best examples of the power of collaboration is the computer "open-source" operating system Linux and the also free Web browser Firefox.[112] These effective (and competitive) products were developed by essentially a voluntary, self-organizing community of thousands of programmers and companies. As the authors of a

recent *Harvard Business Review* article aptly titled "Collaboration Rules" noted, "Most leaders would sell their grandmothers for workforces that collaborate as efficiently, frictionlessly, and creatively as the self-styled Linux 'hackers.'"[113] As in the development of "freeware," the process of collaboration involves learning how to improve interpersonal interactions in group settings while committing to a common agenda. Various developmental milestones may indicate that these collaborative skills are being learned and effectively applied.[114]

Group Leadership

Whether the assigned head of the team or the emergent leader in self-managed teams, there are two key ways in which leaders may affect performance of groups: (1) how they select members and (2) the tactics they use to affect those members.[115] Tactics that help create a more team-oriented climate include eliminating or reducing special offices for the group heads, major differences in perks and privileges, and a decline in the use of designated leader titles.[116] There is also recent research coming out of the procedural justice literature indicating that team members are more satisfied with their leader[117] and have lower absenteeism and better performance[118] when they feel they are being treated fairly. At the same time, leaders need to continue to be clear and decisive even as they work with different people, different teams, and different environments.

As described by widely recognized team researchers Richard Hackman and Ruth Wageman, "Team leaders engage in many different kinds of behaviors intended to foster team effectiveness, including structuring the team and establishing its purposes, arranging for the resources a team needs for its work and removing organizational roadblocks that impede the work, helping individual members strengthen their personal contributions to the team, and working with the team as a whole to help members use their collective resources well in pursuing team purposes."[119] Effective leaders know both how to teach[120] and how to share the glory by acknowledging group success,[121] but perhaps most importantly, how to gain the trust of their team members.[122] Finally, as a follow-on to the importance of positivity discussed in detail in Chapter 7, recent research finds that when team leaders exhibit positivity, their members tended to be more positive (i.e., a contagion effect) and also exhibited better coordination.[123]

Cultural/Global Issues

Although today's times make global teams operating in a multicultural environment inevitable, there is recent evidence that they are experiencing problems. One study of 70 global business teams found only 18 percent considered their performance "highly successful," and the remaining 82 percent fell short of their intended goals; one-third rated their performance as largely unsuccessful.[124] This result is also verified by research findings that employees in global teams that resist the concept of teams will have low job satisfaction and resulting problems.[125] Importantly, certain cultural values lead to resistance to teams.[126] For example, in one study of managers from Mexico, the great majority of leaders indicated they believed there would be significant problems if their companies adopted self-directed work teams.[127] Clearly such cultural obstacles must be overcome to build effective teams. As revealed in a study of a German-Japanese joint venture, national culture remains a key factor in explaining patterns of relationships exhibited in teams.[128] For example, although workplace teams can borrow from and use successful sports teams as a model in the United States,[129] in other cultures such as Asia or Europe, making the language of sports the dominant model or metaphor in one analysis "may be confusing, demotivating, and counterproductive."[130]

To improve global teams, research indicates that creating a "hybrid" team culture can be linked to improved performance.[131] In this study, a U-shaped relationship existed between

team heterogeneity and team effectiveness, where homogenous and highly heterogeneous teams outperformed moderately heterogeneous groups in the long run. Therefore, as noted in the preceding leadership discussion, selection of group members seems to play an important role in the effectiveness of the group. In addition to careful selection, some pragmatic guidelines would include: (1) adapting to each culture (e.g., team pay should be used cautiously in individualistic cultures, but may be readily accepted in collectivist cultures); (2) changing implementation of teams for each culture (e.g., in the United States members should be involved in the selection, reward systems, and task assignments; but in Argentina, China, or Mexico such participation may not be needed or wanted); and (3) respecting local laws (e.g., in Finland, labor laws do not allow the use of team pay).[132] Also, once again shared perceptions of procedural justice in cross-cultural alliance teams seems critical to success.[133] Such shared justice perceptions is especially critical when there is a wide cultural distance between the partners in the alliance.

In general, to help overcome some of the problems associated with more individualistic cultures, it is advisable to allow groups to form voluntarily or for members to join voluntarily. Those who volunteer are more likely to be cooperative and experience greater satisfaction, motivation, and fewer disciplinary problems. Further, group goal-setting processes may also serve to increase motivation and satisfaction when they build group or collective efficacy.[134]

As the review of the above four major processes indicates, there is a great deal left to be learned about how to build more effective teams. At the same time, the use of teams to accomplish tasks continues to grow. This makes the study of teams and performance remain as an important area for more organizational behavior research and effective application.

Summary

Groups and teams represent an important dynamic in the study and application of organizational behavior. Group formation, types, and processes; the dynamics of informal roles and organization; and the dysfunctions of work groups and teams are all of particular relevance to the study of organizational behavior. Group formation is explained theoretically in classic social psychology by propinquity; as a relationship among activities, interactions, and sentiments; as a symmetrical balance between attraction and common attitudes; and as a reward–cost exchange. Participants in an organization also form into groups for very practical economic, security, and social reasons. Many different types of groups are found in today's organizations. Conceptually, there are primary groups, coalitions, and others such as membership and reference groups. Groups have been researched over the years, and findings from classic social psychology studies and increasingly from organizational behavior scholars have implications for organizational behavior.

The last half of the chapter discusses and analyzes the dynamics of informal groups and work teams. Informal norms and roles and the informal organization are very relevant to and often represent the real organization. Informal structure coexists with every formal structure. Traditionally, only the dysfunctional aspects of informal organization have been emphasized. More recently, the functional aspects have also been recognized.

The dynamics of the dysfunctions of groups and teams were examined in terms of norm violation resulting in antisocial behaviors, role ambiguity/conflict, group think conformity, the risky shift phenomenon, and social loafing. The remainder of the chapter focused on work teams per se. Initially, most publicity was given to quality circles, but now self-managed teams are in the spotlight. Self-managed teams have become an established form of doing work to meet the high-tech, quality challenges facing all modern organizations. To date, self-managed teams have a quite successful track record. In addition to self-managed