

Programme Name: **BCS**

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## OPEN BOOK TEST QUESTION PAPER

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1. **Recognize and discuss FOUR (4) types of talk involved in small group communication with relevant examples.**

***Answer***

Small group communication researchers Lawrence Frey and Sunwolf (2005) posited communication is the essential defining feature of any small group. Group communication comprises four types of talk: problem-solving talk, role talk, consciousness-raising talk, and encounter talk (Cragan & Wright, 1999).

1. **Problem-solving talk**

Problem-solving talk centers on accomplishing the group task. Because a group exists for the purpose of task accomplishment, members should participate in this type of talk. At the same time, it is essential to realize the bulk of a group’s communication time should be spent on problem-solving talk. Although groups can use any number of discussion techniques to enhance problem-solving talk, the informal interaction of a group also can center on problem-solving talk.Problem-solving talk centers on accomplishing the group task. Because a group exists for the purpose of task accomplishment, members should participate in this type of talk.

1. **Role talk**

Role talk centers on the specific role each group member plays in the group. Behind it is the idea that the role played by group members determines both the content and the relational aspect of their communication. In the case study provided at the beginning of this chapter, both David and Hassan struggle to establish themselves as the task leader. When David offers his house as a meeting place and Hassan suggests the group meet at the radio station, both are engaging in communication reflective of the task leader role. As you reread the exchange among the group members, what roles do Julie, Shanika, and Joseph play? You can identify these roles because group members’ communication generally reflects the roles they desire to play.Role talk centers on the specific role each group member plays in the group. Behind it is the idea that the role played by group members determines both the content and the relational aspect of their communication.

1. **Consciousness-raising talk**

Consciousness-raising talk centers on group identification and pride and is essential to group development, morale, and identity. Too much consciousness raising talk is not productive, however. Although consciousness-raising talk enhances member satisfaction, when either a group’s communication contains an inordinate amount of consciousness-raising talk or a group places greater emphasis on consciousness-raising talk than problem-solving talk, it can decrease a group’s performance.Consciousness-raising talk centers on group identification and pride and is essential to group development, morale, and identity**.**

1. **Encounter talk**

Encounter talk consists of interpersonal communication. Examples include self-disclosure, responsiveness, and empathy. When group members self-disclose to each other, respond to each other’s needs, and listen to each other empathically, they develop a supportive communication climate. Furthermore, when group members feel satisfied with their group experience, they report greater feelings of closeness with their group members (Wheeless, Wheeless, & Dickson-Markman, 1982).Encounter talk consists of interpersonal communication. Examples include self-disclosure, responsiveness, and empathy Group conflict is an interpersonal problem that occurs between two or more members of a team, and affects results of teamwork, so the team does not perform at optimum levels. Conflicts are caused by the situation when the balance between perceptions, goals, or/and values of the team is upset, therefore people can no more work together and no shared goals can be achieved in the team environment.

1. **Explain contribution of all four talks in effective group discussion**

***Answer***

As such, all four types of talk contribute to effective small group communication. A group that engages in a balance of problem-solving talk, role talk, consciousness-raising talk, and encounter talk not only will accomplish its task effectively but also will act as a positive force behind whether its members enjoy the group experience. It allows us to form connections, influence decisions, and motivate change. Without communication skills, the ability to progress in the working world and in life, itself, would be nearly impossible.A group that fails to engage in one of these four types of talk or overemphasizes one type of talk runs the risk of hindering task accomplishment or alienating group members

1. **Read the following passage and answer the question given below:**

**In a large office an employee named Rosy may feel like a mere payroll number, but her informal group gives her personal attachment and status. With the members of her group she is somebody, even though in the formal structure she is only one of a thousand employees. She may not look forward to monitoring 750 accounts daily, but the informal group gives more meaning to her day. When she thinks of meeting her friends, sharing their interests, and eating with them, her day takes on a new dimension that makes easier any difficulty or tedious routine in her work. Suddenly, Rosy developed some interpersonal and intergroup conflicts with some powerful members of the group. The group did not accept her. Her work became more disagreeable and compelled her to a transfer, to absenteeism and to a resignation.**

1. **Although informal groups have several benefits, explain how can these groups become harmful and toxic?**

***ANSWER***

=An **informal group** can be defined as one in which three or more people decide, perhaps on an ad hoc basis, to meet on a regular or semi-regular schedule for the purpose of discussing subjects of common interest, or for the purpose of engaging in a particular activity of common interest. This group can be harmful and toxic because of following reason:

* **Works counter to the organizational objectives:**

Informal organization forces the members to restrict their output; exhibit a disunites in organizational policies and procedures, cause insubordination, and in general, promote unauthorized actions that work counter to the formal organization.

* **Conformity:**

Informal organization exerts strong pressures for Conformity.

Conformity can make group members reluctant to act independently, creatively or imaginatively, for fear of losing group approval and membership. Informal group leaders sometimes manipulate the group toward undesirable needs. They may pose road blocks for the competent people.

The informal leaders may force members to restrict the level of output, to exceed the time limit for coffee to tea break, to indulge in intolerable activities taxing the patience of the management. In this way, informal group can become an instrument of neurotic owners of conflict or non-responsible rattle- rousers using the group for their own selfish ends.

* **Rumours:**

Informal communication system, known as grapevine, is susceptible for use in spreading destructive, distorted, inaccurate and incomplete information cutting across organizational lines with tremendous speed. Where the formal communication system is poor such rumors prosper. When the employees are not kept informed on matters that directly affect them, they may transmit incorrect information that undermines morale or leads people to make poor and mediocre decisions.

* **Social costs:**

Informal organization is safety value for the frustration and other emotional problems of work group. Research has revealed that social interaction by alleviating monotony on the job my actually contribute to production. But this is true only up to a certain point. Informal organization may result in higher operating costs because it may encourage gossiping joke telling, general horse play, or idle conversion that satisfy some of the members social needs.

* **Resistance to change:**

Every informal group considers certain cultural values which, it feels, desirable to be maintained by the members of the group. Members in the process of following these values and norms unwillingly maintain status quo and resist chance which may be essential in promoting the development of their personality and the organizational benefits.

Perpetuation of status quo ultimately results in resistance to change which the management finds it very difficult to overcome such resistance. Some members may perceive immediate threat to their position by introducing some changes like introduction of computer in the accounts department) in the organization. Perceptions of threats are just as real m the formation and solidification of an informal organization as an actual threat.

* **Role conflict**

Since informal organizations try to meet the social needs of their members there is a natural tendency to produce role conflict. An individual perceives role conflict when he has to fulfil conflicting requirements of both his group as well as of organization as a whole. Such a conflict may be dysfunctional from organization’s point of view. Much of the role conflict can be avoided by carefully cultivating mutual interests with informal groups. The more the interests, goals, methods, and evaluation system of formal and informal organizations can be integrated, the more productivity and satisfaction can be expected.

* **Negative Attitude of Informal Leaders:**

The informal leader may turn out to be a troubleshooter for the organization. In order to increase his influence, he may work against the policies of management and manipulate the behavior of his followers. Thus, he can be source of conflict between the management and the workers.

1. **Suggest some measures for Rosy to check and balance the dysfunctions of informal groups?**

***ANSWER***

Informal groups (or informal organizations) are an important outgrowth of formal organization structure that managers cannot avoid. Rather than viewing informal groups as hindrance to attainment of formal organizational goal, managers should gibe formal acceptance to these group. They must view informal groups as pillars of support to formal organization structures. Many organizational problems that cannot be solved officially can be smoothly solved by informal group’s id they are formally accepted by managers. They speed up transmission of useful information throughout the origination. They provide feedback to managers on how people respond to policies and procedures. They provide useful tips to managers on matters which they cannot officially deal with, they also promote team spirit and cooperation amongst group members so that managers need not maintain close control and supervision over employees. Informal groups are, in fact, a strong support and supplement of formal employees. Informal groups are, in fact, a strong support and supplement of formal organization structures. Managers must, therefore, manage these groups to merge group goals with organizational goals

Some measures for Rosy to check and balance the dysfunctions of informal groups are given below:

* The informal groups operating in the organization should be identified and their existence recognized.
* The patterns of informal communication should be analyzed carefully. To know the sources of misinformation, rumor, etc. an enlightened manager can use informal channels to plug the loopholes of the formal communication system.
* The management should try to achieve equilibrium between formal and informal organizations. Conflicts between the two should be avoided through two-way communication with he group and their leaders.
* The management should attempt to integrate the interests of informal groups with the objectives of the formal organization. If this could be achieved, much of the role conflict would be avoided.
* The desirable patterns of informal relationships may be incorporated into the formal structure. This will make the organization strong.
* Informal group must be taken into confidence whenever a change in work methods is to be introduced in the organization. It is easier to introduce a change when group norms are changed. For overcoming resistance to change on the part of the groups, the management must share complete information about the change with the groups and try to persuade them to accept change by convincing them of the benefits of the said change.
* Informal employees that they are not against informal groups. Rather, they view them as important supplement to formal groups.
* Involve group members in making official decision.
* Integrate group goals with organizational goals and avoid inter-group conflicts.
* Obtain feedback from group members on what they think about organizational plans and policies before officially announcing them.

1. **Read the following passage and answer the question given below**:

**Interviewer:** Do you have meetings for members of staff where they can express views about what’s going on in the store?

**Steve Moody:** We have a series of meetings, management and supervisory every week, we have something which Marks and Spencer’s call a focus group, which is members of staff who get together regularly from all areas of the store, so from the food section and perhaps the menswear section. From the office who do the stock and accounting and indeed the warehouse where people receive goods. They have meeting, they discuss issues, they discuss problems that they feel are going on in the store. They also discuss suggestions of how they can improve that we run the store, and they discuss that amongst themselves first. They will then have a meeting with members of management and obviously myself, and we will discuss those issues and work together to try and provide solutions. However, Marks and Spencer’s philosophy, I suppose is that meetings should not be substitute for day to day communication and therefore if problems do arise in terms of the operations, or an individual has got a problem in their working environment, or indeed their immediate line manager, or with their family, we would like to discuss that as it arises and would like to encourage a policy that they will come and talk to their supervisor or their manager, to see what we can do to solve the problem.

1. Steve Moody mentions two kinds of meetings. The first weekly meetings for management and supervisory staff. What is the second kind of meeting called?

Answer: **A focus group** because they are flexible by design. They capitalize on the ability of decision-makers to talk to their customers directly. They give actionable insight into customers knowledge of their products, or services.A good moderator who prepares well for a focus group will act as a proxy for the decision makers

1. Who attends them?

Answer:

Members of staff from all areas of the store (example the food section ,the stock and accounting section ,management section, sales section, worker and all other staffs) attend them because they discuss issues, they discuss problems that they feel are going on in the store. They also discuss suggestions of how they can improve that we run the store, and they discuss that amongst themselves first. They will then have a meeting with members of management and obviously myself, and we will discuss those issues and work together to try and provide solutions

* 1. What are they designed to achieve?

Answer:

Staff can discuss problems in the store, make suggestions for improvements. Focus groups are used in traditional market research to gather target audience opinions and attitudes about certain products, services or concepts. A company may use a focus group to gather customer feedback on a new product or service before they decide to take the concept into development. In this context, a focus group can be used to test out ideas and gather opinion on whether the idea will be liked or needed by the target audience. Focus groups are fairly widespread and appear to be an accepted form of research for many organisations. They can be used early in the product lifecycle to explore options and formulate new ideas, or they can be used later in the process to validate concepts and even choose between prototypes and different designs before launch. After this, they will meet with members of management to discuss those issues and try to provide solutions.

* 1. What kind of problems cannot be dealt with by meetings?

Answer:

Individuals problems with their work or their line manager, or even family problems. Focus groups have come under some criticism for their inability to remove the potential for ‘group think’ where some participants will be swayed by the opinions of other more dominant members and feel under pressure to conform. In our research, we have often found that what people say they do is often very different from what people actually do, therefore reliance upon focus groups alone can be misleading when trying to uncover true customer behaviour.

* 1. How are such problems dealt with?

Answer:

Individuals are encouraged to discuss such problems with theit supervisor or manager.Discuss, Debate, and Agree on the course of action and execute against that plan. Discuss all of the plans fully with the person who suggested it taking the lead to explain their approach to the solution. Allow the team to debate the positive and negative merits of the proposal and repeat the process until all ideas have been presented. The team should be able to reach consensus on the best course of action.  Now the team can agree to the most likely solution (or two - if they are different resources) and create a game plan to execute against.  Make sure that everybody on the team can answer the question "what is my role in the solution?"  This action planning process ensures that you have an execution plan to solve the problem. We want to make sure that we solve any structural issues first. These might be open sales positions, known bugs in the software, issues with a supplier - internal or external, known production issues, and those types of challenges.  Do we have a common and full understanding of the problem?  Is the meeting goal clear to everyone?  This root cause analysis is the most important part of the process.  If you don't find the root of the problem, it will feel like groundhog day as you'll be solving the symptoms over and over again.

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