

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 41: Group Behaviour- Part VIII

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I will continue to discuss about group behavior. We have already discussed about so many aspects of group behavior in terms of groups, type of groups, why people join groups and different kinds of work therapies and groups. Today I am going to discuss about a very different aspect of group behavior in terms of teams. These are also different kind of groups that we have in any organization, but they differ from groups in a very significant manner and to a larger extent. They have a different purpose, they have a different mission and they have different kind of authorities and powers to execute and achieve the organizational goal.

Based on this discussion, let us first define that what are teams. A team can be defined as a group of members who have complementary skills and are committed to a common purpose or set of performance goals for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. May be in any group, the leader is there and the leader is also responsible for the outcome or the consequence of any action or mission they have taken up. But when we are talking about teams, the members have complementary skills, they hold some expertise related to the task they have to accomplish, the goal they have to accomplish or task they have to complete and they are mutually responsible for the consequence.

For example, launching of any product or designing any product, it requires a team of members with different backgrounds in terms of designing, in terms of engineering, in terms of ergonomics, to what extent any product is very much supporting the physical aspect of any person. So, all these aspects when are being compiled together for a specific purpose, then it forms a team. They perform, they have a specific goal to achieve and as soon as the goal is achieved, the team disbands. It depends whether the life of the team within the organization is finite or it is temporary or permanent. So, teams differ from groups in a larger way as they have a mission.

Once that mission is completed, it is accomplished, the team members tend to disperse, but the most important thing is that they hold some complementary and specific skills that they tend to help the members to achieve that goal. So, teams apart from groups have certain characteristics that they can differ from groups. The first characteristic is that is organized around work processes rather than functions. Every organization has its own functionality. They have a hierarchy and they tend to function accordingly based on the roles, based on the responsibilities, it is being assigned and every member is performing in day to day life on a common schedule.

But when we are talking about teams, teams are formed and they can be categorized based on process that how a particular job or process has to be performed in a specific manner which requires a set of skills to be executed on that task. So, when we are talking about characteristics of teams, so teams are organized around work process rather than functions. They come together to perform those process such as designing on, launching of a new product,

manufacturing and distribution. When it comes to competing in the market, then every aspect of the business has to be considered while launching or designing any new product. It is about manufacturing, it is about designing of the project, it is about engineering aspect, it is about distribution that to what extent the product can be distributed in the market so that we can hold the maximum percentage of the marketplace.

This is all about the first characteristics of teams. The other characteristic is that teams own the product, service or process on which they work. They consider that project, that work close to them, they perceive some meaningfulness in the task that they are contributing to because that task when completed or process that has been achieved will take the organizational performance to the higher level which will help the organization to create its own space in the market. So, this means that people feel part of something meaningful and understand and how their work fits into the big picture. No doubt the whole organization as a group is working and every member of the organization is performing their own designated roles.

But team members come together for a specific task for a mission and they feel important and significant about themselves that they are contributing to the task and the task is very important for the organization. So, every member of teams are trained in several different areas and have a variety of different skills. In general, every member is hired based on his qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities. But when teams are being formed, each and every member is also expected to perform something which is beyond his or her expertise. Under such circumstances, there is a process within team that is known as cross training.

And any member of the team will practice and learn to perform a variety of different tasks and it occurs at regular intervals. When teams become permanent in any organization, then they have to update their knowledge and skills so as they can have hold of different areas of the work process and perform effectively. So, this kind of training is known as cross training. It is a practice of training team members in several different areas of expertise and is followed so that they are qualified to help their teammates by performing a variety of tasks required for team success. Whereas, at the same time when cross training is being performed, then there are also shared mental models where every member is expected to perform different kind of roles regarding that process.

So, shared mental models help people with a common understanding that develops between team members regarding how the team will operate, what they are expected altogether to perform and what each particular person is expected to do at any given time. So, when any team member is undergoing cross training at regular intervals, then they have a mental model, they develop a mental model or common understanding that they can be asked to perform any task at any given point of time irrespective of their expertise. So, teams generally possess the level of following cross training and at the same time shared mental models. The other characteristic is that teams govern themselves at least to some extent. If we talk about any group, there is a leader or there is a hierarchy that is functional to take the decisions regarding

the group or any organization like any boss in the group or any leader who will take the accountability of the decision.

But when we are talking about teams, then to certain extent team members serve as coaches who help team members achieve their goals rather than as traditional or more authoritarian leaders. So, in teams the member or one of the member will serve as coach because there is a reason for it that why there is a coach in any team because that if we go to the previous characteristics that every member has to exercise the practice of cross training, then there is a coach who has expertise in different skills and he tries to transfer that knowledge skill and expertise based on his experiences to different members of the team where the members are itself responsible to bear the consequences of the decision they have taken. So, this is about team govern themselves. There is a coach not a leader. The coach has all the expertise from different areas and they try to impart that skills to different members from time to time.

So, this is how they govern themselves. Next in team support staff and responsibilities are built in. Teams often include members who have expertise in crucial support areas and they do not have to go outside the organization. Once the teams become a permanent part of any organization, then they try to incorporate those members who have different kind of skills to perform the work process such as they have highly advanced and specialized skills who are assigned to work as members of the several teams at once. The teams do not always rely on outside support or services to get their jobs done and are reasonably self-contained and self-sufficient.

May be any organization would outsource any task to be done because organizations do not have that expertise. But in recent times, organizations have teams who already have their own expertise within their organization and they do not have to look out outside the organization to avail those services based on the expert knowledge. The other is that teams are involved in making company wide decisions. Traditionally, it is only high level managers who make important organizational decisions. That is the most important feature of any organization.

But in teams, however, members often take on this responsibility themselves because members have their own coach, they have their own expertise which has been thrown all together towards the work process and how they are taking the decisions or making the decisions, they will take responsible for those aspects. So, some companies may be reluctant to give teams total decision making power, but at least they will offer or they will give some sort of power and authority to take some decisions regarding the work process. But definitely some sort of decision making power is with the team. For instance, teams have been around for more than a century. For example, Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb in 1879.

It was not only his own personal efforts, it was a team of five people with different areas expertise who joined the forces for this invention. Apple Macintosh computer was developed by the team headed by Stephen Jobs. So, it is not only Stephen Jobs hands that created Apple's Macintosh computer, it was basically a team holding different kind of expertise and then that product was launched or created. So, so much expertise was collected from all over the areas

that it led to profound innovation and creativity. This is the significance of team or it can be advertising agency McKen Ericsson who popularized the ad campaign of Mastercard success.

Now, this campaigning was also a teamwork. It is not only one person's idea, but it was a collaborative effort of different people who came together for the ad campaign of Mastercard's credit card. These are the examples that how teams exist in any organization with different and specific characteristics or traits and to certain extent they have powers to make their own decisions to foster innovation and creativity. So, these are the characteristics of team. Based on these characteristics, there are different kinds of teams as well.

The first is based on purpose or mission that why the team has been created. There has to be a reason. So, the major purpose or mission has to do with the team work. In this regard, some teams are known as work teams. Teams whose members are concerned primarily using the organization's resources effectively create its results.

Whereas, now this work team may be a permanent aspect of any organization, their expertise are all together and they are using the organizational resources to spearhead the work process. Another aspect can be or purpose can be to improve the performance of the teams. Then again improvement teams are being created whose members are oriented primarily toward the mission of increasing the effectiveness of the process used by the organization. Resources are there, but to what extent more organization has to be effective and how the resources can be used effectively, then again improvement teams are being created. So, the purpose is either to enhance or to use the resources effectively.

It is purpose or mission. Mission to improve and purpose to use the resources effectively. So, this is the purpose or mission. So, first type of team can be based on purpose or mission based on work teams and improvement teams. The other is the second dimension has to do with time. Some teams are temporary in nature and some teams are permanent in nature.

Any team can be established for a specific purpose and then the team members tend to disband. That means there is a finite limited life of that team because a particular task has to be performed which requires some different skills or expertise and people come together, they perform, they consolidate all the expertise and immediately the task is done. But as soon as and the other kind of teams are permanent and they stay intact as long as the organization is operating. For example, teams focusing on providing effective customer service tend to be a permanent part of any organization. For example, any service provider company they have a permanent team in terms of customer service and that will function throughout the life of the organization.

That is basically a different department which is run by a team of members. So, this is based on the purpose whether the purpose is short lived or it is long run. So, based on time we have temporary teams or permanent teams. The other is degree of autonomy that is to what extent members have the degree to operate autonomously. Autonomously means to what extent they are empowered to take their own decisions, the organizational decision making latitudes to what extent they are free to take the decisions and they are free to take the responsibility of those decisions.

So, the third dimension has to do with the degree to which team operate autonomously. This reflects the extent to which employees are responsible for making their own decisions and the degree to which they are accountable for their own work outcomes. The freedom they have to take their own decisions and they are responsible for those outcomes. At the extreme low end of the scale where bosses are responsible for decision and accountable for work outcomes there are standard work groups. Within these units leaders make decisions on behalf of the group members who in turn are responsible for following their leaders orders.

This is the difference basic difference between group and teams. If every group work group has a leader the leader will take the decision and he will guide and direct the members to achieve the goal. Whereas, if you are talking about teams in terms of authority then in organizations the higher degree of responsibility for decisions can be shared with the team members to a certain extent by the organization and such responsibility or teams are known as semi autonomous work groups. Because intervention of organization or leader will still exist the leader or organization will only share some powers with the team members. So, as to conduct the work process in a in a smooth fashion.

So, such type of teams are known as semi autonomous work groups or teams in which employees get to share the responsibility for decisions with their bosses and are jointly accountable for their work outcomes. So, in in this case the leader and the team members will share the responsibility 50 50 percent of responsibility lies on the shoulders of the leader and the team members. And team members do have right to take the decision to a certain extent. Whereas, if the team members already have all the authority to make the decisions they completely become autonomous independent of taking their own decisions. And such type of teams are known as self managed work teams or self directed teams.

This this can only be possible when the organization is ready to hand over all the liberty and freedom in the hands of the team members to take all the decisions and they transform themselves as self managed teams or self directed teams. I can correlate these kind of teams when we discussed about cohesiveness when leadership is high positive and cohesiveness is very high under such circumstances the leader takes full freedom his own decision to hand over the responsibility to all the team members because they are highly cohesive and they can reconsolidate or reconcile all the interest and resources of the members to conduct the work process. This is the result of or type of team based on degree of autonomy. Based on this self

managed work teams consist of small members of employees who in addition do their regular work take on the duties that are used to be performed. And this includes work assignments, deciding on the pace of work, determining how quality is to be assessed and even specifying who gets to join their teams.

That means, they will create their own team based on own decision and requirements. They will not discuss with any other member of the organizations rather they have their own decision making of hiring and firing. The other is authority structure. The fourth dimension reflects the teams connection to the organizations overall authority structure that is the connection between various formal job responsibilities. Teams remain intact with respect to their organizational functions and such a team can operate without the ambiguities created when members stay from the areas of expertise.

Under such circumstances this type of team is been created when members are join any team irrespective of their expertise and irrespective on the hierarchy from where they are coming may be from top, middle and lower level management. Because team has to be created based on the requirement of the expertise. So it becomes a cross functional team that the members join the team irrespective of any hierarchy in the organization and it can be a cross functional teams. So there are teams that cross over various functional units for example, marketing, finance, human resources and they are commonly referred to as cross functional teams. When people coming from different different departments on areas they come all together these such kind of teams are known as cross functional teams and team represented by people from different speciality areas within organizations.

But the most important thing is that when cross functional teams are been established are been created then members who are coming from different teams then the boundaries has to be considered as permeable. Permeable allowing members to join the team from different backgrounds and departments. To this extended people are involved in several different kinds of teams they may gain broader perspectives and make more important contributions to various teams. May be one member is already a part of another team but that same person can also join another team because of his expertise and contributing more based on his broader experience and perspectives. However this sounds very positive about cross functional team but at the same time cross functional teams are difficult to manage because people come from different units they have different expectations they work on different caliber and levels and it becomes difficult for the even the team and coaches to compile and consolidate all the talent and expertise in one form.

But yes if it is been coordinated accordingly then it contributes largely to the success of the organization. And the other is physical presence people members of the team meeting in physical presence that makes a team as a physical team. When members frequently meet each other in person to discuss about the agendas or share their expertise towards the work process then those teams are termed as physical teams. But with the invention of technology or

expansion in the use of technology such as intranet, teleconferencing, conference calls and emails another team has been created that is known as virtual teams. Where there are no boundaries people operate within their own spaces and based on the dependence on the technology people tend to meet online that such teams are known as virtual teams.

So based on the physical presence there are two types of teams that is physical teams and the virtual teams. So these are the types of teams that have been identified. This is a pictorial representation of types of teams. The first is work teams, temporary teams, work groups, intact teams and physical teams. So based on this there are work teams and improvement teams, temporary teams and permanent teams, work groups and the self-managed work teams where they have all the authority to take the decisions, intact teams and the cross functional teams, physical teams and virtual teams.

So these are the five types of teams that have been identified by social scientist. Next comes group versus teams. The difference between groups and team. This is one of the most important aspect to be discussed because whenever we are talking about group behavior it becomes imperative to discuss the difference between groups and teams. So groups are designed around functions that how the group will function based on the roles, based on the norms, based on the status, based on the level of cohesiveness and based on the common goal that has been achieved by the members.

Whereas teams are designed around work process that how a one particular work process can be accomplished while compiling different expertise as a team. There is no sense of ownership over the work products because the group is functioning at overall level. Whereas teams have ownership of product, services and process because specific expertise has been used to launch any product or design any new product. Workers have single skills where team members have many skills. In groups every member has been assigned any role and duty based on his or expertise where on his skill.

Whereas when we are talking about teams members have different kind of expertise because they are undergoing a process which is termed as cross training, cross training and shared mental models which makes them different from other working groups. Outside leaders govern workers and team members govern themselves. In groups there is a leader whereas in teams there is a coach. Support staff and skills are found outside the group and support staff and skills are built into teams. So in any group there can be different kind of staff to offer any particular or perform any responsibility and duty.

Whereas in teams, teams members have their own staff, own skills to build into teams because they are completely based on work process that how a particular work will be processed based on specific type of expertise. So they manage their own skills and staff and most importantly organization decisions are made by managers and teams are involved in making organizational

decisions for themselves. So organization decisions are made by managers that is the manager or the leader and whereas in teams members are involved in making organizational decisions for themselves. So in teams there is no specific leader but members are so much experienced in their own way that they tend to take decision at collective level.

Next comes creating and developing teams. So this involves a four stage process that when, why and how team has to be established. It is not something that every organization consists this regular feature. Teams are being established as per the requirement or necessity of the organization. So social scientists have identified a four stage process that how teams are developed.

So the first stage is known as pre-work. Pre-work it is explanation, decision and justification that why a team is required. This requires lot of paperwork which includes justification for having a team inside the organization. There has to be inventory which explains that what kind of skills are required for a particular work process. So the first stage when team is created based on the decision is pre-work. So one of the most important objective of this phase is to determine whether a team should be created or not.

And if team has to be created at all then what are the requirements expertise for that work particular work process. So the team members if the team has to be created then it is believed that it may develop the most creative and insightful ways to get the things done. In considering this it is important to note exactly that what needs to be created. So what needs to be created includes inventory of the skills, how the job has to be performed, how it should be prepared, what decision should be taken in advance about what kind of authority should a team has or who has authority to create a team and there has to be a support from the whole organizational system to act as advisory or advice to hand over certain responsibility to the team members for executing their task. Now here the question is that even execution is there then this has to be decided whether that execution has to be an intact team or a work group or it can be a self-managed team.

So this is the first stage of team development that is pre-work. The other second stage is create performance conditions. Building on the pre-work, organizational officials must ensure that the team has proper resources needed to carry out the work. This involves all the material resources, all the intellectual resources that are required or human resources that are required to perform a particular work. It can be in terms of proper resources such as finance and equipment, it can be about human resources for example, appropriate blend of skilled professionals or it can be any support specific support from the organization in terms of space or in the organization that is being required to establish that work area so that the team members can work appropriately. And most importantly willingness of the organization to provide support in every manner unless managers help create the proper condition for team success it will only contribute to the failure.

So it is not only about teams but the backing from the organization also plays an important role to create that condition the team has to be created and that support will come from organization itself that is the larger picture. The third is form and build the team. Once the pre-work has been turned and conditions has been satisfied that the team can be created next comes to form and build the teams. Under such circumstance or at this stage three important things matter a lot. The first is that manager should form boundaries while clearly establishing who is and who is not the member of the team.

So picking up members from the organization based on the expertise and skills will make clear definitions to every group member, organizational member and team member whether they are part of the group or not. So any team has to create its own boundary that differentiate themselves from the groups and that will avoid confusion or any kind of ambiguity regarding what a member has to perform what in terms of role definition. The second is under such circumstances ambiguity is reduced and confusion is avoided which leads to reduced level of frustration. Second members must accept the team's overall mission and purpose. This accustoms to agreement of each and every team member to come to the to the consent and common agreement that how that how team members will function and they are agreeing upon achieving the goal or work process perform the work process at a common ground.

There should be no dissentment or discernment among the members that how the work will be processed. And third that organizational officials should clarify the team's mission and responsibilities. Every member that has been chosen to be part of the team based on the expertise must be able to clarify the team's mission and responsibility. Understanding the team's responsibility and mission and understanding one's own responsibilities and mission.

And the last is stage four that is providing ongoing assistance. Once a team is functioning, supervisors may be needed to help them eliminate certain problems to perform even better. Role of organization still exist even when the team is has been established that they will try to support the team members based on certain conflicts that they experience while working as a team. Under such circumstances, organizations play a very important role to identify and eliminate problems to enhance the performance of the team. For example, there can be certain members in the team who are disruptive, who are problematic, who can be who can restrict or disrupt any work of the any member under such circumstances organizations tend to intervene to identify either to eliminate those members from the team or to counsel those members.

So, as they can align with the team goals. So, in other words, when the stage fourth stage is received and all the considerable investment which is required is being implemented then the work teams pay substantial dividends that means the outcome is positive which makes the work more effective and the quality of the experience of both managers and its members. So, the experience enriches in form of good performances and appropriate work process and the members and the work also becomes effective. So, this is only achieved when the stages in the development of the team is being passed through with all logics. This is the diagrammatic

representation of the four stage process of team development. Stage one pre-work, stage two create performance conditions, stage three form and build team and stage four provide ongoing assistance.

So, this is all about teams. I will discuss another topic in the next lecture series. Thank you so much. Thank you.