

Chapter 7- Groups & Teamwork

LO7.1 Define groups and distinguish between formal and informal groups.

1) Distinguish between formal and informal work groups in organizations. Give an example of each.

Formal work groups: are established to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals (departments, task forces, and committees).

Informal groups: emerge naturally in response to the common interests of organizational members (a softball team, a fitness group or a wine tasting club).

LO7.2 Discuss group development.

1) What are the different stages of group development and what should happen at each stage?

Leaders and trainers have observed that many groups develop through a series of stages over time. Each stage presents the members with a series of challenges they must master in order to achieve the next stage.

Forming: Group members try to orient themselves by “testing the waters”.

Storming: Confrontation and criticism occur as members determine whether they will go along with the way the group is developing.

Norming: Members resolve the issues that provoked the storming, and they develop social consensus.

Performing: The group devotes its energies toward task accomplishment.

Adjourning: Rites and rituals that affirm the group’s previous successful development are common. Members often exhibit emotional support for each other.

2) You have just formed a group as a part of a class assignment to complete a group project. You have four weeks to complete the project and present it to the class. What can you tell the other group members about how the group will develop and how they should proceed? What advice will you give them?

According to the punctuated equilibrium model, the group will experience stretches of group stability punctuated by a critical first meeting (Phase 1), a midpoint change (midpoint transition) in group activity, and a rush to task completion (Phase 2).

Based on the model, you can offer group members the following advice:

- Prepare carefully for the first meeting
- As long as people are working, do not look for radical progress during Phase 1
- Manage the midpoint transition carefully

- Be sure that adequate resources are available to execute the Phase 2 plan and resist deadline changes

3) Discuss 4 advantages and 4 disadvantages of teamwork.

Advantages: quality, customer satisfaction, innovation, and the speed of production.

Disadvantages: intergroup conflict, social loafing, no cohesion amongst the group members and group size too large.

LO7.3 Explain how group size and member diversity influence what occurs in groups.

1) Explain the difference between additive tasks, disjunctive tasks, and conjunctive tasks. Give an example of each.

Additive tasks: tasks in which group performance is dependent on the sum of the performance of individual members (moving a heavy crate).

Disjunctive tasks: tasks in which group performance is dependent on the performance of the best group member (debugging a software program).

Conjunctive tasks: tasks in which the performance of the group is limited by its poorest performer (sequential tasks such as assembly lines).

LO7.4 Review how norms and roles affect social interaction.

1) What are norms? Why is it important for a manager to be aware of the norms in his or her work group?

Social norms are collective expectations that members of social units have regarding the behaviour of each other. They are codes of conduct that specify what individuals should do and not do and standards against which we evaluate the appropriateness of behaviour.

Norms that affect the behaviour of members include the following:

- Dress norms: social norms frequently dictate the kind of clothing people wear to work
- Reward allocation norms: equity, equality, reciprocity, and social responsibility.
- Performance norms

Its important managers understand these group norms because it is the environment in which they are working in.

2) There are two basic kinds of roles in organizations:

Assigned roles: formally prescribed by an organization as a means of dividing labour and responsibility to facilitate task achievement. Indicate “who does what” and “who can tell others what to do.”

Emergent roles: roles that develop naturally to meet the social- emotional needs of group members or to assist in formal job accomplishment.

LO7.5 Discuss the causes and consequences of group cohesiveness.

1) Julia Franco, the VP of Operations at Zeta Manufacturing, is concerned about the consistently low levels of productivity in the assembly plant. At a meeting with company executives, she proposes the introduction of some social activities to increase cohesiveness among the workers, and thereby improve productivity. Gordon Wong, the VP of Human Resources, disagrees. “This group of workers is known to frequent the local pub everyday after work and vacation together on long weekends. If you increase cohesiveness any further, productivity will probably come to a complete halt!” Who do you think is correct? Explain your answer.

This question is intended to test students' understanding of the relationship between cohesiveness, norms, and performance.

Like Julia, many students automatically assume that high cohesiveness will lead to improved performance. However, this is only true if the group productivity norms support the goals of the organization. If, as Gordon suggests, cohesiveness is high and group productivity norms are poor from an organizational standpoint, then increasing cohesiveness will not lead to improved performance.

Julia may have to reduce the cohesiveness of the group first (e.g., by removing key members, adding new members, or perhaps introducing competition or conflict into the group) and then encourage the adoption of better performance norms, perhaps through an incentive program, as one example, before trying to increase cohesiveness.

LO7.6 Explain the dynamics of social loafing

1) Describe the two main forms of social loafing. What are some ways to counteract them?

Free rider effect: people lower their effort to get a free ride at the expense of other group members.

Sucker effect: people lower their effort because of the feeling that others are free riding.

Ways to counteract them include increasing the visibility of individual performance, making the work more interesting, increasing workers' feelings of indispensability, increasing performance feedback, and rewarding group performance.

Chapter 8- Social Influence, Socialization & Culture

LO8.6 Define organizational culture and discuss the contributors to a culture.

CULTURE → NORMS → BEHAVIOUR

A strong culture is an organizational culture with intense and pervasive beliefs, values, and assumptions.

- Provides great consensus concerning “what the organization is about” or what it stands for (Boston Pizza: Teamwork and fun)
- Strong cultures are associated with greater success and effectiveness.

LO8.7 Discuss the assets and liabilities of strong cultures.

1) Discuss the assets and liabilities associated with strong organizational cultures.

Assets of strong cultures:

- Improved coordination: different parts of the organization can learn from each other and can coordinate their efforts
- Conflict resolution: sharing core values is a powerful mechanism that helps to resolve conflicts
- Financial success: when the culture supports the mission, strategy, and goals of the organization

Liabilities of strong cultures:

- Resistance to change: a strong culture can prove very resistant to change and can damage a firm’s ability to innovate
- Potential for pathology: organizational effectiveness simply because the cultures are, in some sense, extreme
- Culture clash: mix badly when a merger or acquisition pushes two of them together under the same corporate banner

2) Describe the step-by-step socialization process of organizations with strong cultures.

- Step 1: Selecting employees
- Step 2: Debasement and hazing
- Step 3: Training “in the Trenches”
- Step 4: Reward and promotion
- Step 5: Exposure to core culture
- Step 6: Organizational folklore
- Step 7: Role models

LO8.8 Describe how to diagnose an organizational culture.

1) Describe three mechanisms, which serve to diagnose, teach, and reinforce organizational culture. Give an example of each.

Symbols: provide common meaning and reinforce cultural values and what the company

considers important (pink Cadillacs are the symbols of success at Mary Kay Cosmetics)

Rituals: parties and gatherings are expressive events that define and build the culture (Mary Kay's seminars)

Stories: stories about past organizational events, both pleasant and unpleasant. Told to communicate informally "how things work" (Ray Kroc cancelled a McDonald's franchise deal after finding a fly in the restaurant).

Chapter 9- Leadership

LO9.1 Define leadership and discuss the role of formal leadership in organizations.

1) What is strategic leadership and why is it important for organizations to have strategic leaders?

Strategic leadership involves the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization.

Strategic leaders are important for organizations because they can provide an organization with a sustainable competitive advantage by helping their organization compete in turbulent and unpredictable environments, and by exploiting growth opportunities.

LO9.2 Explain and critically evaluate the trait theory of leadership.

1) Describe the trait theory of leadership and discuss the main research findings on leadership traits and leader effectiveness.

According to the trait theory of leadership, leadership depends on the personal qualities or traits of the leader. The basic idea is that those who become leaders and are successful leaders possess a special set of traits that distinguish them from followers.

Research on leadership traits has found that all of the Big Five dimensions of personality are related to leadership emergence and success, with extraversion and conscientiousness being the most consistent predictors of leadership effectiveness. Although intelligence is also related to leadership effectiveness, the relationship is lower than previously thought. The relationship between traits and leadership effectiveness is stronger for relational measures of effectiveness than for performance-related measures.

2) Describe the trait theory of leadership and discuss its main limitations.

*Description from previous question

First, it is difficult to determine if traits make the leader or if opportunity for leadership produces the traits. Second, we have few clues about what leaders actually do to influence others successfully. Third, the most crucial problem of the trait approach to

leadership is its failure to take into account the situation in which leadership occurs.

Despite these reasons however, the research has instilled much enthusiasm into finding out what exactly makes a great leader.

LO9.3 Describe the following leadership behaviours and their consequences: consideration and initiating structure.

1) Consideration VS. Initiating Structure

Consideration: the extent to which a leader is approachable and shows personal concern and respect for employees. Seen as friendly and egalitarian, expresses appreciation and support.

Initiating Structure: the degree to which a leader concentrates on group goal attainment. Organizes his or her role and the roles of followers, stresses standard procedures, schedules the work to be done, and assigns employees to particular tasks.

LO9.4 Describe and evaluate the following situational theories of leadership: House's path-goal theory.

Path-Goal Theory is concerned with four specific kinds of leader behaviour:

- Directive behaviour: schedule work, maintain performance standards, and let employees know what is expected of them (initiating structure)
- Supportive behaviour: friendly, approachable, and concerned with pleasant interpersonal relationships (consideration)
- Participative behaviour: consult with employees about work-related matters
- Achievement-oriented behaviour: encourage employees to exert high effort

1) According to House's Path-Goal Theory, under what conditions should employees appreciate both directive and participative leader behaviours? Under what conditions are they not likely to appreciate them? Give examples of tasks, which illustrate each set of conditions.

Employees will likely appreciate both directive and participative leader behaviours when they are working on challenging but ambiguous tasks (a manager developing a project proposal or a budget for a new department). Employees will generally not appreciate directive and participative leader behaviours when the tasks are clear and routine (janitorial work).

LO9.5 Discuss participative leadership and how and when to use participative leadership.

1) Describe the potential advantages and problems associated with participative leadership.

Potential advantages: increased motivation, quality and acceptance of decisions.

Potential problems: concerns about loss of power, excessive time and energy requirements, and lack of receptivity or knowledge by employees.

LO9.7 Describe transactional and transformational leadership and their consequences.

1) Describe the differences between transactional and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership: describes the routine relationship between leaders and followers in which the leader uses rewards and other management techniques to bring subordinate behaviour in line with organizational goals. Transactional leadership behaviour: involves contingent reward behaviour and management by exception (the leader taking corrective action on the basis of the results of leader-follower transactions).

Transformational leadership: provides followers with a new vision that instills commitment. The qualities that set transformational leaders apart from transactional ones are intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and charisma.

2) Explain why transformational leaders are effective.

Transformational leaders are effective because they are instrumental in developing high-quality LMX (leader-member exchange theory) relationships, identification with one's work unit, self-efficacy, person-organization value congruence, and for enhancing employees' perceptions of the five core job characteristics of the job characteristics model.

3) When is a transformational leader most effective?

When we're dealing with someone who is very extrinsic and has trouble being motivated, a transformational leader would be an excellent mentor. Especially because they're very individualized, this would help someone who might be shy, lack confidence and is semi-anti social. In another example, perhaps we're simply dealing with someone who isn't satisfied with their job, the work they do isn't challenging and they don't see the big picture in terms of their inputs.

Chapter 12- Ethics

LO12.8 Define ethics and review the ethical dilemmas that managers face.

1) What are some of the main causes of unethical behaviour in organizations?

Potential for individual gain, role conflict, strong organizational identification, too much or too little competition, organizational and industry culture, and certain personality traits such as high economic values or a need for personal power.

2) Discuss the major themes associated with the ethical issues faced by managers and provide examples of ethical behaviour.

Honest communication (advertise honestly), fair treatment (pay equitably), special consideration (“fair treatment” standard can be modified for special cases), fair competition (avoid bribes and kickbacks), responsibility to organization (avoid waste and inefficiency), corporate social responsibility (do not pollute) and respect for law (follow the letter and spirit of labour laws).

3) Define whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing refers to the disclosure of illegitimate practices by a current or former organizational member to some person or organization that may be able to take action to correct these practices.

LO12.9 Define sexual harassment and discuss what organizations can do to prevent it and how they should respond to allegations.

1) Discuss what organizations can do to improve their responsiveness and deal with allegations of sexual harassment.

They can examine the characteristics of deaf ear organizations, foster management support and education, stay vigilant, take immediate action, create a state-of-the-art policy, and establish clear reporting procedures.

2) What are the main reasons for why organizations fail to respond to allegations of sexual harassment.

- Inadequate organizational policies and procedures for managing sexual harassment complaints
- Defensive managerial reactions and rationalizations for failing to act in the face of complaints
- Organizational features that contribute to inertial tendencies such as international companies in foreign countries

Chapter 11- Decision Making

LO11.1 Define decision-making and differentiate well-structured and ill- structured problems.

1) Decision-making: is the process of developing a commitment to some course of action (it involves making a choice among alternatives, it’s a process and it involves commitment of resources)

Well-structured: A problem for which the existing state is clear, the desired state is clear, and how to get from one state to another is fairly obvious (problems are simple and solutions arouse little controversy)

Ill- structured: A problem for which the existing and desired states are unclear and the method of getting to the desired state is unknown (unique and unusual problems that have not been encountered before)

LO11.2 Compare and contrast perfectly rational decision making with decision making under bounded rationality.

Perfect rationality is a decision strategy that is completely informed, perfectly logical, and oriented toward economic gain.

Bounded rationality is a decision-making strategy that relies on limited information and that reflects time constraints and political considerations.

LO11.3 Discuss the impact of framing and cognitive biases on the decision process.

Framing refers to the aspects of the presentation of information about a problem that are assumed by decision makers.

Cognitive biases are tendencies to acquire and process information in a particular way that is prone to error

1) You are a manager who is faced with a difficult decision, but has encountered three problems that can occur because of the limitations of bounded- rationality. Describe these 3 problems and suggest how you could prevent them or at least reduce their impact on your decisions.

These three problems take their toll on several stages of the decision-making process; problem identification, information search, and alternative development, evaluation and choice.

In problem identification there are several difficulties related to bounded-rationality; perceptual defense, problem defined in terms of functional specialty, problem defined in terms of solution, and problem defined in terms of symptoms. In regards to the information search, there are two outcomes. There can either be too little information leading to a confirmation bias, or too much information leading to information overload.

In addition, the decision-maker can suffer from maximization, which is a form of ignorance in regards to alternative solutions. In many instances, an anchoring effect occurs. This is an inadequate adjustment of the subsequent estimates from the initial estimate, which acts as an anchor. Because of maximizing error, statisticians have begun “satisficing”, which is an alternative to accepting the highest solution.

In this manner, the decision-maker continues to search for alternatives that provide a higher value. If faulty decisions occur, which they do, they are considered a sunk cost. Sunk costs are permanent losses of resources incurred as the result of a decision.

2) Is it possible for a manager to have too much information when faced with an ill-

1) right before “these three problems” :bounded rationality is a decision-making strategy that relies on limited information and that reflects time constraints and political considerations. While we try to act rationally, we are limited in our capacity to acquire and process information. In addition, time constraints and political considerations (such as the need to please others in the organization) acts as bounds. Two aspects, framing and cognitive biases both illustrate the operation of bounded rationality.

structured problem? Explain.

Yes, and it is called information overload—the reception of more information than is necessary to make effective decisions. Information overload can lead to errors, omissions, delays, and cutting corners.

3) What is bounded rationality and how can it influence alternative development, evaluation, and choice?

Bounded rationality is a decision-making strategy that relies on limited information and that reflects time constraints and political considerations. While we try to act rationally, we are limited in our capacity to acquire and process information. In addition, time constraints and political considerations (such as the need to please others in the organization) acts as bounds.

In terms of alternative development, evaluation, and choice it can result in cognitive biases especially in terms of the violation of standard statistical principles such as ignoring base rates, sample size, overestimating the odds of complex chains of events, and failure to revise estimates of probabilities and values as they acquire additional information (i.e., the anchoring effect).

LO11.4 Explain the process of escalation of commitment to an apparently failing course of action.

1) Give an example of an escalation of commitment and discuss four ways to prevent the tendency to escalate commitment to a failing course of action.

An example is the executive who authorizes the purchase of several new machines to improve plant productivity. The machines turn out to be very unreliable, and they are frequently out of commission for repairs. Perfect rationality suggests admitting to a mistake and accepting the sunk costs. However, the executive might authorize an order for more machines from the same manufacturer to “prove” that he was right all along, hoping to recoup sunk costs with improved productivity from an even greater number of machines.

Four ways to prevent escalation include:

- Encouraging continuous experimentation with reframing the problem
- Setting specific goals for the project in advance that must be met if more resources are to be invested
- Placing more emphasis in evaluating managers on how they made decisions and less on decision outcomes
- Separating initial and subsequent decision making

2) What is escalation of commitment and what are the reasons why it occurs?

Escalation of commitment refers to the tendency to invest additional resources to an apparently failing course of action. Rather than accept sunk costs due to a past decision,

the decision maker allows them to enter into future decisions in an attempt to recoup them.

There are a number of reasons why it occurs including: dissonance reduction, a social norm that favours consistent behaviour by managers, decision makers might be motivated to not appear wasteful, the way that decision makers frame the problem once some resources have been sunk, personality, moods, and emotions can also affect escalation. People high on neuroticism and negative affectivity are less likely to escalate.

LO11.5 Consider how emotions and mood affect decision making.

1) Discuss the effect of mood on decision making. What kind of decisions are most likely to be affected by mood, and what does research reveal about moods and decision making?

Mood affects what and how people think when making decisions. Mood has its greatest impact on uncertain and ambiguous decisions. Research on mood and decision making reveals the following:

- People in a positive mood remember positive information; people in a negative mood remember negative information
- People in a positive mood evaluate objects, people, and events more positively; those in a negative mood provide negative evaluation
- People in a good mood overestimate the likelihood that good events will occur and underestimate the occurrence of bad events; people in a bad mood do the opposite
- People in a good mood adopt simplified, short-cut decision making strategies, more likely violating the rational model; people in a negative mood are prone to approach decisions in a more deliberate, systematic, detailed way
- Positive mood promotes more creative, intuitive decision making

LO11.6 Summarize the pros and cons of using groups to make decisions, with attention to the groupthink phenomenon and risk assessment.

1) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of group decision making.

The main advantages of group decision making include higher quality decisions, higher levels of decision acceptance and commitment, and diffusion of responsibility.

The main disadvantages include conflict, domination by one or a few members, and groupthink.

2) What is groupthink? What are its symptoms? How can it be prevented?

Groupthink is the capacity for group pressure to damage the mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment of decision making groups.

Symptoms include the illusion of invulnerability, rationalization, the illusion of morality, the stereotyping of outsiders, the pressure to conform, self-censorship, the illusion of

unanimity, and mindguards.

Leaders can prevent it by not exerting undue pressure for a particular decision outcome and by establishing norms that encourage and even reward dissent (e.g., appointing a devil's advocate). Outside experts can also be brought in from time to time to challenge the group's views.

Chapter 13- Conflict & Stress

LO13.1 Define interpersonal conflict and review its causes in organizations.

1) What are the main causes of organizational conflict?

Group identification & intergroup bias: develop positive view of their own "in-group" and a less positive view of "out-groups" of which they are not a member.

Interdependence: when individuals are mutually dependent on each other to accomplish their own goals. The on-going need for coordination and abuse of power is a problem.

Differences in power, status & culture:

- Power: If dependence is one way, the potential for conflict increases.
- Status: people of lower status are dependent on those of higher status.
- Culture: when two or more very different cultures develop in an organization

Ambiguity: the formal and informal roles that govern interaction break down and it may be difficult to determine responsibility.

Scarce resources: differences in power are magnified when common resources are in short supply.

LO13.2 Explain the types of conflict and the process by which conflict occurs.

Relationship conflict: interpersonal tensions among individuals that have to do with their relationship per se, not the task at hand (personality clashes).

Task conflict: disagreements about the nature of work to be done (differences of opinion about goals or technical matters).

Process conflict: disagreements about how work should be organized and accomplished (responsibility, authority and resource allocation)

LO13.3 Discuss the various modes of managing conflict.

1) What are the five modes or styles of managing conflict? Give an example which illustrates the relationship between assertiveness and cooperativeness for each mode.

1. Avoiding: one cooperates with the other party while not asserting one's own interests.

(A manager who postpones meeting with an employee who wants a raise).

2. Accommodating: one party cooperates with the other party, while not asserting one's own interests (going to the movie that your date wants to see instead of the one that you would rather see).

3. Competing: maximizes assertiveness for your own position and minimizes cooperative responses (most transactions where buyer and seller do not expect to meet again).

4. Collaborating: maximizes both assertiveness and cooperation (two department managers in the same company must share limited resources to achieve their individual departmental objectives, and jointly contribute to the attainment of the company's goals)

5. Compromising: combines intermediate levels of assertiveness and cooperation (when it becomes clear to union negotiators and management that neither is going to get the maximum deal they had hoped for, they settle for a deal that is adequate (satisficing)).

LO13.5 Discuss the merits of stimulating conflict.

CONFLICT → CHANGE → ADAPTATION → SURVIVAL

Conflict can promote change when:

- It brings into consideration new ideas.
- Each party monitors the other's performance more carefully.
- It signals that a redistribution of power is necessary

LO13.6 Distinguish among stressors, stress, and stress reactions.

Stressors: environmental events or conditions that have the potential to induce stress (extreme heat or cold). Personality often determines the extent to which a potential stressor becomes a real stressor and induces stress.

Stress: psychological reaction to the demands inherent in a stressor that has the potential to make a person feel tense or anxious. The person does not feel capable of coping with these demands.

Stress reactions are the behavioural, psychological, and physiological consequences of stress. Some of these reactions are passive responses over which the individual has little direct control (e.g., elevated blood pressure).

LO13.7 Discuss the role that personality plays in stress.

1) Discuss the role of personality on the experience of stress and three personality traits associated with stress.

Personality can affect both the extent to which potential stressors are perceived as stressful and the types of stress reactions that occur.

Three personality traits associated with stress are:

Locus of control: externals are more likely to feel anxious in the face of potential stressors and prone to simple anxiety-reduction strategies.

Type A behaviour pattern: Type A individuals encounter or perceive themselves as encountering more stressful situations than Type B individuals, and they exhibit adverse physiological reactions in response to stress.

Negative affectivity: people high in negative affectivity report more stressors in the work environment and feel more subjective stress.

2) Describe the link between negative affectivity and stress, and the factors responsible for it.

People high in negative affectivity report more stressors in the work environment and feel more subjective stress. They are particularly likely to feel stressed in response to the demands of a heavy workload.

Several factors that might be responsible for their susceptibility to stress include a predisposition to perceive stressors in the workplace, hypersensitivity to existing stressors, a tendency to gravitate to stressful jobs and a tendency to provoke stress through their negativity

LO13.8 Review the sources of stress encountered by various organizational role occupants.

1) Suzie Desouza, the Manager of Industrial Relations at Zeta Manufacturing, has just been informed that the union has issued a strike notice. She notices that the in-basket of her mail tray is overflowing and she has nearly 100 unopened emails. As she pops another pill for her high blood pressure problem, she sighs, "Where do I start?" Analyze Suzie's situation in terms of stressors, stress, and stress reaction.

The managerial stressors affecting Suzie are role overload (e.g., too much to do in too little time) and heavy responsibility (e.g., she is worried about the layoffs which will result if she cannot reach an agreement).

There is also evidence of role ambiguity (e.g., the boss's directive to avoid a strike at all costs, and yet he rejected the union's previous offer), and work-family conflict (e.g., she has not seen much of her children lately). In addition, Suzie exhibits a Type A behaviour pattern, and her repressed anger for her boss and the union representatives may be contributing to her high blood pressure problem.

2) Describe burnout and its stages.

Burnout is a form of stress that is experienced by some boundary role occupants. It is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced self-efficacy.

It follows a process that begins with emotional exhaustion, leads to cynicism, and then to feelings of low self-efficacy and low personal accomplishment.

3) “Work engagement” can be considered to be the opposite of burnout. What exactly is work engagement and why would organizations want to cultivate it? What aspects of engagement make it the opposite of burnout?

Work Engagement can be defined as “a positive work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.” Vigor involves high levels of energy and mental resilience at work. Dedication means being strongly involved in your work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge. Absorption refers to being fully concentrated on and engrossed in your work. In particular, the first two dimensions—vigor and dedication—position engagement as the opposite of burnout.

Cultivating work engagement has positive benefits to employees and organizations. Job resources lead to work engagement as well as organizational citizenship behaviour and organizational commitment. Resources also buffer the negative impact of job demands on well-being.

4) What is bullying and what factors distinguish it as a stress-inducing form of conflict?

Bullying refers to repeated negative behaviour directed towards one or more individuals of lower power or status that creates a hostile work environment. Factors that distinguish it include the following:

- Repeated teasing, demeaning criticism, undermining
- Power or status imbalance between the bully and the victim
- Mobbing, individuals “gang-up” on a particular employee

LO13.9 Describe behavioural, psychological, and physiological reactions to stress and discuss techniques for managing stress.

The reactions that people who experience organizational stress might exhibit can be divided into three categories:

- Behavioural reactions: obvious activities that the stressed individual uses in an attempt to cope with the stress
- Psychological reactions: involve emotions and thought processes rather than overt behaviour (defense mechanism)
- Physiological reactions: The accumulation of stress into burnout has been particularly implicated in cardiovascular problems.

1) Carl has a good friend who seems to be reacting badly to the stress of his new job. You are starting to worry about the toll it is taking on him and realize that he would be better off if he used problem solving as a way to cope with his stress. You have arranged to meet him for lunch and you will propose this to him. What will you tell him about problem solving and what examples of problem solving can you suggest he considers trying?

Problem solving (behavioural reactions) is directed towards terminating the stressor or reducing its potency rather than just making the person feel better in the short run. It is reality oriented and most examples of it are just routine, sensible, and obvious approaches that an objective observer might suggest. Examples that Carl can suggest to his friend include delegation, time management, talking it out, asking for help, and searching for alternatives.

2) Discuss the relationship between stressors and job performance and give examples of hindrance and challenge stressors.

Stressors frequently cause reduced job performance. However, the nature of the relationship depends on the type of stressor. Some stressors are hindrance stressors, such as role ambiguity and interpersonal conflict, and they damage performance. Other stressors are challenging, such as heavy workload and responsibility. While they can also damage performance, they sometimes stimulate it via added motivation.

3) George Walters works in accounting and recently the department introduced a new computer system, which have had a considerable impact on George's job. Who should he talk to? Explain your rationale.

Evidence suggests that the buffering aspects of social support (behavioural reactions) are most potent when they are directly connected to the source of the stress. Therefore, George might find that his co-worker is the best source of support for his work-related woes. Co-workers and superiors may be the best sources of support for dealing with work-related stress. People with stronger social networks exhibit better psychological and physical well-being. Social network acts as a buffer against stress.

4) Discuss several organizational strategies for managing stress.

- Job redesign (redesign jobs to reduce stressful characteristics)

- “Family friendly” human resource policies (increased flexibility to adapt to employee needs).

- Stress management programs (programs designed to help employees “manage” work-related stress)/

- Work-life balance, fitness, & wellness programs (programs encourage employees to have a balanced lifestyle that includes a healthy diet and physical exercise).