

Business Communication Management

Carl Dyer



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by Carl Dyer

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Contents

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 2 | Business Corporate Work Skills: Motivational Skills | 30 |
| Chapter 3 | Personal Communication Skills and Business Interpersonal Skills of Communication | 77 |
| Chapter 4 | Individual Job Skills, Business Work and Communication Experience | 131 |
| Chapter 5 | Collective communication Skills | 169 |

Chapter 1

Introduction

Business communication and Work Skills

Adaptability is a feature of a system or of a process. This word has been put to use as a specialised term in different disciplines and in business operations. Word definitions of adaptability as a specialised term differ little from dictionary definitions. According to Andresen and Gronau adaptability in the field of organisational management can in general be seen as an ability to change something or oneself to fit to occurring changes. In ecology, adaptability has been described as the ability to cope with unexpected disturbances in the environment. However, the word definitions in these fields are just the starting points for detailed analysis of system adaptability.

With respect to business and manufacturing systems and processes adaptability has come to be seen increasingly as an important factor for their efficiency and economic success. In contrast, adaptability and efficiency are held to be in opposition to each other in biological and ecological systems, requiring a trade-off, since both are important factors in the success of such systems. To determine the adaptability of a process or a system, it should be validated concerning some criteria.

Development of the use of this term

In the life sciences the term adaptability is used variously. At one end of the spectrum, the ordinary meaning of the word suffices for understanding. At the other end, there is the term as introduced by Conrad, referring to a particular information entropy measure of the biota of an ecosystem, or of any subsystem of the biota, such as a population of a single species, a single individual, cell, protein or gene. In the technical research field this feature has been considered only since the late 1990s. H. P. Wiendahl first introduced adaptability as a necessary feature of a manufacturing system in 1999. The need to consider adaptability arose in the context of factory planning, where it is an objective to develop modular, adaptable systems. It has now become an important consideration for manufacturing and system engineers. e.g., jenny davies.

Adaptability of a system

Adaptability is to be understood here as the ability of a system (e.g., a computer system) to adapt itself efficiently and fast to changed circumstances. An adaptive system is therefore an open system that is able to fit its behaviour according to changes in its environment or in parts of the system itself. That is why a requirement to recognise the demand for change without any other factors involved can be expressed.

Adaptability in the Workplace

Today's organizations are characterized by changing, dynamic environments in which the need for adaptive workers has become increasingly important. Although adaptability is not a new concept, the pace and types of change we are experiencing only continues to grow, which has caused research sponsors, academic researchers, and practitioners in organizations to become increasingly interested in understanding and enhancing adaptability in the workplace. For example, changing technologies and automation continue to alter the nature of work tasks, requiring employees to learn new ways to perform their jobs. Mergers, "rightsizing," and corporate restructuring also require individuals to learn new skills to be competitive for different jobs. In a global economy, many jobs require individuals to learn to operate effectively in a variety of different countries and with individuals who possess different values and orientations than themselves. Workers need to be increasingly adaptable, versatile, and tolerant of uncertainty to operate effectively in these changing and varied environments. Yet, adaptability, flexibility, and versatility are elusive concepts that have not been well defined in the psychological literature and are therefore difficult to measure, predict, and train effectively.

The purpose of the present research was to explore the concept of adaptive performance in work contexts and more precisely define the adaptive performance requirements of jobs. While the attributes individuals need to be adaptable and the processes by which adaptation occurs in organizations are important, it is our contention that it is not possible to accurately specify what

attributes lead to adaptive performance or how this adaptation occurs until we have a solid understanding of the job performance requirements we are trying to predict.

In the next section, we discuss a general framework that was used as a model for developing the present taxonomy of adaptive performance.

A Framework for Developing a Model of Adaptive Performance

The goal of this research was to develop a taxonomy of adaptive job performance along the lines of the job performance model developed by Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager.

Specifically, Campbell *et al.* proposed and tested alternative models for the substantive content and latent structure of job performance. In their theory, job performance is defined as synonymous with behaviour - it is what people do that can be observed and measured in terms of each individual's proficiency or level of contribution. An important contribution of the Campbell *et al.* theory of performance was the specification of a taxonomy of eight major performance components, some subset of which can describe the highest order latent variables for every job in the occupational domain.

The performance components include:

- Job-specific task proficiency,
- Non-job-specific-task proficiency,

- Written and oral communication,
- Demonstrating effort,
- Maintaining personal discipline,
- Maintaining peer and team performance,
- Supervision/leadership, and
- Management/administration.

Since development of the initial performance taxonomy, additional substantive specifications for performance have been offered by several authors, including Borman and Motowidlo, Ilgen and Hollenbeck, Murphy, and Organ, among others.

Campbell points out that the performance factors suggested by these authors can be easily integrated as sub-factors into the eight component taxonomy, forming a hierarchical description of the latent structure of performance. However, also recently noted that an important performance component not included in the original model that would be a genuine addition to the taxonomy is one dealing with how well individuals adapt to new conditions or job requirements. Hesketh and Neal have also persuasively argued that the current partitioning of the performance domain into task and contextual performance be expanded to include adaptive performance.

The primary purpose of the present research was thus to contribute to the performance model literature by defining and empirically examining adaptive performance in work contexts.

Defining Adaptive Performance

Numerous authors have discussed adaptability in relation to different phenomena at the individual, team, and organizational levels, often using many different names and definitions for this concept. For instance, Hesketh and Neal refer to "adaptive performance," Murphy and Jackson discuss "role flexibility," and London and Mone write about the proficiency with which individuals self-manage their new learning experiences. Further, adaptation has been discussed in relation to many different organizationally relevant variables, encompassing a wide range of behaviours across a variety of different task demands.

Like Campbell *et al* argued with respect to performance in general, to identify what is important and to enable researchers to clearly define their variables, there needs to be understanding and consensus about what adaptive performance means across job, occupational, or role assessment situations. Towards this end, the present research began with a review of the literature that discussed different aspects of job-relevant adaptive performance to develop a definition and preliminary model that could be used as a starting point for understanding the adaptive performance requirements of jobs.

The following six preliminary dimensions of adaptive performance were conceptualized and developed based on this literature review. Solving Problems Creatively: Adapting to novel situations or dynamic and changing situations frequently requires one to solve new and unfamiliar problems. Accordingly, one aspect of adaptive performance that has been discussed by several authors

involves the effectiveness with which employees solve the atypical, ill-defined, and complex problems that confront today's work situations and organizations.

What is required in this aspect of performance is bringing complex matters or situations to their desired end or developing creative solutions to novel, difficult problems. Dealing with Uncertain/Unpredictable Work Situations: Several authors have also discussed adaptability in relation to a wide variety of unpredictable and uncertain work situations. These situations can result from many different factors, including such things as formal organizational restructuring, shifting business priorities, reductions or changes in available resources, or joining a new organization or group. Key aspects of performance that relate to such events are how easily workers adjust to and deal with the unpredictable nature of these situations, how efficiently and smoothly they can shift their orientation or focus when necessary, and the extent to which they take reasonable action, in spite of inherent uncertainty and ambiguity in the situation.

While this aspect of adaptive performance is certainly related to the problem-solving component discussed above in the sense that creative problem solving might be employed in a uncertain or unpredictable situation, the ease and effectiveness with which one confronts and deals with uncertainly in general is conceptually distinct from how creatively and effectively he or she solves novel problems. Further, somewhat different predictors have been shown to be indicative these two general performance areas.

For instance, research has shown that general intelligence, problem understanding, and problem solving constructs make unique contributions to creative problem solving performance. On the other hand, personality constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control have been shown to be effective predictors of coping with uncertain and changing situations. Thus, while creative problem solving and coping with unpredictable situations may well be related, we felt that they should be treated as distinct components of adaptive performance in our preliminary model.

Learning New Tasks, Technologies, and Procedures: A third aspect of adaptive performance discussed in the literature involves learning new ways to perform a job or learning different skill sets or tasks to re-tool for a job or new career. This aspect of adaptive performance has become important largely as a result of the rapid pace of technological advancement and an increasing emphasis on continual learning in organizations. Today's workers are increasingly faced with technical innovation that is forcing them to learn new ways to perform their jobs. Similarly, continuous learning involves the ongoing process of planning for and participating in development to prepare for anticipated future job requirements. Many workers can no longer expect to learn one job or one set of skills and then apply these throughout an entire career. Instead, effective performers in today's organizations are those who anticipate future needs and adapt to changing job requirements by learning new tasks, technologies, procedures, and roles. While technological and job change can certainly be conceived of as a type of unpredictable situation, the effectiveness with which one anticipates, prepares for, and learns

future job requirements is conceptually distinct from how well they cope with ongoing ambiguous and uncertain work situations in general. Also, somewhat different predictors are likely to be associated with these different performance areas. Cognitively-oriented constructs have been shown to facilitate learning and skill acquisition and are therefore likely to be important predictors of adaptive learning performance while, as discussed above, personality and temperament constructs are likely to be important predictors of the dealing with uncertainty dimension. Thus, while a relationship may exist between the learning and dealing with uncertainty aspects of adaptive performance, they were treated as separate components in the preliminary model.

Demonstrating Interpersonal Adaptability: A fourth aspect of adaptive performance that has been discussed by several researchers is interpersonal adaptability. The need for this type of adaptive performance has become salient due to more fluid work environments that are increasingly characterized by work or project teams and the shift from manufacturing-oriented businesses to service-oriented businesses. More specifically, aspects of interpersonal adaptive performance that have been discussed in the literature include such things as demonstrating interpersonal flexibility, adjusting interpersonal style to achieve a goal, adapting interpersonal behaviour to work effectively with a new team, co-workers, or customers, and being a flexible, responsive service-provider who can effectively anticipate and fulfill customer needs.

Demonstrating Cultural Adaptability: Another aspect of adaptive performance concerns adapting to cultural demands within an

organization or a new country. With the globalization of the business environment and extent to which workers today change jobs and organizations, the ability to perform effectively in different cultures and environments is increasingly being recognized as important. As Chao *et al.* proposed, one component of this performance involves learning such things as language, goals and values, history, and politics. Beyond simply learning about a new culture or environment, however, the key aspect of this type of adaptive performance involves successfully integrating into a new culture or environment by fully understanding and willingly behaving in accordance with the accepted customs, values, rules, and structures operating within it.

Demonstrating Physically Oriented Adaptability: A final aspect of adaptive performance discussed in the literature involves adapting to various physical factors such heat, noise, uncomfortable climates, and difficult environments. Adapting quickly and effectively to different physical conditions is required in many different jobs, but this aspect of adaptive performance is becoming especially important within the military and related jobs.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military's primary mission has changed from protecting against a single, well-defined enemy to protecting against more varied and ill-defined enemies. The missions being undertaken today are unique and qualitatively different than those of the past, because they involve small intervention units that perform a variety of operations in many different cultures and climates. Quickly

adapting to the varied and challenging physical conditions as one moves from country to country and climate to climate is a key aspect of effective performance in these types of jobs.

Willingness to be Accountable

Accountability is an old fashioned idea that says you are answerable for your actions-and inactions. If questions come up or something goes wrong, it's you who must absorb scrutiny. There's a subtle distinction between "it's not finished" and "I haven't finished it." The willingness to be accountable for what you do and what you fail or refuse to do is a crucial sign of character. Unaccountable people are into excuses, blaming others, putting things off, doing the minimum, acting confused and playing helpless. They pretend ignorance while hiding behind doors, computers, paperwork, jargon and other people They say things like "I didn't know, "I wasn't there," "I don't have time," "It's not my job," That's just the way I am," "Nobody told me," "It isn't really hurting anyone," and "I'm just following orders." Unaccountable people are quick to complain and slow to act. In organizations, lack of accountability is a highly contagious disease.

Take a Look at Yourself

How accountable are you? Does it depend on the situation, or are you always ready to accept responsibility for your decisions and behaviours?

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing "Never" and 10 representing "Always," rank yourself on each of these characteristics of accountability.

They apply equally to professional and personal situations:

- I communicate regularly and accurately with associates.
- If I don't understand something, I seek out information.
- I own my own problems and circumstances.
- When I make a mistake, I admit it.
- I am proactive, often taking the initiative.
- I ask for the things I need to do my job.
- I analyse my activities and ask, "How is this contributing to organizational objectives?"
- I analyse my activities and ask, "What more can I do?"
- I stand and deliver when it's time to report on my actions.
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Obviously, the higher the score, the better. Take a second look at items on which you ranked yourself at the low end of the scale. What can you do to become more accountable in those areas?

Get Out From Behind Your Job Description

In his weekly radio address on CBS's KNX-1070 AM in Los Angeles, Michael Josephson, Founder and President of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. While stuck in traffic, Hank, a manager of road crews, saw Nick digging holes and Claude following him to fill them up. Appalled, Hank asked Nick what he was doing. "What we've done for 10 years." Nick replied. "I dig holes and Claude fills 'em." "But that doesn't make any sense," Hank said. "Well it did until last January when Phil retired. Phil used to put a tree in the hole before Claude filled it." "You've been doing this since January? Why didn't you tell somebody?" Hank sputtered. "My gosh, Phil got a retirement letter from you, we figured you knew."

Countless people in organizations everywhere waste time and resources digging useless holes. Engaging in mindless behaviours that defy logic is the antithesis of accountability. Accountability means more than just doing your job. It includes an obligation to make things better, to pursue excellence, and to do things in ways that further the goals of the organization. If outmoded or wasteful tasks are part of your job description, it's your responsibility to do something about it.

Human Resources Consultant Peggy Foster has a unique way of measuring accountability in the workplace. Foster suggests that you keep track of time spent in three categories of activity. First, how much time do you devote to core responsibilities? These are the "must do's" in your job description. Second, how often do you perform extras that contribute significantly to the organization

but aren't really required? Finally, how much time do you spend doing things of questionable value, like unproductive busywork, unnecessary phone calls, and tasks you'd be better off delegating? According to Foster, a surefire way to increase your value within the organization is to expand the core category to include progressively more "extras" while at the same time eliminating questionable activities. In other words, stretch yourself and your job description as well. Be willing to rise above circumstances, including your job description if necessary, and do whatever it takes to achieve the objectives of the organization.

Be proactive. Recognize problems and solve them in responsible, intelligent ways. It doesn't matter where the problem comes from. It might be yours or it might be inherited. The crucial question is, "What are you going to do about it?"

Corporate Work Skills: Willingness to be Accountable

Technology in the Classroom

We live in an historical period in which knowledge is the most critical resource for social and economic development and people need to be able to participate in a networked, information-based society. Whereas previously people engaged in manufacturing-based work where they generally competed with or worked independently of each other, now people engage in information- and technological-rich work where they work in teams. People

need to be able to work collaboratively in designing, using, and maintaining the tools of technology.

Technology and teamwork will continuously play a larger role in most people's lives. Children, adolescents, and young adults have no choice but to develop and increase their technological and teamwork literacy. There is no better place for them to begin than in school. Learning in cooperative groups while utilizing the tools of technology should occur at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Because the nature of technology used by a society influences what the society is and becomes, individuals who do not become technologically literate will be left behind.

Influences of a technology include the nature of the medium, the way the medium extends human senses, and the type of cognitive processing required by the medium. Harold Adam Innis (1964, 1972) proposed that media biased towards lasting a long time, such as stone hieroglyphics, lead to small, stable societies because stone was difficult to edit and rewrite and was too heavy to distribute over great distances. In contrast, media biased towards traveling easily across distances, such as papyrus, enabled the Romans to build and run a large empire.

Marshall McLuhan (1964) believed that the way the media technology balances the senses creates its own form of thinking and communicating and eventually alters the balance of human senses. He believed that oral communication makes hearing dominant and thought simultaneous and circular. Written communication makes sight dominant and thought may be linear

(one thing follows another), rational (cause and effect), and abstract.

Electronic technology tends to recreate the village on a global scale through instantaneous and simultaneous communication in which physical distance between people becomes irrelevant. On a more negative note, Neil Postman (1985) expressed fears that our ability to reason with rigor and self-discipline is being eroded as fewer people read systematically and more people watch and listen to electronic media. Their thinking may become more reactive and impressionistic.

Given the pervasive and powerful effects media technologies can have on the nature of society and the thinking and communicating of its members, there can be little doubt that technology will increasingly be utilized in instructional situations.

In the past, however, teachers and schools have been very slow in adopting new technologies and very quick in discontinuing their use (Cuban, 1986).

There tends to be a cycle in which:

- The potential of a technology leads to fervent claims and promises by advocates,
- Its utility is demonstrated by academic research in a small set of classrooms rich with human and technical support,

- Teachers who have little or no resources adopt the technology and are frustrated by their failure to make it work, and
- The use of the new technology gradually declines.

With the invention of motion pictures, for example, Thomas Edison predicted that films of great teachers would replace live classroom teachers. When radio was invented the prediction was made that teachers would soon be obsolete because all over the country students could sit and listen to great minds lecture via the radio. Similar predictions were made when television and computers were first invented.

The failure of schools to adopt available instructional technologies and to maintain (let alone continuously improve) their use may be due at least in part to two barriers:

- The individual assumption underlying most hardware and software development and
- The failure to utilize cooperative learning as an inherent part of using instructional technologies.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the interdependence between instructional technologies and cooperation among students in using the technologies. To understand how cooperative learning may be used with technologies, the nature of cooperative learning needs to be defined, the theoretical foundations on which it is based need to be clarified, the research validating its use needs to be reviewed, distinctions between cooperative learning and other types of instructional

groups need to be made, and the basic elements that make cooperation work must be defined.

At that point, the interrelationships between cooperative learning and technology-supported instruction can be noted and their complementary strengths delineated. The future of technology-assisted cooperative learning can then be discussed.

The Individual Assumption

Before the 1990s, most of the research on computer-supported learning was based on the single-learner assumption. The individual assumption is that instruction should be tailored to each student's personal aptitude, learning style, personality characteristics, motivation, and needs. Computers were viewed as an important tool for individualizing learning experiences, especially for computer-assisted instruction programmes based on programmed learning, but also for learning experiences derived from constructivist principles (Crook, 1994).

Many hardware and software designers (as well as teachers) assumed that all technology-supported instruction should be structured individualistically (one student to a computer) and computer programmes were written accordingly.

The ability of designers to adapt instruction sequences to the cognitive and affective needs of each learner, however, is limited by three factors.

- Substantial variation exists in types of learning styles and personality traits, and although many of them are sometimes correlated with achievement, few have been shown to predict achievement consistently.
- Little agreement exists on how to translate differences in learning styles and personal traits into instructional prescriptions. The only design rule that is widely accepted is that students should control the flow of information.
- Creating algorithms to adapt instruction to individual needs and designing and producing multiple versions of lessons are both time-consuming and expensive.

Thus, the potential for individualized instruction may be limited due to the difficulties associated with identifying individual differences and translating them into instructional prescriptions. In addition, individualized instruction has several shortcomings:

- Individual work isolates students and working alone for long periods may lower personal motivation by increasing boredom, frustration, anxiety, and the perception that learning is impersonal.
- Individual instruction limits the resources available to themselves and the technology. The support and encouragement of peers and the cognitive benefits associated with explaining to peers and developing shared mental models are lost.
- Individualized instruction greatly increases development and hardware costs. A workstation is required for each learner, which entails considerable

hardware expense. Considerable development and software expenses are required, as the lessons have to be designed to personalize instruction and to adapt the instructional sequenced to individual processing requirements.

The difficulties associated with identifying and accommodating individual needs severely limit designers' ability to individualize instruction. The shortcomings of individualized instruction call into question the wisdom of designing individualized programmes.

Despite these problems, however, much of the instructional software has been and is designed, developed, and marketed for individual use. This omission of social interaction in computer-based learning experiences worried many educators in the 1980s (Baker, 1985; Cuban, 1986; Hawkins, Sheingold, Gearhart, and Berger, 1982; Isenberg, 1992). Given the limitations of the individual assumption, and its shortcomings, technology may be more productively used when it is used in combination with cooperation learning.

The spontaneous cooperation often reported around technology, in addition, both casts doubt on the individual assumption made by hardware and software designers and points towards the use of cooperative learning in technology-supported instruction (Dyer, 1994). To use cooperative learning, however, educators must understand its nature.

Types of Cooperative Learning

There are four types of cooperative learning that may be used in combination with instructional technology: formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning, cooperative base groups, and academic controversy.

Formal cooperative learning is students working together, for one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments (such as decision making or problem solving, completing a curriculum unit, writing a report, conducting a survey or experiment, reading a chapter or reference book, learning vocabulary, or answering questions at the end of a chapter; D.W. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1998a, 1998b). Any course requirement or assignment may be reformulated to be cooperative.

In formal cooperative learning groups, teachers:

- Make a number of preinstructional decisions. A teacher has to decide on the objectives of the lesson (both academic and social skills objectives), the size of groups, the method of assigning students to groups, the roles students will be assigned, the materials needed to conduct the lesson, and the way the room will be arranged.
- Explain the task and the positive interdependence. A teacher clearly defines the assignment, teaches the required concepts and strategies, specifies the positive interdependence and individual accountability, gives

the criteria for success, and explains the expected social skills to be engaged.

- Monitor students' learning and intervene within the groups to provide task assistance or to increase students' interpersonal and group skills. A teacher systematically observes and collects data on each group as it works. When it is needed, the teacher intervenes to assist students in completing the task accurately and in working together effectively.
- Evaluate students' learning and help students process how well their groups functioned. Students' learning is carefully assessed and their performances are evaluated. Members of the learning groups then process how effectively they have been working together.

Informal cooperative learning consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period (D. W. Johnson et al., 1998b; D. W. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998). During a lecture, demonstration, or film they can be used to focus student attention on the material to be learned, set a mood conducive to learning, help set expectations as to what will be covered in a class session, ensure that students cognitively process the material being taught, and provide closure to an instructional session. Informal cooperative learning groups are often organized so that students engage in 3- to 5-min focused discussions before and after a lecture and 2- to 3-min turn-to-your-partner discussions interspersed every 15 min or so throughout a lecture.

Cooperative base groups are long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership (D. W. Johnson et al., 1998b; D. W. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998). The purposes of the base group are to give the support, help, encouragement, and assistance each member needs to make academic progress (attend class, complete all assignments, learn) and develop cognitively and socially in healthy ways. Base groups meet daily in elementary school and twice a week in secondary school (or whenever the class meets).

The fourth type of cooperative learning is academic controversy, which exists when one student's ideas, information, conclusions, theories, and opinions are incompatible with those of another, and the two seek to reach an agreement (D.W. Johnson and R. Johnson, 1979, 1995). Teachers structure academic controversies by choosing an important intellectual issue, assigning students to groups of four, dividing the group into two pairs, and assigning one pair the pro position and the other pair a con position.

Students then follow the five-step controversy procedure of:

- Preparing the best case possible for their assigned position,
- Persuasively presenting the best case possible for their position to the opposing pair,
- Having an open discussion in which the two sides argue forcefully and persuasively for their position while subjecting the opposing position to critical analysis,

- Reversing perspectives, and
- Dropping all advocacy coming to a consensus as to their best reasoned judgment about the issue.

In all four types of cooperative learning, repetitive lessons can be scripted so they become classroom routines. Cooperative learning scripts are standard cooperative procedures for conducting generic, repetitive lessons and managing classroom routines (D. W. Johnson et al., 1998a, 1998b). They are used to organize course routines and generic lessons that occur repeatedly.

Some examples are checking homework, preparing for and reviewing a test, drill-reviewing facts and events, reading textbooks and reference materials, writing reports and essays, giving presentations, learning vocabulary, learning concepts, doing projects such as surveys, and problem solving. All of these instructional activities may be done cooperatively and, once planned and conducted several times, will become automatic activities in the classroom.

They may also be used in combination to form an overall lesson. Cooperative learning is being used throughout preschools, elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and adult education programmes because of its blend of theory, research, and practice. It is being used throughout the world, that is, throughout North America and Europe and in Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific Rim. Cooperative learning's popularity is based on its theoretical basis, which has been validated by hundreds of research studies.

Theoretical Foundations of Cooperative Learning

Whereas computers have been used as educational tools since the 1970s, integrating the design and deployment of computers with educational theory has been difficult and largely absent. Technology-supported instruction, for example, needs to be integrated into the theories underlying the use of cooperative learning. There are at least three general theoretical perspectives that have guided research on cooperative learning-cognitive-developmental, behavioural, and social interdependence. The cognitive developmental or constructivist perspective is based largely on the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky.

The work of Piaget and related theorists is based on the premise that when individuals cooperate on the environment, sociocognitive conflict occurs that creates cognitive disequilibrium, which in turn stimulates perspective-taking ability and cognitive development.

The work of Vygotsky and related theorists is based on the premise that knowledge is social, constructed from cooperative efforts to learn, understand, and solve problems.

The behavioural learning theory perspective focuses on the impact of group reinforcers and rewards on learning. Skinner focused on group contingencies, Bandura focused on imitation, and Homans as well as Thibaut and Kelley focused on the balance of rewards and costs in social exchange among interdependent individuals. While the cognitive-developmental and behavioural theoretical orientations have their followings,

the theory dealing with cooperation that has generated by far the most research is the social interdependence theory.

Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each person's success is affected by the actions of the others (Deutsch, 1962; D.W. Johnson and R. Johnson, 1989). It may be differentiated from social dependence (i.e., the outcomes of one person, are affected by the actions of a second person, but not vice versa) and social independence (i.e., individuals' outcomes are unaffected by each other's actions). There are two types of social interdependence: cooperative and competitive. The absence of social interdependence and dependence results in individualistic efforts.

Theorizing on social interdependence began in the early 1900s, when one of the founders of the Gestalt School of Psychology, Kurt Koffka, proposed that groups were dynamic wholes in which the interdependence among members could vary. One of his colleagues, Kurt Lewin, refined Koffka's notions in the 1920s and 1930s while stating that:

- The essence of a group is the interdependence among members (created by common goals), which results in the group being a "dynamic whole," so that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any other member or subgroup, and
- An intrinsic state of tension within group members motivates movement towards the accomplishment of the desired common goals. In the late 1940s, one of Lewin's graduate students, Morton Deutsch (1949,

1962), extended Lewin's reasoning about social interdependence and formulated a theory of cooperation and competition. Deutsch conceptualized three types of social interdependence—positive, negative, and none.

Deutsch's basic premise was that the type of interdependence structured in a situation determines how individuals interact with each other, which in turn largely determines outcomes. Positive interdependence tends to result in promotive interaction, negative interdependence tends to result in oppositional or contrient interaction, and no interdependence results in an absence of interaction. Depending on whether individuals promote or obstruct each other's goal accomplishments, there is substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility. The relationship between the type of social interdependence and the interaction pattern it elicits is assumed to be bidirectional. Each may cause the other. Deutsch's theory has served as a major conceptual structure for the study of social interdependence since the late 1940s.

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How accountable are you? Does it depend on the situation, or are you always ready to accept responsibility for your decisions and behaviours?

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing "Never" and 10 representing "Always," rank yourself on each of these characteristics of accountability.

They apply equally to professional and personal situations:

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Chapter 2

Business Corporate Work Skills: Motivational Skills

Motivation Skills

Motivation is the activation or energization of goal-orientated behaviour. Motivation is said to be intrinsic or extrinsic. The term is generally used for humans but, theoretically, it can also be used to describe the causes for animal behaviour as well. This article refers to human motivation. According to various theories, motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure, or it may include specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, hobby, goal, state of being, ideal, or it may be attributed to less-apparent reasons such as altruism, selfishness, morality, or avoiding mortality. Conceptually, motivation should not be confused with either volition or optimism. Motivation is related to, but distinct from, emotion.

Motivation concepts

Intrinsic motivation has been studied by social and educational psychologists since the early 1970s. Research has found that it is usually associated with high educational achievement and enjoyment by students. Intrinsic motivation has been explained

by Fritz Heider's attribution theory, Bandura's work on self-efficacy, and Ryan and Deci's cognitive evaluation theory.

Students are likely to be intrinsically motivated if they:

- Attribute their educational results to internal factors that they can control (e.g. the amount of effort they put in),
- believe they can be effective agents in reaching desired goals (*i.e.* the results are not determined by luck),
- are interested in mastering a topic, rather than just rote-learning to achieve good grades.

See also Intrinsic motivation and the 16 basic desires theory below.

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the performer. Money is the most obvious example, but coercion and threat of punishment are also common extrinsic motivations.

While competing, the crowd may cheer on the performer, which may motivate him or her to do well. Trophies are also extrinsic incentives. Competition is in general extrinsic because it encourages the performer to win and beat others, not to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of the activity.

Social psychological research has indicated that extrinsic rewards can lead to over justification and a subsequent reduction in intrinsic motivation. In one study demonstrating this effect, children who expected to be rewarded with a ribbon and a gold star for drawing pictures spent less time playing with the

drawing materials in subsequent observations than children who were assigned to an unexpected reward condition and to children who received no extrinsic reward.

Self-control

The self-control of motivation is increasingly understood as a subset of emotional intelligence; a person may be highly intelligent according to a more conservative definition (as measured by many intelligence tests), yet unmotivated to dedicate this intelligence to certain tasks. Yale School of Management professor Victor Vroom's "expectancy theory" provides an account of when people will decide whether to exert self control to pursue a particular goal. Drives and desires can be described as a deficiency or need that activates behaviour that is aimed at a goal or an incentive.

These are thought to originate within the individual and may not require external stimuli to encourage the behaviour. Basic drives could be sparked by deficiencies such as hunger, which motivates a person to seek food; whereas more subtle drives might be the desire for praise and approval, which motivates a person to behave in a manner pleasing to others. By contrast, the role of extrinsic rewards and stimuli can be seen in the example of training animals by giving them treats when they perform a trick correctly. The treat motivates the animals to perform the trick consistently, even later when the treat is removed from the process.

Motivational theories

A reward, tangible or intangible, is presented after the occurrence of an action (*i.e.* behaviour) with the intent to cause the behaviour to occur again. This is done by associating positive meaning to the behaviour.

Studies show that if the person receives the reward immediately, the effect would be greater, and decreases as duration lengthens. Repetitive action-reward combination can cause the action to become habit. Motivation comes from two sources: oneself, and other people. These two sources are called intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, respectively. Applying proper motivational techniques can be much harder than it seems.

Steven Kerr notes that when creating a reward system, it can be easy to reward A, while hoping for B, and in the process, reap harmful effects that can jeopardize your goals. A reinforcer is different from reward, in that reinforcement is intended to create a measured increase in the rate of a desirable behaviour following the addition of something to the environment.

Drive-reduction Theories

There are a number of drive theories. The Drive Reduction Theory grows out of the concept that we have certain biological drives, such as hunger. As time passes the strength of the drive increases if it is not satisfied. Upon satisfying a drive the drive's strength is reduced. The theory is based on diverse ideas from

the theories of Freud to the ideas of feedback control systems, such as a thermostat.

Drive theory has some intuitive or folk validity. For instance when preparing food, the drive model appears to be compatible with sensations of rising hunger as the food is prepared, and, after the food has been consumed, a decrease in subjective hunger. There are several problems, however, that leave the validity of drive reduction open for debate. The first problem is that it does not explain how secondary reinforcers reduce drive. For example, money satisfies no biological or psychological needs, but a pay check appears to reduce drive through second-order conditioning. Secondly, a drive, such as hunger, is viewed as having a "desire" to eat, making the drive a homuncular being—a feature criticized as simply moving the fundamental problem behind this "small man" and his desires.

In addition, it is clear that drive reduction theory cannot be a complete theory of behaviour, or a hungry human could not prepare a meal without eating the food before he finished cooking it. The ability of drive theory to cope with all kinds of behaviour, from not satisfying a drive (by adding on other traits such as restraint), or adding additional drives for "tasty" food, which combine with drives for "food" in order to explain cooking render it hard to test.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Suggested by Leon Festinger, this occurs when an individual experiences some degree of discomfort resulting from an

incompatibility between two cognitions. For example, a consumer may seek to reassure himself regarding a purchase, feeling, in retrospect, that another decision may have been preferable. Another example of cognitive dissonance is when a belief and a behaviour are in conflict. A person may wish to believe smoking is bad for one's health, and yet continues to smoke.

Need Theories

Abraham Maslow's theory is one of the most widely discussed theories of motivation.

The theory can be summarized as follows:

- Human beings have wants and desires which influence their behaviour. Only unsatisfied needs influence behaviour, satisfied needs do not.
- Since needs are many, they are arranged in order of importance, from the basic to the complex.
- The person advances to the next level of needs only after the lower level need is at least minimally satisfied.
- The further the progress up the hierarchy, the more individuality, humanness and psychological health a person will show.

The needs, listed from basic (lowest-earliest) to most complex (highest-latest) are as follows:

- Physiology (hunger, thirst, sleep, etc.)

- Safety/Security/Shelter/Health
- Belongingness/Love/Friendship
- Self-esteem/Recognition/Achievement
- Self actualization

Herzberg's two-factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory, a.k.a. intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, concludes that certain factors in the workplace result in job satisfaction, but if absent, they don't lead to dissatisfaction but no satisfaction.

The factors that motivate people can change over their lifetime, but "respect for me as a person" is one of the top motivating factors at any stage of life.

He distinguished between:

- Motivators; (e.g. challenging work, recognition, responsibility) which give positive satisfaction, and
- Hygiene factors; (e.g. status, job security, salary and fringe benefits) that do not motivate if present, but, if absent, result in demotivation.

The name Hygiene factors is used because, like hygiene, the presence will not make you healthier, but absence can cause health deterioration. The theory is sometimes called the "Motivator-Hygiene Theory" and/or "The Dual Structure Theory." Herzberg's theory has found application in such occupational fields as information systems and in studies of user satisfaction.

Alderfer's ERG Theory

Alderfer, expanding on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, created the ERG theory (existence, relatedness and growth). Physiological and safety, the lower order needs, are placed in the existence category, while love and self esteem needs are placed in the relatedness category. The growth category contains our self-actualization and self-esteem needs.

Self-determination Theory

Self-determination theory, developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, focuses on the importance of intrinsic motivation in driving human behaviour. Like Maslow's hierarchical theory and others that built on it, SDT posits a natural tendency towards growth and development. Unlike these other theories, however, SDT does not include any sort of "autopilot" for achievement, but instead requires active encouragement from the environment. The primary factors that encourage motivation and development are autonomy, competence feedback, and relatedness.

Broad Theories

The latest approach in Achievement Motivation is an integrative perspective as lined out in the "Onion-Ring-Model of Achievement Motivation" by Heinz Schuler, George C. Thornton III, Andreas Frintrup and Rose Mueller-Hanson. It is based on the premise that performance motivation results from the way broad components of personality are directed towards performance. As a result, it includes a range of dimensions that are relevant to

success at work but which are not conventionally regarded as being part of performance motivation. Especially it integrates formerly separated approaches as Need for Achievement with e.g. social motives like dominance. The Achievement Motivation Inventory is based on this theory and assesses three factors relevant to vocational and professional success.

Cognitive Theories

Goal-setting theory is based on the notion that individuals sometimes have a drive to reach a clearly defined end state. Often, this end state is a reward in itself. A goal's efficiency is affected by three features: proximity, difficulty and specificity.

An ideal goal should present a situation where the time between the initiation of behaviour and the end state is close. This explains why some children are more motivated to learn how to ride a bike than mastering algebra. A goal should be moderate, not too hard or too easy to complete. In both cases, most people are not optimally motivated, as many want a challenge (which assumes some kind of insecurity of success). At the same time people want to feel that there is a substantial probability that they will succeed. Specificity concerns the description of the goal in their class. The goal should be objectively defined and intelligible for the individual. A classic example of a poorly specified goal is to get the highest possible grade. Most children have no idea how much effort they need to reach that goal.

Models of Behaviour Change

Social-cognitive models of behaviour change include the constructs of motivation and volition. Motivation is seen as a process that leads to the forming of behavioural intentions. Volition is seen as a process that leads from intention to actual behaviour. In other words, motivation and volition refer to goal setting and goal pursuit, respectively. Both processes require self-regulatory efforts. Several self-regulatory constructs are needed to operate in orchestration to attain goals. An example of such a motivational and volitional construct is perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is supposed to facilitate the forming of behavioural intentions, the development of action plans, and the initiation of action. It can support the translation of intentions into action.

Unconscious Motivation

Some psychologists believe that a significant portion of human behaviour is energized and directed by unconscious motives. According to Maslow, "Psychoanalysis has often demonstrated that the relationship between a conscious desire and the ultimate unconscious aim that underlies it need not be at all direct." In other words, stated motives do not always match those inferred by skilled observers.

For example, it is possible that a person can be accident-prone because he has an unconscious desire to hurt himself and not because he is careless or ignorant of the safety rules. Similarly, some overweight people are not hungry at all for food but for

fighting and kissing. Eating is merely a defensive reaction to lack of attention. Some workers damage more equipment than others do because they harbor unconscious feelings of aggression towards authority figures.

Psychotherapists point out that some behaviour is so automatic that the reasons for it are not available in the individual's conscious mind. Compulsive cigarette smoking is an example. Sometimes maintaining self-esteem is so important and the motive for an activity is so threatening that it is simply not recognized and, in fact, may be disguised or repressed. Rationalization, or "explaining away", is one such disguise, or defence mechanism, as it is called.

Another is projecting or attributing one's own faults to others. "I feel I am to blame", becomes "It is her fault; she is selfish". Repression of powerful but socially unacceptable motives may result in outward behaviour that is the opposite of the repressed tendencies. An example of this would be the employee who hates his boss but overworks himself on the job to show that he holds him in high regard. Unconscious motives add to the hazards of interpreting human behaviour and, to the extent that they are present, complicate the life of the administrator. On the other hand, knowledge that unconscious motives exist can lead to a more careful assessment of behavioural problems. Although few contemporary psychologists deny the existence of unconscious factors, many do believe that these are activated only in times of anxiety and stress, and that in the ordinary course of events, human behaviour-from the subject's point of view-is rationally purposeful.

Intrinsic Motivation and the 16 Basic Desires Theory

Starting from studies involving more than 6,000 people, Professor Steven Reiss has proposed a theory that finds 16 basic desires that guide nearly all human behaviour.

The desires are:

- Acceptance, the need for approval
- Curiosity, the need to learn
- Eating, the need for food
- Family, the need to raise children
- Honour, the need to be loyal to the traditional values of one's clan/ethnic group
- Idealism, the need for social justice
- Independence, the need for individuality
- Order, the need for organized, stable, predictable environments
- Physical Activity, the need for exercise
- Power, the need for influence of will
- Romance, the need for sex
- Saving, the need to collect
- Social Contact, the need for friends (peer relationships)
- Status, the need for social standing/importance
- Tranquility, the need to be safe
- Vengeance, the need to strike back/to win

In this model, people differ in these basic desires. These basic desires represent intrinsic desires that directly motivate a person's behaviour, and not aimed at indirectly satisfying other desires. People may also be motivated by non-basic desires, but

in this case this does not relate to deep motivation, or only as a means to achieve other basic desires.

Controlling motivation

The control of motivation is only understood to a limited extent. There are many different approaches of motivation training, but many of these are considered pseudoscientific by critics. To understand how to control motivation it is first necessary to understand why many people lack motivation.

Employee Motivation

Workers in any organization need something to keep them working. Most times the salary of the employee is enough to keep him or her working for an organization. However, sometimes just working for salary is not enough for employees to stay at an organization. An employee must be motivated to work for a company or organization. If no motivation is present in an employee, then that employee's quality of work or all work in general will deteriorate. Keeping an employee working at full potential is the ultimate goal of employee motivation. There are many methods to help keep employees motivated. Some traditional ways of motivating workers are placing them in competition with each other.

When motivating an audience, you can use general motivational strategies or specific motivational appeals. General motivational strategies include soft sell versus hard sell and personality type. Soft sell strategies have logical appeals, emotional appeals,

advice and praise. Hard sell strategies have barter, outnumbering, pressure and rank. Also, you can consider basing your strategy on your audience personality. Specific motivational appeals focus on provable facts, feelings, right and wrong, audience rewards and audience threats.

Drugs

Some authors, especially in the transhumanist movement, have suggested the use of "smart drugs", also known as nootropics, as "motivation-enhancers". The effects of many of these drugs on the brain are emphatically not well understood, and their legal status often makes open experimentation difficult.

Education

Motivation is of particular interest to educational psychologists because of the crucial role it plays in student learning. However, the specific kind of motivation that is studied in the specialized setting of education differs qualitatively from the more general forms of motivation studied by psychologists in other fields. Motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and how they behave towards subject matter.

It can:

- Direct behaviour towards particular goals
- Lead to increased effort and energy
- Increase initiation of, and persistence in, activities
- Enhance cognitive processing

- Determine what consequences are reinforcing
- Lead to improved performance.

Because students are not always internally motivated, they sometimes need situated motivation, which is found in environmental conditions that the teacher creates.

There are two kinds of motivation:

- Intrinsic motivation occurs when people are internally motivated to do something because it either brings them pleasure, they think it is important, or they feel that what they are learning is significant.
- Extrinsic motivation comes into play when a student is compelled to do something or act a certain way because of factors external to him or her (like money or good grades).

Note also that there is already questioning and expansion about this dichotomy on motivation, e.g., Self-Determination Theory. Motivation has been found to be a pivotal area in treating Autism Spectrum Disorders, as in Pivotal Response Therapy. Motivation is also an important element in the concept of Andragogy (what motivates the adult learner).

Sudbury Model Schools' Approach to Motivation

Sudbury Model schools adduce that the cure to the problem of procrastination, of learning in general, and particularly of

scientific illiteracy is to remove once and for all what they call the underlying disease: compulsion in schools. They contend that human nature in a free society recoils from every attempt to force it into a mold; that the more requirements we pile onto children at school, the surer we are to drive them away from the material we are trying to force down their throats; that after all the drive and motivation of infants to master the world around them is legendary. They assert that schools must keep that drive alive by doing what some of them do: nurturing it on the freedom it needs to thrive. Sudbury Model schools do not perform and do not offer evaluations, assessments, transcripts, or recommendations, asserting that they do not rate people, and that school is not a judge; comparing students to each other, or to some standard that has been set is for them a violation of the student's right to privacy and to self-determination.

Students decide for themselves how to measure their progress as self-starting learners as a process of self-evaluation: real life-long learning and the proper educational evaluation for the 21st century, they adduce. According to Sudbury Model schools, this policy does not cause harm to their students as they move on to life outside the school. However, they admit it makes the process more difficult, but that such hardship is part of the students learning to make their own way, set their own standards and meet their own goals. The no-grading and no-rating policy helps to create an atmosphere free of competition among students or battles for adult approval, and encourages a positive cooperative environment amongst the student body.

Business

At lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, such as physiological needs, money is a motivator, however it tends to have a motivating effect on staff that lasts only for a short period (in accordance with Herzberg's two-factor model of motivation). At higher levels of the hierarchy, praise, respect, recognition, empowerment and a sense of belonging are far more powerful motivators than money, as both Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation and Douglas McGregor's theory X and theory Y (pertaining to the theory of leadership) demonstrate.

Maslow has money at the lowest level of the hierarchy and shows other needs are better motivators to staff. McGregor places money in his Theory X category and feels it is a poor motivator. Praise and recognition are placed in the Theory Y category and are considered stronger motivators than money.

- Motivated employees always look for better ways to do a job.
- Motivated employees are more quality oriented.
- Motivated workers are more productive.

The average workplace is about midway between the extremes of high threat and high opportunity. Motivation by threat is a dead-end strategy, and naturally staff are more attracted to the opportunity side of the motivation curve than the threat side. Motivation is a powerful tool in the work environment that can lead to employees working at their most efficient levels of production.

Nonetheless, Steinmertz also discusses three common character types of subordinates: ascendant, indifferent, and ambivalent whom all react and interact uniquely, and must be treated, managed, and motivated accordingly. An effective leader must understand how to manage all characters, and more importantly the manager must utilize avenues that allow room for employees to work, grow, and find answers independently. The assumptions of Maslow and Herzberg were challenged by a classic study at Vauxhall Motors' UK manufacturing plant. This introduced the concept of orientation to work and distinguished three main orientations: instrumental (where work is a means to an end), bureaucratic (where work is a source of status, security and immediate reward) and solidaristic (which prioritises group loyalty). Other theories which expanded and extended those of Maslow and Herzberg included Kurt Lewin's Force Field Theory, Edwin Locke's Goal Theory and Victor Vroom's Expectancy theory. These tend to stress cultural differences and the fact that individuals tend to be motivated by different factors at different times.

According to the system of scientific management developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor, a worker's motivation is solely determined by pay, and therefore management need not consider psychological or social aspects of work. In essence, scientific management bases human motivation wholly on extrinsic rewards and discards the idea of intrinsic rewards.

In contrast, David McClelland believed that workers could not be motivated by the mere need for money-in fact, extrinsic motivation (e.g., money) could extinguish intrinsic motivation

such as achievement motivation, though money could be used as an indicator of success for various motives, e.g., keeping score. In keeping with this view, his consulting firm, McBer and Company, had as its first motto "To make everyone productive, happy, and free."

For McClelland, satisfaction lay in aligning a person's life with their fundamental motivations. Elton Mayo found out that the social contacts a worker has at the workplace are very important and that boredom and repetitiveness of tasks lead to reduced motivation. Mayo believed that workers could be motivated by acknowledging their social needs and making them feel important. As a result, employees were given freedom to make decisions on the job and greater attention was paid to informal work groups. Mayo named the model the Hawthorne effect. His model has been judged as placing undue reliance on social contacts at work situations for motivating employees. In *Essentials of Organizational Behaviour*, Robbins and Judge examine recognition programmes as motivators, and identify five principles that contribute to the success of an employee incentive programme:

- Recognition of employees' individual differences, and clear identification of behaviour deemed worthy of recognition
- Allowing employees to participate
- Linking rewards to performance
- Rewarding of nominators
- Visibility of the recognition process

Self Motivation Skills

Self improvement speakers have long talked about how you can develop your self motivation skills, the importance of self motivation, its use and the like. Motivation, as you already know, comes from inside and other people can only give you a stimulant - an external inspiration - that can make you take action.

But what happens after that? What happens after you have reached the self motivation level you wanted? What lies beyond the realm of self motivation, self understanding and inspiration? In the aftermath, there is a new task for you - Achieving success while maintaining the same level of self motivation. The good news is that it is easier to maintain your level of self motivation than it is to reach there first. Here are some quick self motivation tips that will keep you going when you feel downz.

Look Back

Remember how you were a person with no or very low motivation, no success, no purpose and no self esteem? Can you notice the change you made in yourself? Don't you think you have come a long way in the process of developing your self motivation skills? Did you notice the change in your attitude and outlook and opinion on things? Did you notice how people react more favourably towards you? Well, you sure have come a long way and it's good to look back because these are all positive things. You have achieved them through your hard work and you must be proud about it.

Take Some Time Out

You've been working hard since a long time and now its time to break. What's even better is that you deserve this break more than anyone else because you worked hard to get where you are right now. You developed your self motivation skills through constant practice and it is time that you took some time off your normal course of life to sit back and enjoy the usual nuances. Spend some time with your family and friends, eat out, go for a picnic, visit a new place - do whatever you love doing. This will keep you going and give you a chance to recharge your self motivation and self understanding.

Plan Again

You had set a plan for yourself when you began and you have executed at least some of its parts. It is now time to compare your performance with your plan? Did you achieve what you set out to achieve? Or did you fall short by just a teeny-weeny little bit? Whatever place you are at, compare your performance and make a new plan again taking into consideration your shortcomings in the last plan. This will act as a new source of self motivation and give your necessary inspiration in moments.

Stimulating Yourself to Take Action

Motivation always comes from within. There is no book, guide, coach etc. who can motivate you to do something. People, books, events can only "inspire" you to take action but the real motivation comes from within you.

Notice how plants and animals work. They react to external stimuli. A "touch-me-not" plant would close its leaves if you touch it. Your touching it is an external source of stimulation that fires up its action of "retracting its leaves". This is the motivation. Apparently, it is all about stimulation. To motivate yourself from the inside you need "external stimuli". You need a very strong reason that keeps you focused on what you are doing. This is the "stimulant" - your REASON for doing something. One thing that doesn't stop surprising me is the number of people who keep searching for something that could fire them up to take action. The problem is that people don't actually try to search for this "stimulant". Rather, they sit there thinking it will come by itself. Wrong. Very wrong.

To actually do some self motivation, you need to find this stimulant yourself. The stimulant is your "Why?" for what you are doing. If you are a businessman, WHY are you doing it? Are you in it for just the profits? Or is serving the people? If you are a home-based internet marketer, why are you doing it? For the comfort of being able to work from home? For supporting your family?

Ask those questions to yourself and determine a stimulant for yourself. Once you have done that, you will notice a drive inside you that constantly tells you to work towards that "why" - the stimulant. And presto, you can motivate yourself anytime of the day now because you know your "why" - your purpose.

For most people, motivating themselves seems to be the most difficult task. For them, motivation is like a fairy tale where

everything is good and great but which they can never really achieve. The truth is, it is not so difficult at all. It is very easy to develop your self motivation skills using the following self motivation tips:

Understand Yourself

The first and foremost thing to develop your self motivation skills is to have an understanding of your inner self. Motivation is directly related to self understanding. The more you know about yourself, the easier it is to motivate yourself to take action and never give up. Sit back and think about yourself - "What are the things you like? What things do you dislike? What do you prefer to do? What do you enjoy doing everyday?" These questions must be answered to properly understand yourself and use this understanding to motivate you towards success.

Think Positively

An important facet of self motivation is to think positively. To be able to stay focused and motivated, it is important that you believe in yourself and that things will turn out to be what YOU want them to turn out as. Negative thinking, fear and apprehensions will never allow you to move forward and over your failures. Positive thinking is that one single asset that can make or break your self motivation skills. This, combined with self understanding, gives you a very positive outlook of life, people and things and most importantly, your work.

Set Your Goals

If there is one thing which can mean all to your level of motivation, it is goal setting. To be able to perform self motivation, it is important that you have some set goals. The best thing about goals is that they give you a direction to work in and they make you accountable to yourself. By setting clear goals, you will see your self motivation skills develop by leaps and bounds and an even greater increase in your level of motivation with each passing day.

Using Self Motivation to Fight Depression

Are you depressed? Are you feeling down? Are you experiencing a lack of motivation? Depression is one of the most self-destructive things that could happen to a person. The onset of depression and its continuance can bring the most determined of people down to giving up. The good news is that you can use your self motivation skills to fight depression. Here are a few quick tips to help you fight any degree of depression through motivation:

Challenge your Beliefs

An important cause of depression is what YOU BELIEVE to be bad. Challenge your beliefs. Is your situation so bad? Are you the only person to be facing such situations? Aren't there others who are in even worse situations than you? Yes, there are. And this very fact can help you come out of your depression easily by restoring your self motivation back to its original level. Don't blame yourself for everything.

Don't Fall Prey to Moods

Another major cause of depression is your mood. Our mind gets a certain kind of fun to be sad. It loves to be alone in such times. The reason you must not allow your sad mood to take over is simply that it will get you even more down and depressed. Identify what triggers your depression or mood and either cut yourself off from those triggers or find a way to fight those triggers through your self motivation skills.

Take Care of Yourself

It is easy to give up the 'usual' course of life when you are depressed. Do not stop eating food, exercising or any other activities that you usually do. This will only depress you even more. Motivation comes easily in a healthy body filled with high spirits. All is not lost and you still deserve the pleasure and enjoyment of life.

Using the above tips and your self motivation skills, you can come out of your depression in a very short amount of time and start moving towards success again.

Using Negative Motivation for Success

There exist various ways of motivating yourself to take action. One of the important of those ways is negative motivation. Negative motivation is widely used in factories and such places where labour work is required. But, it can also be used personally as well. Fear is an inherent quality of all humans.

Every person is afraid of something at one time or the other. Negative motivation relies on exploiting this very quality to motivate you. In negative motivation, instead of expecting a positive outcome, one has to expect negative results or negative outcomes if the work at hand is not done. In business, workers or employees are often given a dose of negative motivation where they are encouraged to do more work if they don't want to get fired or have their wages or salaries cut. Negative motivation is an important self motivation skill that you can easily develop through practice and self understanding.

To use negative self motivation, you can apply the same techniques to motivate yourself as big business do - making yourself realise the negative or unwanted results if you do not do the work. For example, you may motivate yourself to do better on your job by telling yourself that if you don't do it, you might get fired which wouldn't allow you to pay your bills this month and you could be expelled from your house. Or if you are in a business, you can think to yourself that if you don't manage it properly, the business would run in losses and you'll have to shut it down.

In this way, by exploiting the fear and apprehension of the human mind, you can motivate yourself to perform better through negative motivation.

Playing Games for Self Motivation

Often times, motivation may come from places you would least expect it to. Although motivation is generated as a result of

external stimulants, it is possible to derive self motivation by carrying out certain activities which may stimulate you. One such activity is playing games. While developing your self motivation skills, it is possible that you realised that the human mind likes to feel powerful.

It likes to attain a sense of accomplishment. You can notice this right after you achieve something big and for which you had been working hard for. This sense of achievement gives you a surge of positive energy that is capable of motivating you for days together. Playing games is one such activity where you can reproduce that same sense of accomplishment again and again.

Did you play a particular game in your childhood? Cricket? Soccer? Rugby? Basketball? Do you remember how you used to feel great after hitting a big shot or scoring a goal or a basket? Didn't it make you feel positive? This is your sense of accomplishment at work. All games have a certain challenge in them and depending on your self understanding level, you can easily identify which games appeal more to you. Computers have made this even easier. The wide variety of computer games available today allow you to play any type of game right on your desktop.

Of course, overdoing it is harmful. Take creative people for example. People who are creative and of the thinking type, usually like quick games where they can do anything they want. For example, the Grand Theft Auto series. It allows them to take out all the tension that fills up their mind. Another example would be the 'plan and prepare' type of people. These people have

a certain liking for strategy games like Commandos, IGI and Max Payne. By playing games which you like and winning in those games, you'll be able to recreate the sense of accomplishment and increase your level of self motivation with every passing day.

Self Motivation is About Liking Yourself

It has been said time and again that motivation comes from inside. But for motivation to grow and prosper inside you, it is important that you believe in yourself. This simply means that you must appreciate what you are first, before trying to improve upon your current situations.

Self motivation is an attitude, a belief. Any attitude or belief in oneself starts with the simple exercise of appreciating your present self or liking yourself the way you are. Here are some quick tips to help you value what you are right now and use it to improve your self motivation skills.

Write your Positive Aspects

The first and foremost step in appreciating yourself is to identify some key positive aspects about you. Each and every person has some or the other positive qualities that make him or her, what he or she is. When you list these positive aspects down, you allow your sub-conscious to clearly see what a good person you are and helps you to raise your self motivation levels easily.

Write your Negative Aspects

As a flip side, every person has at least one negative quality too. Interestingly, this can also be used to improve your self motivation skills. Once you've written down your negative aspects, start putting efforts and making plans about how you are going to deal with them and how you can improve yourself more. This will give you a sense of power and accomplishment every time you overcome a negative quality which in turn, brings in a great deal of self motivation.

Write your Achievements

Think for a minute and try to identify some of the important achievements of your life. Remember the day you learned to cycle well or drive a bike around town? Write these down because they are achievements in their own accord. Now go through the list every time you feel down to bring back that lost enthusiasm and self motivation.

Using the above tips, you can easily stimulate yourself towards improvement and over time, you will notice that your self motivation has reached a new level. Once you have your motivation in place, who can stop you from success?

Self Motivation in 5 Simple Steps

Developing your self motivation is an art. It is a skill that requires some practice to make it perfect. It is not difficult to raise your level of motivation once you develop some strong self

motivation skills. Here are 5 simple steps that you can use to develop just that.

This is the first and foremost step. Set an aim for yourself. Goal setting is the first step in every field or subject. If you have a purpose - a definite goal - it will keep you going by constantly 'knocking' at your mind.

Try to be as specific as you can be regarding your goal. After you have set a goal, try to break it into smaller goals. These smaller goals will help you measure how much you have progressed towards your main goal.

Commit Yourself to your Goals

Attitude makes a lot of difference when it comes to self motivation. There is a huge difference between saying "I'll try my best to achieve my goals" and "I WILL achieve my goals". You must commit yourself to achieving your goals, no matter what happens.

This will make a huge difference to your motivation because your sub-conscious registers this as being an 'order'. It will change your whole attitude and give you the required motivation whenever you need it.

Take Action

Once you have set your goals and committed yourself to them, you need to start taking action. The reason is that when the mind

sees things happening around it, it gives you that very essential self motivation drive. It starts radiating the self motivation energy which is required to keep you going no matter what results you get.

Take Motivation 'Food'

While you are taking action on your plans, it is important that you keep feeding your mind with some motivation food. Keep challenging yourself. Keep imagining yourself achieving your goals and the positive energy around you once you achieve them.

To be self motivated even more, keep reading the success stories of small and big entrepreneurs, artists and other notable people to inspire you to do even better.

Measure Your Performance

In the first step, you had set small goals. To get even more motivation, regularly measure your performance against your goals. Don't be disheartened if you fell short of your goal. It simply means that you have to put in even more hard work till your next 'measurement exercise'.

How to Get a Self Motivation Drive

Self motivation is a state of mind. It is the condition of the mind where you focus and concentrate on your work so precisely that you lose yourself in the work while doing it. This often happens with various successful professionals in their respective fields.

Why do you think doctors are able to work so efficiently in the most critical situations? Or how does an engineer conceive such big and difficult to build buildings in the face of design and technological challenges? Why are they so successful? The reason is simple - they all have a self motivation drive.

A self motivation drive is a condition of the mind which makes you so dedicated and focused on your work that you can easily overcome the toughest of challenges that come your way. So, how do you achieve this self motivation drive? This is easy to achieve if you have three major ingredients that contribute to this drive:

Firstly, PURPOSE. Do you have a purpose? Do you have an ultimate aim? Do you have something which all your activities are directed towards? This is called your purpose. Your purpose is the main source of motivation. Whether you are in a job, a business or any other profession, your purpose is what makes the difference. For example, making your family happy is a purpose.

Or making your mom proud of you is a purpose. What methods you use to achieve this purpose are secondary. To develop your self motivation skills and self understanding, you need to have a primary purpose. Secondly, PASSION. Are you passionate about your purpose? Are you willing to do anything for your purpose? Are you ready to face anything and everything that comes your way?

This is passion. There exists a big difference between doing a work and doing a work with passion. If you compare the results

of the two, you can notice this difference easily. Passion is an important source of the self motivation drive. It keeps you going and doesn't let you give up even in the most difficult circumstances. Finally, PERSISTENCE. Do you give up easily? Do you keep doing the work until you finish it? Do you persist at everything that you do? Persistence is an important trait of your personality to achieve success. Combined with your purpose, passion and your self motivation drive, persistence will help you achieve any and every goal that you set for yourself. Using your self motivation skills to your benefit, you can make yourself persist in the most challenging situations, no matter how long it takes for you to achieve your goals.

Personal Skills: Team Skills

Team Skills

Team building refers to a wide range of activities, usually in a business context, for improving team performance. Team building is pursued via a variety of practices, and can range from simple bonding exercises to complex simulations and multi-day team building retreats designed to develop a team (including group assessment and group-dynamic games), usually falling somewhere in between. It generally sits within the theory and practice of organizational development, but can also be applied to sports teams, school groups, and other contexts. Team building is not to be confused with "team recreation" that consists of activities for teams that are strictly recreational. Teambuilding is an important factor in any environment, its focus is to specialize

in bringing out the best in a team to ensure self development, positive communication, leadership skills and the ability to work closely together as a team to problem solve. Work environments tend to focus on individuals and personal goals, with reward and recognition singling out the achievements of individual employees. "How to create effective teams is a challenge in every organization" Team building can also refer to the process of selecting or creating a team from scratch.

- Sigmund Freud (1921, 1960) discussed a theory of group dynamic termed identification with the leader which is the foundation of group formation.
- McDougall (1920) tends to be credited for being the first team builder and suggested five different conditions needed for a high functioning group.
- Taylor (1947) discovered how group norms impact performance.
- Lewin (1945) founded the Centre for Research in Group Dynamics and laboratory studies were conducted.
- World War II brought increased research/attention to team performance.
- During the 1970s theory and methodologies were available for large-scale team building. However, work culture tended to not be supportive of teamwork and rather rewarded individual behaviour.
- From the early 1980s until 1990, the United States began to rethink business and viewed teams differently given the economics with inflation rising and significant international debt. Team-based reward systems were implemented.

- The years 1990 to present are considered the era of high-performance teams. Consulting firms developed methods and tools to help organizations with

A team-building consultant is responsible for each component of a team building intervention. A team-building consultant will likely interact with the team once, or for a limited number of times. During this relationship, the consultant will actively work to assess the team, make recommendations, and provide activities (exercises that compose a team building intervention) for the team. These responsibilities usually require a team-building consultant to write a proposal after his or her evaluation of the organization and the team, indicating how he or she would go about improving the team's performance.

Once the organization and consultant determine which recommendations to utilize (if not all), the consultant is then responsible for providing a useful intervention that will transfer back into the organizational setting. This responsibility usually requires the consultant to create a detailed plan of events, while allowing for flexibility. After the intervention has been employed, the consultant will typically evaluate the team-building programme and communicate the results to the organization. otherwise!!

Things a Team-Building Consultant Might Ask

What does your organization want to get out of the exercise? The organization should make their goals clear to a team-building consultant or facilitator. This will allow the consultant to more

effectively work with the organization to find the best exercises that fit their needs.

What are the needs of the current team? Sometimes an organization will not know exactly what is wrong with a team. The team itself may have some clear ideas about what they need to improve on. Again, a consultant or facilitator will be able to assist the team better if they are able to get this kind of information. With this information, they can tailor the team building and individual exercises to best help the team.

What is the general age of the participants within the team? Some team building exercises are designed for younger groups. These exercises are not appropriate for older groups and could cause the organization and the team members to think that team building is a waste of time. In addition, some exercises are simply beyond some individuals physical capabilities. It is important to make exercises all-inclusive, so that all individuals within the teams can participate.

Reasons For Team Building

Reasons for Team Building include:

- Improving communication
- Making the workplace more enjoyable
- Motivating a team
- Getting to know each other
- Getting everyone "onto the same page", including goal setting

- Teaching the team self-regulation strategies
- Helping participants to learn more about themselves (strengths and weaknesses)
- Identifying and utilizing the strengths of team members
- Improving team productivity
- Practicing effective collaboration with team members

What are Team Building Exercises and What is Their Purpose?

Team building exercises consist of a variety of tasks designed to develop group members and their ability to work together effectively. There are many types of team building activities that range from kids games to games that involve novel complex tasks and are designed for specific needs. There are also more complex team building exercises that are composed of multiple exercises such as ropes courses, corporate drumming and exercises that last over several days. The purpose of team building exercises is to assist teams in becoming cohesive units of individuals that can effectively work together to complete tasks.

Who Can Benefit From Team Building Exercises?

Team building exercises are useful for all kinds of teams. Some exercises are designed for smaller teams, some for larger teams. Some are designed for new teams, others to focus on specific areas of an established team to be worked on. In addition to this, team building exercises also are for different age groups. In addition to this, some team building exercises are intended primarily for a specific age group.

It is possible that some team building activities designed for younger teams being misused with more mature groups has contributed to the negative stigma frequently associated with team building exercises.

Types of Team Building Exercises

This type of team building exercise is exactly what it sounds like. Communications exercises are problem solving activities that are geared towards improving communication skills. The issues teams encounter in these exercises are solved by communicating effectively with each other.

- *Goal:* Create an activity which highlights the importance of good communication in team performance and/or potential problems with communication.

Problem Solving/Decision Making Exercise

Problem Solving/Decision making exercises focus specifically on groups working together to solve difficult problems or make complex decisions. These exercises are some of the most common as they appear to have the most direct link to what employers want their teams to be able to do.

- *Goal:* Give team a problem in which the solution is not easily apparent or requires the team to come up with a creative solution

These exercises focus on aspects of planning and being adaptable to change. These are important things for teams to be able to do when they are assigned complex tasks or decisions. o Goal: Show the importance of planning before implementing a solution

Trust Exercise

A trust exercise involves engaging team members in a way that will induce trust between them. They are sometimes difficult exercises to implement as there are varying degrees of trust between individuals and varying degrees of individual comfort trusting others in general.

- *Goal:* Create trust between team members

Methods for Team Building

Team building events often take participants out of their regular work context, and use the new context as an enabler of change and development - allowing team participants to get to learn more about each other in a new (nonwork) context.

A good method for a team building will have 4 components:

- *Screening phase:* Aimed at finding the actual problems, topics and/or issues the team would like to deal with.
- *Analytical phase:* Data collection, exercise or any other procedure that will help to collect a good material to be used in intervention part. Data used in this part vary from very systematic (social network data or sociogram)

to unsystematic data collected by experience in exercise, simulation or a game.

- *Intervention/debriefing phase:* In this phase, team members use the data from the first part to reflect on team, themselves and their role in the team. Best methods help team members to process the data/experience into an developmental action plan.
- *Follow-up phase:* Scheduled weeks after the first three phases to make sure the planned changes (action plan) actually took place.

Three Components of a Team Building Exercise

- *Part 1: Instructions:* This part of a team-building exercise involves introducing the participants to the instructions for the exercise.
- *Part 2: Activity:* This part of the team-building exercise is the exercise itself. This is when participants utilize the instructions and begin to participate in the actual activity.
- *Part 3: Debriefing:* This is the most important part of a team building exercise. The facilitator will close the exercise with a review of the purpose for the exercise and how the team accomplished it.

For the debriefing portion of the team building exercise using open ended questions is a tool that a team building facilitator uses to bring participants to examine what was learned. These questions have no right and wrong answer they are meant to trigger thought and insight in the team members. These

questions can be used for front loading - setting up the thoughts prior to the beginning of a team building activity. These questions can also be used following an activity to reflect on the individual experience, team experience and actions plans for behavioural change within the team.

Below are examples of open ended questions that get results and inspire team work; What was the first clue that the situation was not going well? How did the chaos stop? What had to happen before you could start working towards a solution? What type of solution were you, as small teams, striving for? What are some real examples from your work lives that mirror this activity?

As a team initiative, which elements of high performing teams were evident and which elements needed more emphasis? Clarity of purpose and clarity of roles are essential for team performance. How did these two factors influence performance? What similarities do you see between this and the workplace? Is there anything we want to focus our attention on in future initiatives?

How did you use your planning time? Was everyone incorporated into the planning, if not why? Those of you who did not feel part of the team what stopped you from pushing your way in? Was a common language created? How is this like work? How can we implement our learning into the team? What strategies did the group develop to implement an effective solution? What was the consequence of change during the activity?

What strategies did the group develop to adjust to change? What recommendations does the group have for managing change at work based on the experience? How did this activity build trust? What changes have you noticed since you finished the stages? How did you overcome any anxieties? How well did you coach your partner? Using an open ended question will raise ideas and create solutions that teams never thought possible.

The methods of doing this vary widely, including:

- *Simple social activities:* To encourage team members to spend time together
- *Group bonding sessions:* Company sponsored fun activities to get to know team members (sometimes intending also to inspire creativity)
- *Personal development activities:* Individual programmes given to groups (sometimes physically challenging)
- *Team development activities:* Group-dynamic games designed to help individuals discover how they approach a problem, how the team works together, and discover better methods
- Psychological analysis of team roles, and training in how to work better together (and combinations of the above)

Team interaction involves "soft" interpersonal skills including communication, negotiation, leadership, and motivation - in contrast to technical skills directly involved with the job at hand. Depending on the type of team building, the novel tasks can

encourage or specifically teach interpersonal team skills to increase team performance.

Models of Team Behaviour

Team building generally sits within the theory and practice of organizational development. The related field of team management refers to techniques, processes and tools for organizing and coordinating a team towards a common goal - as well as the inhibitors to teamwork and ways to remove, mitigate or overcome them.

Several well-known approaches to team management have come out of academic work.

- The forming-storming-norming-performing model posits four stages of new team development to reach high performance. Some team activities are designed to speed up (or improve) this process in the safe team development environment.
- Belbin Team Types can be assessed to gain insight into an individual's natural behavioural tendencies in a team context, and can be used to create and develop better functioning teams.
- Team Sociomapping is an visual approach to team process and structure modelling. This model is based on social networks approach and improves the team performance by improvement of specific cooperation ties between the people.

Team Member Qualities

Emotional stability:

- Adjustment
- Self-esteem

Extraversion:

- Dominance
- Affiliation
- Social Perceptiveness
- Expressivity

Openness:

- Flexibility

Agreeableness:

- Trust
- Cooperation

In breaking down these dimensions, it was generalized that past research has been consistent when it mentions that emotional stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are all related to team effectiveness. Within extraversion, dominance was found to be a negative attribute in team members where they are not working independently and not collaborating with others.

Adjustment and flexibility were noted to be important facets for team members to have where adjustment to situations is needed. Clearly for teams to be successful there has to be a balance between the personality dimensions. This provides well-roundedness for a person to bring to a team.

Organizational Development

In the organizational development context, a team may embark on a process of self-assessment to gauge its effectiveness and improve its performance. To assess itself, a team seeks feedback from group members to find out both its current strengths and weakness. To improve its current performance, feedback from the team assessment can be used to identify gaps between the desired state and the current state, and to design a gap-closure strategy. Team development can be the greater term containing this assessment and improvement actions, or as a component of organizational development.

Self-Managed Work Teams

Self-managing work teams (SMWTs) have been rising in popularity since the beginning of the 1990s. These team members are responsible for themselves. Although more organizations are implementing SMWTs, employees have been resisting them. Three variables at the individual-level are potential reasons for resistance to SMWTs. These variables include trust, cultural values and low tolerance for change.

Managers should implement SMWTs with procedural and distributive justice. Also, managers should address concerns regarding trust, and accountability. They should provide clarity regarding who is responsible for what and how the employees' careers and opportunities for development will be affected. Managers should work to encourage employees having a positive organizational outlook.

Team Management Skills

So you've just got a new job as a manager or supervisor. Congratulations! Or, maybe you've just been given the task of pulling a new team together. What a challenge! Either way, whether your team exists already, or whether it's your responsibility to create it, what do you do next?

This article looks at some of the key things that team managers need to do if their team is to thrive and succeed. These range from choosing the right people and deciding who does what, to communicating with, developing and motivating people. It also covers some of the most common pitfalls to be avoided.

First Things First

But before that, some definitions are useful. What IS management, exactly? And how does it differ from leadership? A good starting point is the saying "Leaders do the right things, while managers do things right." What this means is that leadership involves setting direction, communicating that vision passionately to those they work with, and helping the people they

lead understand and commit to that vision. Managers, on the other hand, are responsible for ensuring that the vision is implemented efficiently and successfully. Of course, these two roles overlap considerably - and what's best is when you fulfill both roles. However, the focus here is on the specific skills and responsibilities of managers, and the tools available to them.

Team skills in Todays Time

In today's environment teams take many forms. Technology and geography lead to 'virtual teams' that might never physically meet. Projects require rapid formation of teams for a short term activity, and increasingly teamworking occurs across departments. This means that team building and team skills training are an important and recurring activity.

For many organisations, the term "team building" implies a fun activity (possibly involving mud!), in which people get out of the office and do some 'bonding'. But developing team work and team skills, and building high performing teams requires a far more comprehensive approach.

Chapter 3

Personal Communication Skills and Business Interpersonal Skills of Communication

Interpersonal Skills

Given the vast amount of attention devoted to the analysis and evaluation of motor skill performance, it is rather surprising that it was some considerable time before psychologists began to investigate seriously the nature of social skill.

In one sense, this is a term that is widely employed and generally comprehended, since it has already been used in this chapter and presumably understood by the reader. Indeed, the terms 'communication skill', 'social skill', and 'interpersonal skill' have entered the lexicon of everyday use. For example, many job advertisements stipulate that applicants should have high levels of social, or communication, skill. In this global sense, social skills can be defined as the skills employed when communicating at an interpersonal level with other people. This definition is not very illuminating, however, since it describes what these skills are used for rather than what they are. It is rather like defining a bicycle as something that gets you from one place to another. As illustrated in the next section, attempts to provide a more technical, insightful definition of social skill are manifold.

Definitions of Interpersonal Skill

In reviewing this field, Phillips concluded that a person was socially skilled according to 'The extent to which he or she can communicate with others, in a manner that fulfils one's rights, requirements, satisfactions, or obligations to a reasonable degree without damaging the other person's similar rights, satisfactions or obligations, and hopefully shares these rights, etc. with others in free and open exchange'. This definition emphasized the microelements' of social encounters, in terms of reciprocation between participants, and focused upon the outcome of behaviour rather than the skills per se (although Phillips also noted that knowing how to behave in a range of situations was part of social skill). A similar approach was adopted by Combs and Slaby, who defined social skill as 'the ability to interact with others in a given social context in specific ways that are socially acceptable or valued and at the same time personally beneficial, mutually beneficial, or beneficial primarily to others'.

'To perform skillfully, the individual must be able to identify the emotions or intent expressed by the other person and make sophisticated judgments about the form and timing of the appropriate response.' Thus, the skilled individual needs to take cognisance of the others involved in the encounter. This involves perceptual acumen and perspective-taking ability, together with a capacity to mesh one's responses meaningfully, and at apposite moments, with those of others. An evaluation of these definitions reveals a remarkable similarity with the position relating to motor skill, in that there are common elements, but no uniform agreement about the exact nature of interpersonal skill.

One problem here is that any detailed study of higher-order skill will involve a long process. There is a well established '10-year rule' in relation to the learning of complex skill routines, in that the highest level of performance in any field is only attained after 10 years of concerted practice and training. Top chess players, Olympic athletes, international soccer players, celebrated musicians, etc., will all have engaged in at least a decade of intensive practice. It is very probable that the 10-year rule also applies to complex social skills (negotiating, teaching, counselling, etc.). This makes analysis and synthesis problematic. While there has been study of how various types of motor skill performance change over time, there is a paucity of such research in relation to interpersonal skill. In the interpersonal domain, Spitzberg and Dillard concluded that 'what constitutes skill, even in well-defined contexts, is difficult to specify'. Trying to define social skills in a sentence is like trying to define some complex motor skill, such as being a good baseball player, in one sentence.

There are many components to these skills. Skilled performance is not a unitary activity. There is a large variety of different types of skill, some of which involve basic activities that are simple to execute, while others incorporate a range of intricate subelements, making them much more complicated to master. It is hardly surprising therefore that differing definitions of what constitutes social skill have proliferated within the literature. Any definition must, of necessity, be a simplification of what is an intricate, multifarious, and multifaceted process. This is not to say that definitions are without value: at the very least, they set parameters as to what should be included in the study of

social skill and, therefore, act as a template for legitimate investigation in this field. Moreover, while definitions vary in emphasis, the defining features of skill can be charted.

Thus, the six main elements as being central to the concept of social skills; namely, that they:

- Are learned
- Are composed of specific verbal and non-verbal behaviours
- Entail appropriate initiations and responses
- Maximise available rewards from others
- Require appropriate timing and control of specific behaviours
- Are influenced by prevailing contextual factors.

Process

While behaviour is a key aspect of skill, it is in turn shaped by a range of other features. As such, motoric behaviour represents the overt part of an overall process in which the individual pursues goals, devises implementation plans and strategies, continually monitors the environment, considers the position of others involved in the encounter, responds appropriately in that situation, estimates the likelihood of goal success, and adjusts future behaviour accordingly (the operationalisation of these process elements of skilled performance will be discussed. In this way, interaction is a transactional process in which each person's response is guided and shaped by the responses of others.

In fact, a common analogy is made between interacting and dancing. Both are carried out for a wide variety of reasons, some of which overlap. Thus, one may dance or interact to express oneself, to impress others, to help to develop a relationship, to pass the time, to seduce a partner, and so on. Interacting, like dancing a tango or waltz, depends on the coordinated intermeshing of learned repertoires between the two parties. Both are forms of performance wherein certain 'moves' are expected and anticipated, and the people involved complement one another in a fluid pattern of co-responding.

If one partner is unskilled, the encounter becomes much more difficult. One of the process dimensions to have attracted considerable attention within the interpersonal communication literature is the notion of competence. Indeed, Spitzberg and Cupach argued that 'Competence is an issue both perennial and fundamental to the study of communication.' Some theorists have conceptualised skill as being subsumed by competence. For instance, Samter concluded that 'Social competence can thus be regarded as the manifestation of the various social skills a person possesses.' Likewise, Ridge defined competence as the ability 'to choose a strategy, then select among skills appropriate to that context and employ these skills', given that 'a strategy is a plan derived from a context that determines which skills to apply'.

Here, competence is regarded as the ability to choose appropriate strategies and implement these in terms of skilled performance. Spitzberg argued, 'Competence can be viewed as an evaluative judgment of the quality of a skill.' He also concluded that

appropriateness (the extent to which behaviour meets standards of acceptability and legitimacy) and effectiveness (the degree to which desired outcomes are achieved) were the two main criteria used to guide such judgements.

In a comprehensive review of this area, there are three qualities associated with competence:

- Knowledge. This relates to the information that is necessary for the person to be able to communicate in a way that is perceived to be competent (e.g. what one should say in this situation, how others might feel about this, what the alternative responses are).
- Motivation. This concerns the desire of the person to behave in ways that will be judged as competent.
- Skill. This refers to the individual's ability to act in such a way as to promote the perception of competence.

However, it is also possible to argue that skill subsumes competence. Thus, the Chambers English Dictionary defines skill as 'aptitudes and competencies appropriate for a particular job'. In this way, skilled soccer players or skilled negotiators would be regarded as highly competent in many separate facets of the process in which they are engaged. Likewise, it makes sense to describe someone as 'competent but not highly skilled' at performing a particular action. Furthermore, the terms are often combined.

Thus, Daly asserted, 'Those who exhibit socially competent skills are preferred in interactions.' If all of this is confusing, it reflects the confusion that is rife in the deliberations of some theorists who grapple with this issue. For example, the distinction proffered by Sanders was that competence involves the acquisition of an apparently higher-order 'system of computation and reasoning' whereas skill is of a lower-order nature and concerned with having 'acquired a set of methods and techniques'. But Sanders failed to explain how one could be skilled without being competent.

Moreover, his definition of competence implies that it is an abstract ability. Thus, by Sanders' distinction, someone who could provide a fluent rationale (reasoning) as to how one should be, for example, a good soccer player or negotiator, yet who in practice is disastrous at playing soccer or negotiating, would be highly competent in these contexts, yet also highly unskilled.

Goal-Directed

Social interaction is now widely recognised as goal-directed activity. A defining feature of skilled performance is therefore intentionality. As expressed by Dindia and Timmerman, 'Communication skill refers to an individual's ability to achieve communicative goals.'

Skilled behaviours are selected by the individual to achieve a desired outcome, and as such are purposeful as opposed to chance or unintentional. The importance of goals has long been recognised. An unskilled person may have ambitious goals, but

without carefully related action plans nothing is likely to be achieved. Carver and Scheier illustrated how, in turn, the execution of plans depends on a range of resources, such as money, access to relevant others, interpersonal skills, and cognitive ability.

Four main theories for explaining and predicting goal-directed intentions and behaviours have been proposed:

- The theory of reasoned action purports that behaviour is determined directly by one's intentions to carry it out, and these are influenced by one's attitudes positive or negative towards the behaviour and by perceived social pressure to perform it.
- The theory of planned behaviour extends this by adding the notion of perceived behavioural control as an important predictor of intention and action. Perceived behavioural control refers both to the presence of facilitating situational conditions and to feelings of self-efficacy (personal confidence in one's ability to execute the behaviour successfully).
- The theory of self-regulation emphasises the centrality of motivational commitment, or desire, to act (this aspect will be further discussed).
- Finally the theory of trying interprets goal-directed behaviour within three domains – trying and succeeding, trying but failing, and the process of striving per se.

This theory emphasises the importance of personal attitudes to success and failure as predictors of intentions and actions, as well as attitudes to the process involved en route to the goal. For example, one may decide not to try to lose weight because of a personal belief that one would fail anyway, or because the process of dieting and exercising is not viewed as desirable.

The frequency and recency of past behaviour is also seen as important. Thus, one is likely to be less hesitant about asking a member of the opposite sex for a date if one has had lots of dates (frequency), the last of which was two days ago (recency), than if one has only ever dated three people and the last date was 10 years ago. Although the processes of goal setting, goal implementation, and goal abandonment are affected by a range of variables, in essence the decision to pursue particular goals seems to be determined by two overarching factors:

- Desirability (the attractiveness of goal attainment)
- Feasibility (the strength of belief that the goal can be achieved).

Another distinction has been made between learning goals and performance goals. Those who see themselves as pursuing learning goals (e.g. to learn how to be a better salesperson) view setbacks as opportunities for learning and future development. On the other hand, those who are guided by performance goals (to sell 'x' number of products today) are more negatively affected by failure. Learning goals therefore lead to better achievements than performance goals. In their comprehensive analysis of the nature, role, and functions of goals as regulators of human

action, Locke and Latham demonstrated how goals both give incentive for action and act as guides to provide direction for behaviour.

They reviewed studies to illustrate the following principles:

- People working towards a specific goal outperform those working with no explicit goal.
- Performance level increases with goal difficulty (providing the person is committed to the goal).
- Giving people specific goals produces better results than vague goals (such as 'do your best').

A distinction needs to be made between long-term and short-term goals. In order to achieve a long-term goal, a number of related short-term ones must be devised and executed. Our moment-by-moment behaviour is guided by the latter, since if these are not successfully implemented the long-term goal will not be achieved. Sloboda used the term 'goal stacks' to refer to a hierarchy of goals through which one progresses until the top of the stack is reached. In this way, skilled behaviour is hierarchically organised with larger goal-related tasks comprising smaller component subunits.

For example, a long-term goal may be to appoint an appropriate person for a job vacancy. In order to do so, there is a range of subgoals which must be achieved – advertising the position, drawing up a short-list of candidates, interviewing each one, and so on. These subgoals can be further subdivided. At the interview stage, the chief goal is to assess the suitability of the candidate,

and this, in turn, involves subgoals such as welcoming the candidate, making introductions, and asking relevant questions. In this way, the short-term, behavioural goals provide a route to the achievement of the long-term, strategic goal.

Another aspect of skilled action is that goals are usually subconscious during performance. The skilled soccer player is not consciously aware of objectives when running with the ball, but these nevertheless govern behaviour.

Those involved in the process of successful learning of new skills progress through the following four sequential stages:

- Unconscious incompetence. At this stage, we are blissfully unaware of the fact that we are acting in an unskilled way.
- Conscious incompetence. Here we know how we should be performing but also know that we are not able to produce the level of performance required.
- Conscious competence. At the early stage of skill acquisition, we are aware of behaving in a skilled manner as we act.
- Unconscious competence. Once a skill has been fully assimilated, we successfully execute it without having to think about it.

Interrelated Behaviour

Social skills are defined in terms of identifiable units of behaviour, and actual performance is in many ways the acid test

of effectiveness. In recognising the centrality of behaviour, Millar, Crute and Hargie pointed out: Judgements about skill are directly related to behavioural performance. We do not judge soccer players on their ability to discuss the game or analyse their own performance, but rather we regard them as skilful or not based upon what they do on the field of play. Similarly, we make judgements about social skill based upon the behaviour of the individual during social encounters.

Therefore, a key aspect of skilled performance is the ability to implement a smooth, integrated, behavioural repertoire. In a sense, all that is ever really known about others during social interaction is how they actually behave. All kinds of judgements (boring, humourous, warm, shy, and so on) are inferred about people from such behaviours. As mentioned earlier, skilled behaviour is hierarchical in nature, small elements such as changing gear or asking questions combining to form larger skill areas such as driving or interviewing, respectively.

This viewpoint has guided training in social skills, whereby the emphasis is upon encouraging the trainee to acquire separately smaller units of behaviour before integrating them to form the larger response elements – a technique that has long been employed in the learning of motor skills (this issue of skills training is further discussed). Socially skilled behaviours are interrelated in that they are synchronised and employed in order to achieve a common goal. As this book illustrates, there is a wide range of differing behavioural routines, each of which can usefully be studied separately. However, to be skilled, the individual must combine appropriate elements of these as

required, so as to respond appropriately in a particular interaction. As noted by Stivers, 'Social interaction requires that many different practices and systems of practices be brought together.' This is similar to the tennis player who, to improve performance, focuses on separate aspects of the game (serve, volley, lob, backhand, etc.) during training, but, to be skilled, must combine these during actual matches.

In this sense, while our understanding is informed by a microanalysis of particular elements, for a fuller appreciation of skilled performance the complete picture must also be taken into consideration. One example of this is that an analysis of aspects of the channels of verbal and non-verbal behaviour combined has been found to be more effective in accurately detecting whether or not someone is being deceptive than the scrutiny of either channel on its own. Skilled performance has been likened to an orchestra. All of the instruments (behaviours) must be synchronised, and if any one is out of synch the entire performance is adversely affected. In this respect, Bellack highlighted how performance needs to be viewed as a whole when making judgements about skill, pointing out that in social presentation:

Skill therefore involves a coordinated meshing of behaviour, and 'is said to have been acquired when the behaviour is highly integrated'. The car driver needs simultaneously to operate the clutch, accelerator, gear lever, brakes, steering wheel, and light switches. Similarly, someone wishing to provide reward to another concurrently uses head nods, eye contact, smiles, attentive facial expressions, and statements such as 'That's very

interesting.’ These latter behaviours are all interrelated in that they are indicative of the skill of rewardingness.

Conversely, if someone does not look at us, yawns, uses no head nods, and yet says, ‘That’s very interesting’, these behaviours are contradictory rather than complementary, and the person would not be using the skill of rewardingness effectively. An individual who adopted such a pattern of mixed response over a prolonged period would be judged to be low in interpersonal skills. People who always act in a socially incompetent fashion are deemed to be unskilled regardless of the depth of theoretical knowledge they may possess about interpersonal behaviour. In skill, it is performance that counts. Noel Coward, recognising his own performance deficit, once said that he could not sing although he knew how to. An important criterion for judging skill is accuracy. Highly skilled individuals make fewer performance errors than those less skilled. Just as a highly skilled golfer misses fewer putts than one less skilled, so, too, a skilled orator makes fewer speech dysfluencies than a less skilled public speaker.

The errors are divided into:

- *Errors of omission:* Here an action that should have been executed is omitted. For example, a driver forgets to put the gear in neutral before switching on the engine, or a salesperson fails to get the client’s commitment to buy before attempting to close a sale.
- *Errors of commission:* In this instance, the person carries out a behaviour that detracts from performance. For example, a learner driver releases the

clutch too quickly and the car engine stalls, or an individual discloses too much deeply negative personal information on a first date and the other person terminates the encounter.

This behavioural aspect of the skills definition has been misunderstood by some theorists. For example, Sanders presented a critique of the skills approach from his background as a 'language and social interaction' scholar. In a misinterpretation of the skills perspective, Sanders made the rather absurd deduction that 'all speakers of a language are equally able to produce grammatical sentences, and thus must be equally skilled'. Unfortunately, he does not explain how precisely he reached this conclusion, as it is the exact opposite of what is being proposed in the skills perspective.

It is completely illogical to make the leap from individuals being able to produce grammatical sentences to being equally skilled, and no skills analyst would make such an error. While behaviour (both verbal and non-verbal – although the latter domain is almost entirely ignored by Sanders) is recognised as being important, it is how this behaviour is contextually employed that determines the extent to which it is deemed to be skilful.

Situationally Appropriate

The importance of contextual awareness for the effective operation of motor skill has long been recognised. In his analysis of motor skill, Welford pointed out that 'skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental

demands, with human beings and external situation together forming a functional "system" '. There is firm evidence that certain behaviours are situationally determined. For example, Hargie, Morrow and Woodman carried out a study of effective communication skills in community pharmacy, in which they videotaped 350 pharmacist-patient consultations. They found that skills commonly employed when dealing with over-the-counter items were not utilised by the pharmacist when handling prescription-related consultations.

For instance, the skill of suggesting/advising, which was defined as the offer of personal/professional opinion as to a particular course of action while simultaneously allowing the final decision to lie with the patient, fell into this category. When dealing with prescription items, suggestions or advice were not given, probably because these patients had already been advised by their doctor and the pharmacist did not wish to interfere. Individuals skilled in one context may not be skilled in another. For example, an excellent midfielder in soccer may be a terrible goalkeeper.

Likewise, experienced teachers have been shown to have difficulties in becoming skilled school counsellors. In essence, the more similarity there is between the demand characteristics of situations, the higher the probability that skills will transfer. Thus, a professional tennis player is usually good at other racquet sports. In the same way, a successful car salesperson is likely to be effective in other related selling contexts. One similarity between motor and social skill is that they are both sequential in nature. Thus, the skill of driving involves a pre-set

sequence of behaviours that must be carried out in the correct order. In social interaction, there are also stages that tend to be followed sequentially. Checking into a hotel usually involves interacting in a set way with the receptionist, being shown to one's room and giving a tip to the porter who delivers one's cases. Likewise, going to the doctor, the dentist, or church involves sequences of behaviour that are expected and which are more or less formalised, depending upon the setting.

In the case of the doctor's surgery, the sequence would be:

- Patient enters the surgery.
- Doctor makes a greeting.
- Patient responds and sits down.
- Doctor seeks information about the patient's health.
- Patient responds and gives information.
- Doctor makes a diagnosis.
- Doctor prescribes and explains treatment.
- Doctor makes closing comments.
- Patient responds, stands up, and leaves the surgery.

This sequence is expected by the patient, who would be most unhappy if the doctor moved straight without going through the intervening steps. It can be disconcerting and embarrassing if one is in a situation where the sequence is not as expected or has not been learned (for example, attending a church service of a different religious denomination). In such situations, however, we usually cope and, unlike the sequence of behaviours in, for example, driving a car, these behaviours are expected rather than essential. It is only in certain rituals or ceremonies that a pre-set

sequence is essential (for example, weddings in church) and responses are demanded in a fixed temporal order.

Interpersonal skills are more fluid and individualised than most motor skills. Different people employ varying combinations of behaviours, often with equal success, in social contexts. This process, whereby the same goal can be achieved through the implementation of differing strategies, is referred to as equifinality. These strategies, in turn, have alternative yet equally effective behavioural approaches. While there are common stages in social episodes (e.g. opening, discussion, closing), the behaviours used within each stage vary from one person to another. However, 'knowing' the social situation is clearly an important aspect of social skill, in order to relate behaviours successfully to the context in which they are employed. Further aspects of the situational context will be explored in.

Learning

The fifth aspect of the definition is that skills comprise behaviours that can be learned. Some theorists purport that not all skilled behaviour is learned. For example, Sanders argued, 'There are species of behaviour for which persons can produce desired results "naturally" because the skills are acquired in the course of bodily or mental development.' As an example, he cites 'speaking and understanding one's native language'. However, most skills analysts would find the view that language just occurs 'naturally' (whatever that means) to be a rather unusual perspective.

Does it mean, for example, that children reared in isolation acquire their 'native' language 'naturally'? Of course, the answer is no, they do not. While most humans are hard-wired to learn language (an exception being those suffering from cognitive impairments), all social behaviour (including non-verbal as well as verbal) still has to be learned. We know that if children are reared in isolation they do not develop 'normal' interactive repertoires and certainly will not acquire their 'native' language. In addition, it has been shown that the interactive skills of parents are key components in the development of social competence in children.

Thus, mothers who encourage their children to talk, and make elaborations on the child's responses, produce enhanced language development in the child. Indeed, there is evidence that the degree of deprivation of appropriate learning experiences from other people differentially affects the social behaviour of individuals. In this way, children from socially deprived home backgrounds are more likely to develop less appropriate social behaviours, whereas children from culturally richer home environments tend to be more socially adept. Bandura's social learning theory posited that all repertoires of behaviour, with the exception of elementary reflexes (eye blinks, coughing, etc.), are learned. This social learning process involves the modelling and imitation of significant others, such as parents, peers, media stars, siblings, and teachers. The individual observes how others behave and then follows a similar behavioural routine. By this process, from an early age, children may walk, talk, and act like their same-sex parent.

At a later stage, however, they may begin to copy and adopt the behaviour of people whom they see as being more significant in their lives by, for example, following the dress and accents of peers regardless of those of parents. A second major element in social learning theory is the reinforcement of behaviour. As a general rule, people tend to employ more frequently responses that are positively reinforced or rewarded, and to display less often those that are punished or ignored.

This is not to say that there are not innate differences in individual potential, since some people may be more talented than others in specific areas. While most behaviours are learned, it is also true that people have different aptitudes for certain types of performance. Thus, although it is necessary to learn how to play musical instruments or how to paint, some may have a better 'ear' for music or 'eye' for art and so will excel in these fields. Likewise, certain individuals have a 'flair' for social interchange and find interpersonal skills easier to learn and perfect. However, as discussed earlier, practice is also essential for improvement. Comparisons of highly skilled people with those less skilled, across a wide variety of contexts, show that the former engage in significantly more practice.

Cognitive Control

The final element of social skill is the degree of cognitive control that the individual has over behaviour. Thus, a socially inadequate person may have learned the basic behavioural elements of interpersonal skill but may not have developed the appropriate thought processes necessary to control their

utilisation. If skill is to have its desired effect, timing is a crucial consideration. Behaviour is said to be skilled only if it is employed at the opportune moment. For example, smiling and saying 'How funny' when someone is relating details of a personal bereavement would certainly not be a socially skilled response. Indeed, saying the right thing at the wrong time is a characteristic of some social inadequates. Learning when to employ socially skilled behaviours is every bit as important as learning what these behaviours are, where to use them, and how to evaluate them. In his discussion of the notion of interpersonal competence, Parks highlighted the importance of hierarchical control theory, which conceives of personal action as a process controlled by nine linked and hierarchical levels. From lower to higher, these levels are as follows.

- *Intensity control*: This is the level just inside the skin involving sensory receptors, muscle movements, and spinal responses. Damage at this basic level has serious consequences for communication. For example, impairments to vision, hearing or to the vocal chords can dramatically impede interpersonal ability.
- *Sensation control*: Here, the sensory nuclei collected at level 1 are collated and organised into meaningful packages. The ability to portray a certain facial expression would be dependent upon activity at this level.
- *Configuration control*: The basic packages developed at level 2 are in turn further organised into larger configurations, which then control movements of the limbs, perception of visual forms, and speech patterns.

The ability to decode verbal and non-verbal cues occurs at this level.

- *Transition control*: This level further directs the more basic configurations into fine-grained responses, such as changing the tone of voice, pronouncing a word, or using head nods at appropriate moments. Transition control also allows us to recognise the meaning of such behaviour in others.
- *Sequence control*: At this level, we control the sequence, flow, intensity, and content of our communications. The ability to synchronise and relate our responses appropriately to those with whom we are interacting, and to the situational context, is handled at this level. Thus, judgements of the extent to which someone is socially skilled can begin to be made at the sequence control level.
- *Relationship control*: Here the individual judges and makes decisions about larger sets of relationships (cause-effect, chronological, etc.), so that appropriate strategies can be implemented to attain higher-order goals. For example, the ability to encode and decode deceptive messages is controlled at this level. Likewise, longer-term tactics for wooing a partner, negotiating a successful business deal, or securing promotion at work all involve relational control.
- *Programme control*: At this level, programmes are developed to predict, direct, and interpret communication in a variety of contexts. Skill acquisition involves a process of knowledge compilation.

Two types of knowledge are important here:

- *Knowing what is important in social encounters:* This type of content or declarative knowledge includes an awareness of the rules of social encounters, the behaviour associated with the roles that people play, and so on. In the early stages of skill learning, this knowledge predominates.
- *Knowing how to perform in a skilled fashion:* When the individual becomes skilled, declarative knowledge is 'compiled' into procedural knowledge. Here, the person has developed a large repertoire of procedures directly related to the implementation of interpersonal skills.

There has been increasing interest in the role of 'mental representations' in social behaviour. Highly skilled people have a huge store of such representations relating to a wide range of situations. These representations, or conceptual schemas, allow existing circumstances to be compared with previous knowledge and experience, and so facilitate the process of decision making. For the development of skill, 'knowledge must be acquired in such a way that it is highly connected and articulated, so that inference and reasoning are enabled as is access to procedural action.

The resulting organization of knowledge provides a schema for thinking and cognitive activity'. A schema is a cognitive structure that is developed after repeated exposure to the same situation. It provides the person with a store of knowledge and information about how to behave in a particular context. Schemas contain

learned 'scripts' that are readily available for enactment as required. By adulthood, we have developed thousands of schemas to deal with a wide variety of people across a range of situations, such as checking-in at an airport, shopping at the supermarket, or giving directions to a stranger on the street.

New situations can be difficult to navigate, since we have not developed relevant schemas to enable us to operate smoothly and effectively therein. In any profession, learning the relevant schemas and scripts is an important part of professional development. In their analysis of skill acquisition, Proctor and Dutta demonstrated how as skill is acquired cognitive demands are reduced (the person no longer has to think so much about how to handle the situation), and this in turn frees up cognitive resources for other activities.

An experienced teacher has a number of classroom-specific schemas, such as 'class getting bored' and 'noise level too high', each with accompanying action plans – 'introduce a new activity' or 'call for order'. These schemas are used both to evaluate situations and to enable appropriate and immediate responses to be made.

Experienced teachers build up a large store of such schemas, and so are able to cope more successfully than novices. The same is true in other professions. Veteran doctors, nurses, social workers, and salespeople develop a range of work-specific schemas to enable them to respond quickly and confidently in the professional context. This ability to respond rapidly and appropriately is, in turn, a feature of skilled performance. In fact,

speed of response is a notable aspect of skilled interaction. Thus, in free-flowing interpersonal encounters, less than 200 milliseconds typically elapses between the responses of speakers. This flexibility to change plans, so as to adapt to the needs of the situation, is another feature of skill.

- *Principle control*: Programmes must be related directly to our guiding principles or goals, and these, in turn, control their implementation. In this sense, we have to create programmes that are compatible with our goals. However, as Parks pointed out, 'unsuccessful behaviour often occurs because individuals lack the necessary programming to actualize their principles'. This is particularly true when one is confronted by unexpected events, for which programmes have not been fully developed.
- *System concept control*: At the very top of this hierarchy is our system of idealised self-concepts. These drive and control our principles, which in turn determine programmes, and so on. Someone whose idealised self-concept included being a 'trustworthy person' would then develop principles such as 'always tell the truth' and 'fulfil one's obligations'. Further down the hierarchy, at the programme-control level, schemas would be formulated to enable these principles to be operationalised across various contexts.

Social Skills and Motor Skills

From the above analysis, it is obvious that there are similarities and differences between social and motor skills. The parallels between the two sets of skill are not perfect. However, the analogy between motor and social performance has stimulated considerable debate, and there certainly are considerable areas of overlap.

The main similarities are that both sets of skill:

- Are goal-directed and intentional
- Involve high levels of cognitive control
- Encompass behaviour that is synchronised and situation-specific
- Are learned and improved through practice and feedback.

Rapidity is a feature of all skilled action. An ability to respond rapidly means that skilled individuals appear to have more time to perform their actions and as a result their behaviour seems less rushed. The skilled person can 'sum up' situations and respond swiftly, so that performance becomes smoother and more fluid. In one study of chess players, Chase and Simon showed novices and grandmasters chessboards on which were placed pieces from the middle of an actual game. After viewing the board for 5 seconds, they were asked to reconstruct the game on a blank board.

On average, novices correctly replaced 4 out of 20, whereas masters replaced 18 out of 20, pieces. Interestingly, in a second part of this study when the subjects were shown a board on which the pieces were placed in a way that could not have resulted from an actual chess game, masters performed no better than novices. Thus, rapidity was related to actual chess playing. Socially skilled individuals develop a similar ability in relation to specific contexts - for example, interviewers will know how to deal with a vast array of interviewee responses. Again, this is context-related, so that an experienced detective may be highly skilled during an interrogative interview but less skilled in a counseling interview. Automaticity refers to the fact that skilled actions are performed 'without thinking'. We do not think about how to walk or how to talk - we just do it. Yet, in infancy, both skills took considerable time and effort to acquire, and in cases of brain injury in adulthood both may have to be relearned.

Mediating Factors

The term 'mediating factors' refers to those internal states, activities, or processes within the individual that mediate between the feedback perceived, the goal being pursued, and the responses that are made. What has been termed the 'mediated mind' is therefore an important feature of interpersonal communication. Mediating factors influence the way in which people and events are perceived, and determine the capacity of the individual to assimilate, process, and respond to the social information received during interpersonal encounters.

It is at this stage that the person makes decisions about appropriate courses of action for goal achievement. This is part of the process of feedforward, whereby the individual estimates the likely outcome of particular responses in any given context. There are two core mediating factors, cognition and emotion.

Cognition

As discussed, cognition plays a very important role in skilled communication, in terms of control of responses. This is because 'it is in the mind that intentions are formulated, potential courses of action considered, and efferent commands generated. Cognition has been defined as 'all the processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used'.

This definition emphasises the following aspects:

- Cognition involves transforming, or decoding and making use of the sensory information received.
- To do so, it is often necessary to reduce the amount of information attended to, in order to avoid overloading the system.
- Conversely, at times, we have to elaborate upon minimal information by making interpretations, judgements, or evaluations (e.g. 'He is not speaking to me because I have upset him').
- Information is stored either in short-term or long-term memory.

While there is debate about the exact nature and operation of memory, there is considerable evidence to support the existence of these two systems. Short-term memory has a limited capacity for storage, allowing for the retention of information over a brief interval of time (no more than a few minutes), while long-term memory has an enormous capacity for storage of data that can be retained over many years. Thus, information stored in short-term memory is quickly lost unless it is transferred to the long-term memory store.

For instance, we can usually still remember the name of our first teacher at primary school, yet a few minutes after being introduced to someone for the first time we may have forgotten the name. The process of context-dependent coding is important. Remembering occurs by recalling the context of the original event. When we meet someone we recognise but cannot place, we try to think where or when we met that person before – in other words, we try to put the individual in a particular context.

A similar process occurs in social situations, whereby we evaluate people and situations in terms of our experience of previous similar encounters. Short-term memory is important in skilled performance in terms of listening and retaining information about the responses of others so as to respond appropriately.

- Information that is stored is recovered or retrieved to facilitate the process of decision making and problem solving.

As expressed by Meyer, 'Prior to addressing a communication goal, speakers retrieve from long-term memory knowledge about how that goal has been addressed in the past.' While some thoughts are purposeful and goal-oriented, other cognitive activity may be disordered, less controlled, and more automatic, or involuntary, in nature. The extent to which these erratic thoughts determine the main direction of mental activity varies from one person to another, but is highest in certain pathological states, such as schizophrenia, where a large number of unrelated thoughts may 'flood through' the mind.

Socially skilled individuals have greater control over cognitive processes and use these to facilitate social interaction. Snyder demonstrated how those high in social skill have a capacity for monitoring and regulating their own behaviour in relation to the responses of others – a system he termed self-monitoring. This process of regulation necessitates an awareness of the ability level of the person with whom one is interacting and of the 'way they think', since, as Wessler pointed out, 'In order to interact successfully and repeatedly with the same persons, one must have the capacity to form cognitive conceptions of the others' cognitive conceptions.'

Such metacognition is very important in forming judgements about the reasons for behaviour. However, as with many of the processes in skilled performance, there is an optimum level of metacognition, since, if overdone 'all of this thinking about thinking could become so cumbersome that it actually interferes with communication'. In other words, it is possible to 'think oneself out of' actions. However, highly skilled individuals have

the ability to 'size up' people and situations rapidly, and respond in an appropriate fashion. Such ability is dependent upon the capacity to process cognitively the information received during social interaction.

Emotion

The importance of mood and emotional state in the communication process and the part they play in shaping our relationships with others has been clearly demonstrated. The effective control of emotion is a central aspect of socially skilled performance. For this reason, measures of the emotional domain figure prominently in interpersonal skill inventories. Skilled individuals are adept both at encoding their own emotions, and at accurately decoding and responding appropriately to the emotional state of others. Being responsive to the emotional needs of others is a key aspect of effective relational communication. Indeed, one of the characteristics of dysfunctions of personality, such as psychopathy, is emotional malfunction.

Responses

Once a goal and related action plan have been formulated, the next step in the sequence of skilled performance is to implement this plan in terms of social responses. It is the function of the response system (voice, hands, face, etc.) to carry out the plan in terms of overt behaviours, and it is at this stage that skill becomes manifest. Social behaviour can be categorised as shown.

Thus, an initial distinction is made between linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. Linguistic behaviour refers to all aspects of speech, including the actual verbal content (the words used), and the paralinguistic message associated with it. Paralanguage refers to the way in which something is said (pitch, tone, speed, volume of voice, accent, pauses, speech dysfluencies, etc.). Non-linguistic behaviour involves all of our bodily communication and is concerned with the study of what we do rather than what we say.

While there are many approaches to the analysis of non-verbal behaviour, this domain encompasses the following three main categories.

- Tactesics is the study of bodily contact – in other words, with what parts of the body we touch one another, how often, with what intensity, in which contexts, and to what effect.
- Proxemics is the analysis of the spatial features of social presentation – that is, the social distances we adopt in different settings, how we mark and protect
- Kinesics is the systematic study of body motion – the meanings associated with movements of the hands, head, and legs, the postures we adopt, and our gaze and facial expressions.

One important element of individual behaviour is the concept of style, defined by Norton as ‘the relatively enduring pattern of human interaction associated with the individual’, involving ‘an

accumulation of “microbehaviours”... that add up to a “macrojudgment” about a person’s style of communicating’.

Norton identified the following nine main communicative styles, each of which can be interpreted as a continuum:

- Dominant/submissive. Dominant people like to control social interactions, give orders, and be the centre of attention; they use behaviours such as loud volume of voice, interruptions, prolonged eye contact, and fewer pauses to achieve dominance. At the opposite end of this continuum, submissive people prefer to keep quiet, stay out of the limelight, and take orders.
- Dramatic/reserved. Exaggeration, storytelling, and non-verbal communication are techniques used by dramatic individuals who tend to overstate their messages. At the other end of the continuum is the reserved type of person, who is quieter, modest, and prone to understatement.
- Contentious/affiliative. The contentious person is argumentative, provocative, or contrary, as opposed to the agreeable, peace-loving, affiliative individual.
- Animated/inexpressive. An animated style involves making use of hands, arms, eyes, facial expressions, posture, and overall body movement to gain attention or convey enthusiasm. The converse here is the dull, slow-moving, inexpressive person.
- Relaxed/frenetic. This continuum ranges from people who do not get overexcited, always seem in control, and are never flustered, to those who are tense, quickly

lose self-control, get excited easily, and behave frenetically.

- **Attentive/inattentive.** Attentive individuals listen carefully to others and display overt signs of listening such as eye contact, appropriate facial expression, and posture. Inattentive individuals, on the other hand, are poor listeners who do not make any attempt to express interest in what others are saying.
- **Impression-leaving/insignificant.** The impression-leaving style is characterized by flamboyant individuals who display a visible or memorable style of communicating and leave an impression on those whom they meet. They are people who, for example, wear loud clothes, have unusual hairstyles, or exhibit a controversial interactive manner. The opposite of this is the insignificant individual who 'fades into the fabric' of buildings, is non-controversial, and dresses conservatively.
- **Open/closed.** Open people talk about themselves freely, and are approachable, unreserved, candid, and conversational. At the opposite end of this continuum are very closed individuals who disclose no personal information, are guarded, secretive, and loath to express opinions, and 'keep themselves to themselves'.
- **Friendly/hostile.** This style continuum ranges from the friendly person who smiles frequently, and is happy, very rewarding, and generally non-competitive, to the hostile person who is overtly aggressive, highly competitive, and very unrewarding.

Most people can be evaluated overall in terms of these continua, although style of communication can also be affected by situations. A dominant teacher in the classroom may be submissive during staff meetings, while a normally friendly individual may become hostile when engaging in team sports. Nevertheless, there are elements of style that endure across situations, and these have a bearing on a number of facets of the individual.

For example, someone who tends to be dominant, frenetic, inattentive, or hostile will probably not make a good counsellor. Similarly, a very dominant person is unlikely to marry someone equally dominant. As discussed in Chapter, behaviour is the acid test of skill. If someone always fails miserably at actual negotiation we would not call that person a skilled negotiator. For this reason, much of this text is devoted to an analysis of a wide array of responses in terms of skills, styles, and strategies. However, in order to respond appropriately, it is also necessary to be aware of available feedback during communication.

Personality

The concept of personality and the role it plays in determining behaviour has long occupied the minds of social scientists (Butt, 2004). While recognising that there are many differing perspectives on personality, and hence varying definitions, Pervin and John defined it as 'those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving'.

One common unit of analysis in the study of personality has been that of traits. It is argued by trait theorists that whether we are cooperative or competitive, extraverted or introverted, dominant or submissive, dependent or independent, and so on, influences both how we interpret and how we respond to situations.

Although many inventories have been developed to measure a plethora of such characteristics, there is considerable debate regarding the exact number of traits, or factors, which can reliably be charted. Most agree on the validity of what have been termed the 'big five' traits of extraversion, neuroticism (or anxiety), tough-mindedness, conscientiousness, and open-mindedness. Traits can be viewed as representing naturally occurring goal tensions within individuals. For example, extraversion-introversion represents the tension between wanting to meet and socialise with others, on the one hand, and the desire to have peace and quiet and be alone, on the other hand.

It would seem that while traits are not universally reliable in predicting behaviour, they are most useful in predicting individual responses across similar situations. However, there is no clear agreement about the exact determinants of personality. Although a combination of hereditary and prenatal factors is contributory, experiences in infancy and early childhood seem to play a vital shaping role.

Furthermore, while personality is relatively stable, it can and does change as a result of experiences throughout the lifespan. There is also some evidence that differences in personality may differentially affect skill acquisition, though research in this field

is at a very early stage. In addition, skills need to be adapted to meet the specific requirements of different types of people.

Gender

During social interaction, we tend to respond differently to, and have differing expectations of, others depending upon whether they are male or female. All cultures recognize male/female as a fundamental divide and accord different sets of characteristics and behavioural expectations according to which side of the divide an individual is on.

The first question asked after the birth of a baby is usually whether it is a girl or a boy. Sexual differences are then perpetuated by the ways in which infants are dressed and responded to by adults. Not surprisingly, therefore, by the age of 2 years, children can readily distinguish males from females on the basis of purely cultural cues such as hairstyle and clothing.

Gender stereotypes proliferate in child rearing, with children being reminded of gender role expectations in phrases such as 'big boys don't cry' or 'that's not very lady-like'. Such practices inevitably contribute to later differences in behaviour and expectations thereof. However, the extent to which gender-specific patterns of behaviour are innate or learned remains unclear.

For example, 'social constructionist' theorists view gender as being constructed through everyday discourse and relational communication. However, this perspective, which purports that

masculinity and femininity exist only in relation to one another, is rejected by evolutionary theorists. The latter argue that gender variations in behaviour can be understood from an evolutionary perspective, as these arise from biological differences.

Each side cites evidence to substantiate its claims. It seems likely, however, that both nature and nurture play a part in shaping gender response patterns, although the precise manner in which this occurs remains a matter of considerable debate.

Age

There has been increasing research into the field of social gerontology. One reason for this is that 'social aging - how we behave, as social actors, towards others, and even how we align ourselves with or come to understand the signs of difference or change as we age - are phenomena achieved primarily through communication experiences'.

Likewise, communication processes are directly affected by maturational phenomena at each stage of our lives. It is also clear that our own age, and the age of those with whom we interact, shape our behaviour and expectations. Skilled individuals therefore take the age of the target (and of course their own age) into consideration when framing their responses. For example, different forms of reward are appropriate for 3-year-olds, 12-year-olds, and 25-year-olds; statements such as 'You're a clever little person', 'You have really grown up', and 'I find your ideas intellectually very challenging' are apposite for one age group, but not for the others.

Reaction time, speech discrimination, and the capacity for information processing tend to decrease with age. However, there are wide differences across individuals, with some more adversely affected than others. Furthermore, older people have accumulated a larger vocabulary, coupled with a wealth of experience of handling a wide variety of types of people across varying situations.

Thus, there can be advantages and disadvantages in terms of the effects of age upon skilled performance. There has been considerable research into patterns of intergenerational communication.

Appearance

The physical appearance of others, in terms of body size, shape, and attractiveness, also affects our behaviour and expectations. People are judged upon their appearance from a very early age, so that nursery school children have been shown to exhibit an aversion to chubby individuals and a greater liking for physically attractive peers.

Attractiveness is a very important feature in social encounters. A range of research studies has shown that being rated as attractive has positive benefits. These include being seen as more popular, intelligent, friendly, and interesting to talk to; receiving higher grades in school; dating more frequently; securing employment more readily; earning more; and being less likely to be found guilty in court.

While they are also seen as more vain, materialistic, and likely to have extramarital affairs, it remains the case that 'on the whole, we seem to equate beauty with goodness'. Ratings of physical attractiveness are fairly consistent across variations in age, gender, socio-economic status, and geographical location.

Aronson argued that cross-cultural agreement about ratings of attractiveness has been influenced by popular culture. Many children are raised on a diet of Disney cartoon characters, Ken and Barbie dolls, Scream-Dream pop stars, and TV soaps.

It is not surprising therefore that research has shown cross-cultural agreement that attractive facial features in young women include large eyes relative to size of face, high cheek bones, and thin jaw, as well as short distance between nose and mouth and between mouth and chin. The male physique rated as attractive by females includes being tall and slim, with medium-thin lower trunk and medium-wide upper trunk, small buttocks, thin legs, and a flat stomach. However, research and theory into the study of attraction have also emphasized how initial judgments of attractiveness can be tempered by psychological, sociological, contextual, and relational influences.

Thus, attractiveness involves more than physical features and is not just 'skin deep'. For instance, a physically unattractive professional may be successful and popular with clients by developing an empathic interactive style coupled with a competent professional approach. Although one of the prime functions of clothes is to protect the wearer from cold or injury, dress also serves a number of social functions.

The importance of social signals conveyed by apparel is evidenced by the amount of money spent on fashion wear in Western society. This is because, in many situations, it is very important to 'look the part'. Socially skilled people devote time and effort to the selection of appropriate apparel for interpersonal encounters in order to project a suitable image. Thus, we 'dress up' for important occasions such as selection interviews or first dates.

In addition, we also carefully select other embellishments, including 'body furniture' (rings, bangles, necklaces, brooches, earrings, watches, and hair ribbons or bands), spectacles, and make-up, to enhance our overall personal image. Since so much attention is devoted to the choice of dress, it is hardly surprising that we make judgements about others based upon this feature. In terms of impression management, it is patently advisable to dress with care.

The situation

As explained, skilled performance is shaped by situational factors. There is ample evidence that social situations have a powerful impact on behaviour. This impact can be understood by examining the core features of social situations. These are explained below, with reference to professional interaction.

Goal Structure

As noted earlier, goals represent a central aspect of skill. The goals we seek are influenced by the situation in which we are interacting, while, conversely, the goals we pursue are central

determinants of situation selection. Thus, in the surgery, the doctor will have goals directly related to dealing with patients.

However, if the doctor has the social goal of finding a mate, social situations in which available members of the opposite sex are likely to be encountered will be sought. In this way, goals and situations are intertwined. Thus, knowledge of the goal structure for any situation is an important aspect of skilled performance.

In any given situation, people play, and are expected to play, different roles, which carry with them sets of expectations about behaviour, attitudes, feelings, and values. Thus, a doctor is expected to behave in a thorough, caring fashion, to be concerned about patients' health, and to treat their problems in confidence. The roles of those involved affect both the goals and behaviour of participants.

For example, a teacher will behave differently, and have different goals, when teaching pupils in the classroom, attending a staff meeting at lunchtime, or having an interview with the principal about possible promotion.

Rule

Social interaction has been likened to a game, involving rules that must be followed if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

Professionals must be aware not only of the rules of the situations they encounter, but also how to deal with clients who break them.

Repertoire of Elements

Different types of behaviour are more or less appropriate in different situations; therefore it is important for professionals to develop a range of behavioural repertoires. Thus, in one situation, fact finding may be crucial and the skill of questioning central, while in another context it may be necessary to explain carefully certain facts to a client. These behavioural repertoires are usually sequential in nature.

Concepts

A certain amount of conceptual information is necessary for effective participation in any given situation. In order to play the game of poker, one must be aware of the specific meaning of concepts such as 'flush' and 'run'.

Similarly, a patient visiting the dentist may need to be aware of the particular relevance of concepts such as 'crown' or 'bridge'. One common error is to assume that others are familiar with concepts when in fact they are not. Most professionals have developed a jargon of specific terminology for various concepts, and must ensure that it is avoided, or fully explained, when dealing with clients.

Language and Speech

There are linguistic variations associated with social situations, with some requiring a higher degree of language formality. Giving a lecture, being interviewed for a managerial position, or chairing

a board meeting all involve a more formal, deliberate, elaborated use of language than having a chat with a friend over coffee.

Equally, changes in tone, pitch, and volume of voice change across situations: there are vocal patterns associated with, inter alia, evangelical clergymen addressing religious gatherings, barristers summing up in court, and sports commentators describing ball games. Professionals need to develop and refine their language and speech to suit a particular context.

Physical Environment

The nature of the environment influences behaviour. Humans, like all animals, feel more secure on 'home territory' than in unfamiliar environs. Thus, a social worker will tend to find clients more comfortable in their own homes than in the office, whereas the social worker will be more relaxed in the latter situation.

People usually feel more at ease, and therefore talk more freely, in 'warm' environments (soft seats, concealed lights, carpets, curtains, and pot plants). The physical lay-out of furniture is also important in either encouraging or discouraging interaction.

Culture

Few aspects of the communication process have attracted as much attention in recent years as the study of culture. Culture can be defined as 'the sets of behaviours, beliefs, values, and

linguistic patterns that are relatively enduring over time and generation within a group’.

It is passed from one generation to another and, while not static, is a stable system within which people negotiate identity and relationships. Furthermore, any group that is significantly different from the rest of society forms a subculture, and the actions of individuals are more readily understood in the light of subcultural influences. Culture has been shown to have a definite influence on how interpersonal skills are enacted. This is because, ‘Based on the beliefs and values of our culture, we learn not only what are appropriate interaction scripts within our culture, but also the meanings that should be assigned to these interactions’.

Cultural expertise refers to the ability to adapt one’s responses appropriately across differing cultural settings. An example is contained in the old adage, ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ It necessitates the development of a knowledge and understanding of the cultural and subcultural norms, beliefs, values, and responses of those with whom we are interacting. Being a skilled person includes the possession of a high level of such cultural expertise.

While culture is a multifaceted concept, a common broad distinction is made between collectivist and individualistic cultures. Eastern cultures communicative meaning is implicit and attached to relationships and situations rather than to what is said. The style of communication is more indirect and self-

concealing, with the result that verbal messages can be ambiguous.

These cultures foster an interdependent self with high value placed upon external features such as roles, status, relationships, 'fitting in', being accorded one's proper place, being aware of what others are thinking and feeling, not hurting others' feelings, and minimizing imposition when presenting requests. Time is conceived as being subservient to duties, relationships, and responsibilities. Western cultures are low context, with an emphasis upon open, direct communication with explicit meaning, so that verbal messages tend to be clearer, more complete, specific, and pointed.

There is a discomfort with ambiguity, and anxiety when meaning depends upon something other than the words uttered. These cultures encourage the development of an independent self that is bounded, unitary, stable, and detached from social context, with a consequent focus upon internal abilities, thoughts and feelings, expressing oneself and one's uniqueness, and being 'up front'. Goals tend to be more personal and instrumental, and time is seen as paramount – being viewed as akin to a commodity, which can be 'spent', 'saved', 'invested', or 'wasted'. Collectivist cultures therefore inculcate a 'we' identity as opposed to the 'I' identity in individualist cultures.

This directly affects interpersonal skills. For example, cultural differences have been found in style of request, between direct forms ('Close that window'), indirect forms ('It's getting cold') and those in between ('Would it be OK to have the window closed?').

Kim and Wilson found that US undergraduates considered the direct style as the most skilful way of making a request whereas Korean undergraduates rated it as the least effective strategy. Furthermore, the US sample saw clarity as a key dimension of successful requests, while Koreans viewed clarity as counterproductive to effectiveness.

However, it has also been found that there are individual as well as cultural differences in individualism and collectivism. As noted by Ivey, 'individuals differ as much as or more than do cultures. You will want to attune your responses to the unique human being before you.' Furthermore, at different times, in varying situations, and with different people, we may adopt either a more individualistic or a more collectivist style of communicating. Skilled individuals therefore consider both the nature of the specific individual and prevailing cultural norms when deciding how to respond.

In recent years, it has become increasingly recognized that investigators in a field of enquiry - any field - bring personal perspectives and figurative comparisons to bear on their work. Such perspectives have been called paradigms, metaphors, or fundamental analogies, and their influence has been thought to be pervasive. Indeed, both philosophers and working scientists acknowledge the value and necessity of such processes in the realm of creative thought. At least in earliest, gesture as a medium of communication coordinate with vocal and written language was recognized by Francis Bacon. He suggested that 'as the tongue specked to the ear, so the hand specked to the eye. Subsequent analyses, inspired by Bacon's proposal, were

undertaken to examine chirologia (manual language) as both a rhetorical and natural language form. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scholars argued that emotional expression and gesture, the so-called 'natural languages', surely provided the foundation for the more refined and artificial verbal symbolic communication. The boundaries of the particular variations in the 'behaviour as communication' analogies which have been identified are fuzzy, and the explicit categories of the metaphors as employed by particular investigators are difficult to articulate fully.

Yet the three variations of the communication analogy seem valid as the history and current investigation in non-verbal behaviour as communication is examined. In this spirit, a fourth general communication metaphor can also be identified - non-verbal behaviour as dramatic presentation.

Non-Verbal Behaviour as Style

Although the 'non-verbal behaviour as communication' analogies hold historical precedence in the area, two additional analogies can be identified: non-verbal behaviour as personal idiom and non-verbal behaviour as skill. Allport introduced the important distinction between the instrumental aspects of action and the expressive aspects, the latter being personalised and stylistic ways of accomplishing the tasks of life. Comparisons with one's signature, voice, or thumb print are offered. This perspective emphasises holism, consistency, and configural uniqueness, while de-emphasising complexity, skill, and authenticity.

Demonstrations of the application of the analogy have been offered (certainly among the ranks of the stage impressionists, if not scientific workers), but the richness and fruitfulness of the metaphor have not yet been fully exploited. Perhaps the most inviting metaphor of non-verbal behaviour has been the emphasis on skilled performance. The fruitfulness of the analogy of acquired skills as a way of thinking about non-verbal behaviour has been recognised for some time. However, its extension to non-verbal behaviour has been rather recent; Rosenthal, The analogy has directed attention to the expressive or sending (encoding) and interpretive or receiving (decoding) aspects of non-verbal exchange, and has begun to highlight aspects of face-to-face interaction not investigated hitherto.

The Scientific Study of Non-Verbal Behaviour

Literature dealing with non-verbal behaviour as communication has increased dramatically in volume and complexity, particularly during the last several decades. Wolfgang and Bhardway listed 170 book-length volumes published during the previous 100 years that contained non-verbal communication materials, the vast majority of which had appeared within the last 15 years.

Today's electronic databases attest to the health and continued development of the field. A search of the area, covering the time period, yielded over 300 books and chapters on the subject of

non-verbal behaviour as communication. A comparable search of the PsycINFO database from 1997 to the present suggests an increased empirical focus on this area of communication.

The results of the search listed over 700 entries that had the descriptor term 'non-verbal behaviour' or 'non-verbal communication'. Over 500 of these entries were journal articles, the vast majority of which were empirically based.

The topic is usually presented with two different emphases:

- A theoretical-research orientation
- An application-demonstration orientation.

Because of its relation to the subtle and interpretative aspects of communication, there is a tendency on the part of popular lay texts to emphasise application without a balanced presentation of the theory and research which examines the validity and reliability aspects necessary for proper understanding of non-verbal behaviour as one form of communication. Indeed, an interesting piece in this vein appeared on the Internet recently, providing an extended discourse on the psychological meaning of the handshake. While fascinating, and probably face valid, no recognizable empirical data accompanied the analysis.

The challenge of the present chapter is to discuss non-verbal behaviour as a communication skill, while maintaining the scientific integrity needed to evaluate critically the degree to which application is appropriate for any particular reader. It is hoped that the reader will assume a critical, scientific

perspective in treating non-verbal behaviour as a meaningful yet complex topic for research and application.

Behavioural dimensions

The first category is kinesics, commonly referred to as 'body language', and includes movements of the hand, arm, head, foot, and leg, postural shifts, gestures, eye movements, and facial expressions. A second category is paralanguage and is defined as content-free vocalisations and patterns associated with speech such as voice pitch, volume, frequency, stuttering, filled pauses (for example, 'ah'), silent pauses, interruptions, and measures of speech rate and number of words spoken in a given unit of time.

A third category involves physical contact in the form of touching. Another category is proxemics, which involves interpersonal spacing and norms of territoriality. A fifth category concerns the physical characteristics of people such as skin colour, body shape, body odour, and attractiveness. Related to physical characteristics is the category of artefacts or adornments such as perfume, clothes, jewellery, and wigs. Environmental factors make up the last category and deal with the influences of the physical setting in which the behaviour occurs: a classroom, an office, a hallway, or a street corner. Knapp's seven dimensions help depict the breadth of non-verbal communication.

It is interesting to note that the physical characteristic, adornment, and environmental factor categories do not involve an assessment of overt non-verbal expressions, but rather

information about the actor that is communicated non-verbally. There are numerous examples in the literature that detail these categories, either individually or in combinations and the reader is referred to these for detailed discussion. This chapter will present these categories in various combinations as they pertain to non-verbal behaviour as a communication skill.

It is important to stress that non-verbal behaviour is dependent upon all of these factors for meaningful communication to take place. Some of these categories are covered in the theoretical and empirical presentation; others are not, but are nevertheless important and should always be considered as part of the 'universe' comprising non-verbal communication.

Setting and role influences on non-verbal behaviour

One of the major problems in focusing on the interpretation of non-verbal behaviour is to treat it as a separate, independent, and absolute form of communication. This view of the topic is much too simplistic. The meaning of non-verbal behaviour must be considered in the context in which it occurs. Several types of contextual factors will be used to guide this discussion of non-verbal communication and the behaviours associated with it. One involves the environmental setting of the behaviour.

Both the physical and social aspects of the environment must be described in sufficient detail to assess possible contributing factors to non-verbal behaviour as meaningful communication. For example, the furniture arrangement in an office can be a major factor influencing the non-verbal behaviours exhibited

therein. Body movements differ depending upon whether the person is sitting behind a desk or openly in a chair.

The proximity and angle of seating arrangements have been shown to serve different functions during interaction and to affect such behaviour as eye contact, gazing, and head rotation. Non-verbal behaviour may have very different meanings when exhibited on the street rather than, say, in a classroom. Background noise level in a work setting may produce exaggerated non-verbal communication patterns that would have very different meaning in a more quiet setting such as a library. The influence of ecological factors on behaviour has become an increasingly important focus in the study of human behaviour. Most research in nonverbal communication dealing with physical-environmental factors focused on interpersonal spacing, proxemics, and cultural differences in interaction patterns.

The social climate of the environment is also an important factor in the consideration of non-verbal behaviour. Research has demonstrated that different behaviours are produced in stressful versus unstressful situations. The formality of a setting will determine the degree to which many non-verbal behaviours are suppressed or performed. Competitive versus cooperative interaction settings will also produce different types, levels, and frequencies of nonverbal behaviours. These are just several examples of factors affecting the communicative meaning of non-verbal behaviour. The reader is encouraged systematically to survey factors that may be of importance in more personally familiar settings.

Requiring communicative behaviour to be explicitly goal-directed, with an immediate adjustment on the part of the encoder depending upon the decoder's response, limits the number of behaviours that can be considered communicative. In typical conversations, many non-verbal behaviours become automatic responses and are performed at low levels of awareness or involve no awareness at all. What was once a specifically defined, goal-directed behaviour becomes habitual and is no longer a product of conscious intention. The degree to which non-verbal behaviours involve varying levels of awareness then becomes difficult to determine. Another consideration for the understanding of non-verbal communication is whether or not the encoder and decoder share a common, socially defined signal system.

Chapter 4

Individual Job Skills, Business Work and Communication Experience

Volunteer work and internships

Work experience is the experience that a person has working, or working in a specific field or occupation.

The phrase is sometimes used to mean a type of volunteer work that is commonly intended for young people — often students — to get a feel for professional working environments. This usage is common in the United Kingdom, while the American equivalent is intern.

Though the placements are usually unpaid, travel and food expenses are sometimes covered, and at the end of the appointment, a character reference is usually provided. Trainees usually have the opportunity to network and make contacts among the working personnel, and put themselves forward for forthcoming opportunities for paid work.

Many employers in the more sought after professions demand that every new entrant undergo a period of unpaid “work experience” before being able to get paid work.

Educational work experience at secondary Level in Australia and the United Kingdom

Work experience is offered on the national curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 in the United Kingdom and Australia; every student has a statutory right to take work experience if he or she wishes. Work experience in this context is when students in an adult working environment more or less act as an employee, but with the emphasis on learning about the world of work. Placements are limited by safety and security restrictions, insurance cover and availability, and do not necessarily reflect eventual career choice but instead allow a broad experience of the world of work.

If a student fails to find a placement then he or she may sometimes be forced to attend school everyday, continuing the normal school day or doing a placement around the school such as aiding the caretaker for example, or helping out elsewhere in the school, such as with language and PE departments, or with ICT technicians.

Students are not prohibited from working at a company outside the conurbation of the city or abroad. Routine safety checks on the companies are now more thorough and students who arrange placements at failed companies are forced to find a new placement; companies which fail to comply with statutory requirements for insurance and child protection may be prohibited from officially taking students.

Most students do not get paid for their time doing work experience; however, some employers do give money to the students, as this is considered part of their education. The duration varies according to the course the student is on and various other personal circumstances; the vast majority of students will go out on work experience for one or two weeks in a year, while some students will work in a particular workplace perhaps one or two days a week for extended periods of time throughout the year, either for vocation reasons and commitment to alternative curricula or because they have social and/or behavioural problems.

University-level work experience

At the university level, work experience is often offered between the second and final years of an undergraduate degree course, especially in the science, engineering and computing fields. Courses of this nature are often called sandwich courses, with the work experience year itself known as the sandwich year. During this time, the students on work placement have the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge gained in their first two years, and see how they are applied to real world problems.

This then can offer then useful insights for their final year and prepares them for the job market once their course has finished. Some companies also have the means to sponsor students in their final year at university with the promise of a job at the end of the course. This can act as an incentive for the student to perform well during the placement as helps with two otherwise unwelcome stresses: the lack of money in the final year, and

finding a job for when the University course completes and when he have a free time.

Resume Work Experience

Your work experience, also called “professional experience” or only “experience”, is the most meaningful part of your resume after the resume profile. The Experience section must give the evidences that you actually did what you said you did at your resume profile.

Even if you are changing careers, your resume work experience section tells the recruiter what kind of employee you are or will be, what result you can produce, and the career path you have chosen. It will also be a major focus of your job interviews, so spend time perfecting this part of your resume.

How to Write the Resume Work Experience Section?

Before beginning to write your work or employment history, it’s important to know that:

Employers are more interested in true responsibilities and achievements than in job titles or job descriptions.

Employers have neither the time nor the willingness to look at unrelated job titles to try to figure out if the applicant actually acquired skills related to the position he or she held. The important thing is the work you did, the skills you acquired and the achievements you attained.

If you are using EasyJob Resume Builder to make your resume, you are well on your way to adapting a powerful employment history for your resume by combining the employment history and achievements story documents in your job search portfolio.

Most Job Titles Have Little Meaning

It often happens that people receive job titles with very little meaning outside of the industry, company or even department they work for. If one of your titles doesn't accurately reflect your duties, change it.

Two Common Resume Work Experience Writing Mistakes

- Don't write work histories that read like job descriptions. Some job seekers go so far as to copy job descriptions literally. The result is a boring summary of job duties without indication of actual job performance.
- Don't use bullets to outline work histories, since this might dilute the impact of achievements.

The key is to emphasize skills and achievements and provide proof of your potential value. Describe what you did when you had a specific job title. Did you manage a special project or serve on a decision-making committee? Be sure to mention how your skills made a difference.

If you use EasyJob Resume Builder to write your winning resume, you will automatically stress skills and achievements.

Promotion of Work Ethic concept

Steven Malanga refers to “what was once understood as the work ethic—not just hard work but also a set of accompanying virtues, whose crucial role in the development and sustaining of free markets too few now recall.

Weber quotes the ethical writings of Benjamin Franklin: Remember, that time is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides.... Remember, that money is the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again is seven and threepence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds.

The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds.

Criticism of Work Ethic concept

Slacker and hippie cultures have challenged these values in recent times. In the 19th century, the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris in the UK and Elbert Hubbard in the US noted how "alienation" of workers from ownership of the tools of

production and their work product was destructive of the work ethic because in the expanding firms of that era, the workers saw no point in doing more than the minimum.

The industrial engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor revised the notion of work ethic to include giving up control over the work process to management so that the latter could study and "rationalize" the work process, and the notion of work ethic thereafter included acknowledgment of management control. Marxists, and most non-Marxist sociologists, make short shrift of "work ethic" as a useful sociological concept. They argue having a "work ethic" in excess of management's control doesn't appear rational in any mature industry where the employee can't rationally hope to become more than a manager whose fate still depends on the owner's decisions. The French Leftist philosopher André Gorz wrote:

"The work ethic has become obsolete. It is no longer true that producing more means working more, or that producing more will lead to a better way of life. The connection between more and better has been broken; our needs for many products and services are already more than adequately met, and many of our as-yet-unsatisfied needs will be met not by producing more, but by producing differently, producing other things, or even producing less. This is especially true as regards our needs for air, water, space, silence, beauty, time and human contact. Neither is it true any longer that the more each individual works, the better off everyone will be.

The present crisis has stimulated technological change of an unprecedented scale and speed: 'the micro-chip revolution'. The object and indeed the effect of this revolution has been to make rapidly increasing savings in labour, in the industrial, administrative and service sectors. Increasing production is secured in these sectors by decreasing amounts of labour. As a result, the social process of production no longer needs everyone to work in it on a full-time basis. The work ethic ceases to be viable in such a situation and workbased society is thrown into crisis." André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, Gallilé, 1989

Work-leisure dichotomy

Some societies assume, for the large part of the population which is in a condition of employee, a separation between "work" and "leisure". This idea was invented with the industrial revolution. From this perspective, work is considered as the main activity and "one's duty", consisting of the labour given to an employer. "Leisure", a label with derogatory connotation attached to everything else outside work, is instead considered of marginal importance and frivolous.

A famous argument against this dichotomy, is that the separation between what you are and what you do, generates psychological disorders, alienation and detachment to life.

Workplace stress

Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and

the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Stress-related disorders encompass a broad array of conditions, including psychological disorders and other types of emotional strain, maladaptive behaviours, and cognitive impairment. In turn, these conditions may lead to poor work performance or even injury. Job stress is also associated with various biological reactions that may lead ultimately to compromised health, such as cardiovascular disease, or in extreme cases, death.

Prevalence

Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today's workplace. About one-third of workers report high levels of stress. One-quarter of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Three-quarters of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago. Evidence also suggests that stress is the major cause of turnover in organizations.

Health and Healthcare Utilization

Problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than are any other life stressor—more so than even financial problems or family problems. Many studies suggest that psychologically demanding jobs that allow employees little control over the work process increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

On the basis of research by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and many other organizations, it

is widely believed that job stress increases the risk for development of back and upper-extremity musculoskeletal disorders. High levels of stress are associated with substantial increases in health service utilization. Workers who report experiencing stress at work also show excessive health care utilization.

In a 1998 study of 46,000 workers, health care costs were nearly 50% greater for workers reporting high levels of stress in comparison to "low risk" workers. The increment rose to nearly 150%, an increase of more than \$1,700 per person annually, for workers reporting high levels of both stress and depression. Additionally, periods of disability due to job stress tend to be much longer than disability periods for other occupational injuries and illnesses. Physiological reactions to stress can have consequences for health over time. Researchers have been studying how stress affects the cardiovascular system, as well as how work stress can lead to hypertension and coronary artery disease. These diseases, along with other stress-induced illnesses tend to be quite common in American work-places.

There are four Main physiological reactions to stress:

- Blood is shunted to the brain and large muscle groups, and away from extremities, skin, and organs that are not currently serving the body.
- An area near the brain system, known as the reticular activating system, goes to work, causing a state of keen alertness as well as sharpening of hearing and vision.

- Energy-providing compounds of glucose and fatty acids are released into the bloodstream.
- The immune and digestive systems are temporarily shut down.

Causes of Workplace Stress

Job stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. Views differ on the importance of worker characteristics versus working conditions as the primary cause of job stress.

The differing viewpoints suggest different ways to prevent stress at work. According to one school of thought, differences in individual characteristics such as personality and coping skills are very important in predicting whether certain job conditions will result in stress. In other words, what is stressful for one person may not be a problem for someone else. This viewpoint underlies prevention strategies that focus on workers and ways to help them cope with demanding job conditions.

Although the importance of individual differences cannot be ignored, scientific evidence suggests that certain working conditions are stressful to most people. Such evidence argues for a greater emphasis on working conditions as the key source of job stress, and for job redesign as a primary prevention strategy. Large surveys of working conditions, including conditions recognized as risk factors for job stress, were conducted in member states of the European Union in 1990, 1995, and 2000.

Results showed a time trend suggesting an increase in work intensity. In 1990, the percentage of workers reporting that they worked at high speeds at least one-quarter of their working time was 48%, increasing to 54% in 1995 and to 56% in 2000. Similarly, 50% of workers reported they work against tight deadlines at least one-fourth of their working time in 1990, increasing to 56% in 1995 and 60% in 2000. However, no change was noted in the period 1995–2000 in the percentage of workers reporting sufficient time to complete tasks.

A substantial percentage of Americans work very long hours. By one estimate, more than 26% of men and more than 11% of women worked 50 hours per week or more in 2000. Represent a considerable increase over the previous three decades, especially for women. According to the Department of Labour, there has been an upward trend in hours worked among employed women, an increase in extended work weeks by men, and a considerable increase in combined working hours among working couples, particularly couples with young children.

A person's status in the workplace can also affect levels of stress. While workplace stress has the potential to affect employees of all categories; those who have very little influence to those who make major decisions for the company. However, less powerful employees are more likely to suffer stress than powerful workers. Managers as well as other kinds of workers are vulnerable to work overload.

Economic factors that employees are facing in the 21st century have been linked to increased stress levels. Researchers and

social commentators have pointed out that the computer and communications revolutions have made companies more efficient and productive than ever before. This boon in productivity however, has caused higher expectations and greater competition, putting more stress on the employee.

The following economic factors may lead to workplace stress:

- Pressure from investors, who can quickly withdraw their money from company stocks.
- The lack of trade and professional unions in the workplace.
- Inter-company rivalries caused by the efforts of companies to compete globally
- The willingness of companies to swiftly lay off workers to cope with changing business environments.

Bullying in the workplace can also contribute to stress.

Signs of Workplace Stress

Stress-related problems include mood disturbance, psychological distress, sleep disturbance, upset stomach, headache, and problems in relationships with family and friends. The effects of job stress on chronic diseases are more difficult to ascertain because chronic diseases develop over relatively long periods of time and are influenced by many factors other than stress. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that stress plays a role in the development of several types of chronic health problems—

including cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychological disorders.

Prevention

A combination of organizational change and stress management is often the most useful approach for preventing stress at work.

How to Change the Organization to Prevent Job Stress:

- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.
- Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
- Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
- Improve communications-reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers.
- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.
- Combat workplace discrimination.
- Ensure hiring is in accord with Affirmative Action guidelines.
- Bringing in an objective outsider such as a consultant to suggest a fresh approach to persistent problems.

- Introducing a participative leadership style to involve as many subordinates as possible to resolve stress-producing problems.

St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company conducted several studies on the effects of stress prevention programmes in hospital settings.

Programme activities included:

- Employee and management education on job stress,
- Changes in hospital policies and procedures to reduce organizational sources of stress, and
- The establishment of employee assistance programmes.

In one study, the frequency of medication errors declined by 50% after prevention activities were implemented in a 700-bed hospital. In a second study, there was a 70% reduction in malpractice claims in 22 hospitals that implemented stress prevention activities. In contrast, there was no reduction in claims in a matched group of 22 hospitals that did not implement stress prevention activities.

Telecommuting is another way organizations can help reduce stress for their workers. Employees defined telecommuting as “an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform tasks elsewhere that are normally done in a primary or central workplace, for at least some portion of their work schedule, using electronic media to interact with others inside and outside the organization.” One reason that telecommuting gets such high

marks is that it allows employees more control over how they do their work. Telecommuters reported more job satisfaction and less desire to find a new job. Employees that worked from home also had less stress, improved work/life balance and higher performance rating by their managers.

Work-life balance

Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between “work” on one hand and “life” on the other. Related, though broader, terms include “lifestyle balance” and “life balance”.

The expression was first used in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual’s work and personal life. In the United States, this phrase was first used in 1986.

Over the past twenty-five years, there has been a substantial increase in work which is felt to be due, in part, by information technology and by an intense, competitive work environment. Long-term loyalty and a “sense of corporate community” have been eroded by a performance culture that expects more and more from their employees yet offers little security in return.

Many experts predicted that technology would eliminate most household chores and provide people with much more time to enjoy leisure activities; but many ignore this option, encouraged by prevailing consumerist culture and a political agenda that has “elevated the work ethic to unprecedented heights and thereby reinforced the low value and worth attached to parenting”.

Many Americans are experiencing burnout due to overwork and increased stress. This condition is seen in nearly all occupations from blue collar workers to upper management. Over the past decade, a rise in workplace violence, an increase in levels of absenteeism as well as rising workers' compensation claims are all evidence of an unhealthy work life balance.

Employee assistance professionals say there are many causes for this situation ranging from personal ambition and the pressure of family obligations to the accelerating pace of technology.. According to a recent study for the Centre for Work-Life Policy, 1.7 million people consider their jobs and their work hours excessive because of globalization. These difficult and exhausting conditions are having adverse effects. According to the study, fifty per cent of top corporate executives are leaving their current positions. Although sixty-four per cent of workers feel that their work pressures are "self-inflicted", they state that it is taking a toll on them. The study shows that seventy per cent of US respondents and eighty-one per cent of global respondents say their jobs are affecting their health.

Between forty-six and fifty-nine per cent of workers feel that stress is affecting their interpersonal and sexual relationships. Additionally, men feel that there is a certain stigma associated with saying "I can't do this".

Work Statistics

According to a survey conducted by the National Life Insurance Company, four out of ten employees state that their jobs are

"very" or "extremely" stressful. Those in high stress jobs are three times more likely than others to suffer from stress-related medical conditions and are twice as likely to quit. The study states that women, in particular, report stress related to the conflict between work and family.

Stress and Work-life Balance

The number of stress-related disability claims by American employees has doubled[when?] according to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association in Arlington, Virginia. Seventy-five to ninety per cent of physician visits are related to stress and, according to the American Institute of Stress, the cost to industry has been estimated at \$200 billion-\$300 billion a year.

Steven L. Sauter, chief of the Applied Psychology and Ergonomics Branch of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Cincinnati, Ohio, states that recent studies show that "the workplace has become the single greatest source of stress". Michael Feuerstein, professor of clinical psychology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences at Bethesda Naval Hospital states, "We're seeing a greater increase in work-related neuroskeletal disorders from a combination of stress and ergonomic stressors". It is clear that problems caused by stress have become a major concern to both employers and employees.

Symptoms of stress are manifested both physiologically and psychologically. Persistent stress can result in cardiovascular disease, sexual health problems, a weaker immune system and

frequent headaches, stiff muscles, or backache. It can also result in poor coping skills, irritability, jumpiness, insecurity, exhaustion, and difficulty concentrating. Stress may also perpetuate or lead to binge eating, smoking, and alcohol consumption.

According to James Campbell Quick, a professor of organizational behaviour at the University of Texas-Arlington, "The average tenure of presidents at land-grant universities in the past ten years has dropped from approximately seven to three-and-a-half years".

The feeling that simply working hard is not enough anymore is acknowledged by many other American workers. "To get ahead, a seventy-hour work week is the new standard. What little time is left is often divvied up among relationships, kids, and sleep." This increase in work hours over the past two decades means that less time will be spent with family, friends, and community as well as pursuing activities that one enjoys and taking the time to grow personally and spiritually.

Texas Quick, an expert witness at trials of companies who were accused of overworking their employees, states that "when people get worked beyond their capacity, companies pay the price." Although some employers believe that workers should reduce their own stress by simplifying their lives and making a better effort to care for their health, most experts feel that the chief responsibility for reducing stress should be management.

According to Esther M. Orioli, president of Essi Systems, a stress management consulting firm, “Traditional stress-management programmes placed the responsibility of reducing stress on the individual rather than on the organization-where it belongs. No matter how healthy individual employees are when they start out, if they work in a dysfunctional system, they’ll burn out.”

Women and Family

According to Sylvia Hewlett, president of the Centre for Work-Life Policy, if a woman takes time off to care for children or an older parent, employers tend to “see these people as less than full committed. It’s as though their identity is transformed.”

Brett Graff, Nightly Business Report correspondent states that. “If you thought choosing a baby name was hard, you have yet to wrestle with the idea of leaving your career to be a full-time mom or take care of an older parent...Most will want to reenter, but will do so accepting lesser positions or lower wages.” This circumstance only increases the work-life balance stress experienced by many women employees.

Research conducted by the Kenexa Research Institute, a division of Kenexa, evaluated how male and female workers perceive work-life balance and found that women are more positive than men in how they perceive their company’s efforts to help them balance work and life responsibilities. The report is based on the analysis of data drawn from a representative sample of 10,000 U.S. workers who were surveyed through WorkTrends, KRI’s annual survey of worker opinions.

The results indicated a shift in women's perceptions about work-life balance. In the past, women often found it more difficult to maintain balance due to the competing pressures at work and demands at home.

Work-life Balance Concerns of Men and Women Alike

Similar discrimination is experienced by men who take time off or reduce working hours for taking care of the family. For many employees today—both male and female—their lives are becoming more consumed with a host of family and other personal responsibilities and interests. Therefore, in an effort to retain employees, it is increasingly important for organizations to recognize this balance.

Work-life Balance Issues and their Influence on Children

An increasing number of young children are being raised by a childcare provider or another person other than a parent; older children are more likely today to come home to an empty house and spend time with video games, television and the internet with less guidance to offset or control the messages coming from these sources.

No one knows how many kids are home after school without an adult, but they know the number is in the millions. Also, according to a study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the "more time that children spent in child care, the more likely their sixth grade teachers were to report

problem behaviour.” The findings are the results of the largest study of child care and development conducted in the United States; the analysis tracked 1,364 children from birth.

Responsibility of the Employer

Companies have begun to realise how important the work-life balance is to the productivity and creativity of their employees. Research by Kenexa Research Institute in 2007 shows that those employees who were more favourable towards their organization’s efforts to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction.

Employers can offer a range of different programmes and initiatives, such as flexible working arrangements in the form of part time, casual and telecommuting work. More proactive employers can provide compulsory leave, strict maximum hours and foster an environment that encourages employees not to continue working after hours. It is generally only highly skilled workers that can enjoy such benefits as written in their contracts, although many professional fields would not go so far as to discourage workaholic behaviour. Unskilled workers will almost always have to rely on bare minimum legal requirements.

The legal requirements are low in many countries, in particular, the United States. In contrast, the European Union has gone quite far in assuring a legal work-life balance framework, for

example pertaining to parental leave and the non-discrimination of part-time workers.

Global Comparisons

According to a new study by Harvard and McGill University researchers, the United States lags far behind nearly all wealthy countries when it comes to family-oriented workplace policies such as maternity leave, paid sick days and support for breast feeding.

Jody Heyman, founder of the Harvard-based Project on Global Working Families and director of McGill's Institute for Health and Social Policy, states that, "More countries are providing the workplace protections that millions of Americans can only dream of. The U.S. has been a proud leader in adopting laws that provide for equal opportunity in the workplace, but our work/family protections are among the worst."

This observation is being shared by many Americans today and is considered by many experts to be indicative of the current climate. However, the U.S. Labour Department is examining regulations that give workers unpaid leave to deal with family or medical emergencies.

At the same time, Senator Chris Dodd from Connecticut is proposing new legislation that would enable workers to take six weeks of paid leave. Congress is also expected to reconsider the Healthy Families Act which is a bill that would require employers

with at least fifteen employees to provide seven paid sick days per year.

At the state level, California has paid family leave benefits for its workers. New Jersey lawmakers are pushing legislation that would make their state the second state to add this worker benefit. Under one New Jersey proposal, workers who take leave would be paid through the state's temporary disability insurance fund, "augmented by a 0.1 per cent charge on workers' weekly wages." Traditionally, many conservatives have opposed paid family leave, but there is a sign that this mindset is beginning to change.

Reverend Paul Schenck, a prominent member of the National Pro-Life Action Centre recently stated that he would support paid maternity leave on the assumption that it might encourage women to follow through with their pregnancies instead of having abortions. According to Heyman, "Across the political spectrum, people are realizing these policies have an enormous impact on working families.

If you look at the most competitive economies in the world, all the others except the U.S. have these policies in place." The United States is not as workplace family-oriented as many other wealthy countries. According to a study released by Harvard and McGill University researchers in February 2007, workplace policies for families in the U.S. are weaker than those of all high-income countries and even many middle-and low-income countries.

For example, the study notes that the United States is one of only five countries out of 173 that does not guarantee some form of paid maternity leave. Other differences include the fact that fathers are granted paid paternity leave or paid parental leave in sixty-five countries; thirty one of these countries offer at least fourteen weeks of paid leave. The U.S. does not guarantee this to fathers.

At least 107 countries protect working women's right to breast-feed and, in at least seventy-three of them, women are paid. The U.S. does not have any federal legislation guaranteeing mothers the right to breast-feed their infants at work. When it comes to sick days, 145 countries provide sick days to their employees; 127 provide a week or more per year.

There is not a federal law requiring paid sick days in the United States. At least 134 countries have laws setting the maximum length of the work week; the U.S. does not have a maximum work week length and does not place any limits on the amount of overtime that an employee is required to work each week. Sweden, Denmark and Norway have the highest level of maternity benefits—Sweden provides 68 weeks paid maternity leave, Norway provides 56 weeks paid maternity leave and Denmark provides 52.

American workers average approximately ten paid holidays per year while British workers average twenty-five holidays and German employees thirty. Americans work twelve weeks more a year in total hours than Europeans. In Europe, the Working Time

Regulation has implemented a maximum of forty-eight hours of work per week.

Many countries have opted for fewer hours. France attempted to introduce a thirty-five hour workweek, and Finland experimented with a thirty-hour week in 1996. In a 2007, the European Quality of Life Survey found that countries in south-eastern Europe had the most common problems with work-life balance.

In Croatia and Greece, a little over 70% of working citizens say that they are too tired to do household jobs at least several times a month because of work. In Britain, legislation has been passed allowing parents of children under six to request a more flexible work schedule. Companies must approve this request as long as it does not damage the business. A 2003 Survey of graduates in the UK revealed that graduates value flexibility even more than wages.

In all twenty-five European countries, voters “punish” politicians who try to shrink vacations. “Even the twenty-two days Estonians, Lithuanians, Poles and Slovenians count as their own is much more generous than the leave allotted to U.S. workers.” According to a report by the Families and Work Institute, the average vacation time that Americans took each year averaged 14.6 days.

Even when vacation time is offered in some U.S. companies, some choose not to take advantage of it. A 2003 survey by Management Recruiter International stated that fifty per cent of executives surveyed didn’t have plans to take a vacation. They decided to

stay at work and use their vacation time to get caught up on their increased workloads.

Work aversion

Work aversion is the state of being turned off by working or being employed, or the extreme preference of leisure as opposed to work. It can be attributed to laziness, boredom, or burnout. As the majority of people work out of necessity rather than pleasure, most underachievers suffer from some work aversion.

Work aversion can be caused by an anxiety disorder, especially chronic social anxiety problems or may stem from other mental disorders, in which the subject intentionally refuses to be gainfully employed at all, or works far less than is necessary in order to meet one's monetary needs. It is not a disease, but rather a symptom of one or more psychiatric disorders. It is estimated that about four to five million people in the United States may be suffering from some form of work aversion, though the exact number is not known.

The term work aversion does not refer to immature teens or young adults who "slack off" and fail to seek their first job or perform seriously at a job they obtain. It also does not automatically signify the lack of a work ethic. Not all unemployed persons have work aversion.

The subject of work aversion is typically an adult who has been previously employed, or who recently graduated from college or trade school, and for some psychological reason, feels turned off

by employment. The subject who receives such a label generally has expenses, hence the need for steady employment. But due to medical issues, such as a phobia, s/he does not attempt to work or seek employment, and makes excuses to others for not doing so.

Causes

The typical view of people with work aversion in the eyes of others is often laziness or the lack of a work ethic. But most persons suffering from work aversion are undergoing a psychological disorder that has not been treated or for which treatment has been unsuccessful. Work aversion usually occurs in persons who have previously been employed, and can have a variety of causes.

These include:

- *Boredom with work:* Holding a boring job early in life can lead to the impression later that all work is boring.
- *Depression:* A person who is suffering from clinical depression, dysthymia, grief, or other similar disorders may lack the motivation to work.
- *Obsessive-compulsive disorder:* Due to neurological dysfunction, the person becomes preoccupied with anxiety-based obsessions, and performs compulsive behaviours in order to cope with their anxiety. They are therefore unable to redirect their attention towards a job or employment search.

- *Panic disorder*: For some, merely finding oneself in a work environment can trigger a panic attack. After such an occurrence, many are reluctant to seek further employment.
- *Post-traumatic stress disorder*: The person has suffered from a traumatic experience at an earlier job. This may be a physical injury suffered on the job, a scary event that occurred while at work, severe harassment or bullying from fellow employees, or abuse from one's boss or employer.
- *Abrupt termination*: A former employee who was fired or laid off from an earlier job may be fearful of seeking future employment on the basis that such rejection may recur again.
- *Phobia*: Some persons are simply phobic of the workplace.
- *Autism*: Some inborn conditions, such as some forms of autism, may lead to work aversion
- *Aversion to hierarchy*: Some persons refuse to subject themselves to rules imposed by others higher in the capitalist social hierarchy, such as managers, and may even dislike running a business because that would require them to be subjected to rules imposed by the government or the tax authorities. This aversion may be due to politics or a psychological phobia. For those whose hierarchy aversion is not caused by psychological complications, they may be capable of joining an alternative community or living in anarchist squats where they may grow vegetables in abandoned

gardens. Generally such people do not have aversion to work per se, but suffer from hierarchy aversion.

Complications

Since the term work aversion only applies to one with the need to earn income, complications will inevitably arise from lacking the money the subject needs from employment.

These may include:

- Loss of assets, as one lives off his/her savings and liquidates other assets, including mortgaging his/her home
- Loss of money in a get-rich-quick scheme the subject enters out of desperation
- Gambling problems
- Debt and credit problems
- Self-neglect. This may include malnourishment, since the subject may be unable to afford a sufficient diet, or neglect of one's personal appearance or hygiene in ways that may cost the subject money or may make giving a good impression to a potential employer more difficult.
- Neglect of dependents, such as spouse and children, who one is expected to support. Work aversion is responsible for many cases of divorce and broken families.
- Neglect of personal belongings, such as one's home, car, or other possessions requiring maintenance, or

loss of services that require payment of a monthly bill, such as utilities, phone service, insurance.

- Strained relations with family and friends, especially those who are forced to support the unemployed subject, or those who otherwise expect the subject to have money or items of value.
- Strained marriage, when financial problems hurt marriage
- Reduced socialization, especially in cases where the subject is in need of money to support such interaction.
- Legal problems, when subject turns to law-breaking to obtain cost of living. An estimated 20% of criminals feel compelled to a life of crime due to work aversion. A study has shown that more than 40% of prisoners have work aversion
- Denial of citizenship, since immigrants to new countries are expected to work and not be a burden to taxpayers of the new country
- Homelessness, in most severe cases. A 1989 survey found that 45% of respondents believed homelessness is caused by work aversion.

Treatment

Treating work aversion involves treating the underlying psychological cause of the disorder, which often requires diagnostic testing. Often, this cause cannot be easily identified because the subject frequently has little or no self-recognition of

the problem, lacks funding needed for diagnosis, and has little or no willpower to seek treatment.

Methods of treatment for the underlying disorder include psychotherapy, counseling, medication, or some more unusual forms of treatment. Depending on the cause, lengths of treatment and success rates may vary. While some mild cases of work aversion may subside naturally over time without any treatment, other more severe cases may be incurable. These subjects are often considered candidates for Social Security Disability.

Aversion therapy has been found to be successful in many cases. When it works, patients can recover rapidly. Sometimes, environmental changes may help cure the disorder. These may include a career change or overhaul, a move to a new city or region, or self-employment. Sometimes, a subject may be able to find partial relief from a certain type of job or job environment where s/he feels comfortable. But, if the subject loses such a job, finding a replacement could be increasingly troublesome, and symptoms may reappear and worsen.

If a subject is receiving funding for his expenses from a relative, friend, or other source, cutting off the funding does not motivate the subject to obtain employment, and will not improve this condition. A relative or friend who wants to help a subject should encourage him/her to seek treatment for the underlying cause.

Many career counselors have turned to a therapy they identify as work-hardening. This means they put the person to work for a brief period of time in the first week, such as two hours per day.

In the following week, they increase it to four hours per day. The amount of work increases each week until it becomes full-time, with the client being willing. This sometimes has proven to be successful.

Philosophical/religious Views

In many religions, work is seen as an obligation, therefore, failure to work for a living is considered to be a sin. Lack of working is viewed as a way many are led to a life of crime or other unethical ways to make money. Some have defined aversion to work as the “greatest evil in the world.”

Anti-work

The anti-work ethic states that labour tends to cause unhappiness, therefore, the quantity of labour ought to be lessened. The ethic appears to have originated in anarchist circles, and to have come to prominence with essays such as *In praise of idleness* by Bertrand Russell, *The Right to Useful Unemployment* by Ivan Illich, and *The Abolition of Work* by Bob Black, published in 1985. Paul Lafargue’s *The Right to Be Lazy* essay is one of the most classical works on the subject.

The followers of this ethic typically argue that capitalist and communist societies tend to encourage a “labour” mentality towards life either directly or indirectly through the cost of living, labour markets, the work week, applying normative values to economics, and social conventions. The critics then ask why with increasing mechanization the number of hours in the average

work week have not fallen significantly; for example, Bob Black asks, "Why hasn't the average work week gone down by more than a few minutes in the past fifty years?" The devotees of the anti-work movement therefore attempt to find answers and practical solutions towards reducing the volume of work for a typical person and encouraging the activities they see as conducive to happiness.

Refusal of work

Refusal of work is behaviour which refuses to adapt to regular employment.

From political positions it has been advocated at various times by many social activist groups, mostly located on the libertarian left. The concept is associated with Libertarian Marxism, the Marxism of the Italian workerist/autonomist tradition, the French ultra-left -and with anarchism. As actual behaviour it has been practiced by various subcultures and individuals.

The Concept of Wage Slavery

Wage slavery refers to a situation where a person is dependent for a livelihood on the wages earned, especially if the dependency is total and immediate. The term is used to draw an analogy between slavery and wage labour. Some uses of the term may refer only to an "equal bargaining situation between labour and capital," particularly where workers are paid unreasonably low wages. More controversially, others equate it with a lack of workers' self-management or point to similarities between owning

and employing a person, and extend the term to cover a wide range of employment relationships in a hierarchical social environment with limited job-related choices.

Similarities between wage labour and slavery were noted at least as early as Cicero and Aristotle. With the advent of the industrial revolution, thinkers such as Proudhon and Marx elaborated these comparisons in the context of a critique of property not intended for active personal use. Before the American Civil War, Southern defenders of African American slavery also invoked the concept of wage slavery to favourably compare the condition of their slaves to workers in the North. The introduction of wage labour in 18th century Britain was met with resistance - giving rise to the principles of syndicalism.

The use of the term wage slave by labour organizations may originate from the labour protests of the Lowell Mill Girls in 1836. The imagery of wage slavery was widely used by labour organizations during the mid-19th century to object to the lack of workers' self-management. However, it was gradually replaced by the more pragmatic term "wage work" towards the end of the 19th century, as labour organizations shifted their focus to raising wages. Historically, some groups and individual social activists, have espoused workers' self-management or worker cooperatives as possible alternatives to wage labour.

Political Views

The Right to Be Lazy is an essay by Cuban-born French revolutionary Marxist Paul Lafargue, written from his prison cell

in 1883. It polemicizes heavily against contemporary liberal, conservative and even socialist ideas of work. Lafargues criticizes these ideas from a Marxist perspective as dogmatic and ultimately false by portraying the degeneration and enslavement of human existence when being subsumed under the primacy of the "right to work", and argues that laziness, combined with human creativity, is an important source of human progress.

Autonomism

Autonomism, as an identifiable theoretical system, first emerged in Italy in the 1960s from workerist communism. Later, post-Marxist and anarchist tendencies became significant after influence from the Situationists, the failure of the Italian far-left movements in the 1970s and the emergence of a number of important theorists including Antonio Negri, who had contributed to the 1969 founding of Potere Operaio Marxist group, Mario Tronti, Paolo Virno, etc.

It influenced the German and Dutch Autonomes, the worldwide Social Centre movement, and today is influential in Italy, France, and to a significantly lesser extent the English-speaking countries. Those who describe themselves as autonomists now vary from Marxists to post-structuralists and anarchists. Autonomist philosopher Bifo defines refusal of work as not "so much the obvious fact that workers do not like to be exploited, but something more.

It means that the capitalist restructuring, the technological change, and the general transformation of social institutions are

produced by the daily action of withdrawal from exploitation, of rejection of the obligation to produce surplus value, and to increase the value of capital, reducing the value of life.” More simply he states “Refusal of work means...I don’t want to go to work because I prefer to sleep. But this laziness is the source of intelligence, of technology, of progress. Autonomy is the self-regulation of the social body in its independence and in its interaction with the disciplinary norm.” As a social development Bifo remembers “that one of the strong ideas of the movement of autonomy proletarians during the 70s was the idea “precariousness is good”.

Job precariousness is a form of autonomy from steady regular work, lasting an entire life. In the 70s many people used to work for a few months, then to go away for a journey, then back to work for a while. This was possible in times of almost full employment and in times of egalitarian culture. This situation allowed people to work in their own interest and not in the interest of capitalists, but quite obviously this could not last forever, and the neoliberal offensive of the 80s was aimed to reverse the rapport de force.” As a response to this developments his view is that “the dissemination of self-organised knowledge can create a social framework containing infinite autonomous and self-reliant worlds.”

From this possibility of self-determination even the notion of Workers’ self-management is seen as problematic since “Far from the emergence of proletarian power...this self-management as a moment of the self-harnessing of the workers to capitalist production in the period of real subsumption... Mistaking the

individual capitalist rather than the enterprise as the problem... the workers themselves became a collective capitalist, taking on responsibility for the exploitation of their own labour. Thus, far from breaking with 'work'...the workers maintained the practice of clocking-in, continued to organize themselves and the community around the needs of the factory, paid themselves from profits arising from the sale of watches, maintained determined relations between individual work done and wage, and continued to wear their work shirts throughout the process."

Chapter 5

Collective communication Skills

Flexibility in business communication

Flexibility is used as an attribute of various types of systems. In the field of engineering systems design, it refers to designs that can adapt when external changes occur. Flexibility has been defined differently in many fields of engineering, architecture, biology, economics, etc.

In the context of engineering design one can define flexibility as the ability of a system to respond to potential internal or external changes affecting its value delivery, in a timely and cost-effective manner. Thus, flexibility for an engineering system is the ease with which the system can respond to uncertainty in a manner to sustain or increase its value delivery.

Uncertainty is a key element in the definition of flexibility. Uncertainty can create both risks and opportunities in a system, and it is with the existence of uncertainty that flexibility becomes valuable.

Flexible Manufacturing System

Flexibility has been especially thoroughly studied for manufacturing systems.

For manufacturing science eleven different classes of flexibility has been identified:

- *Machine flexibility:* The different operation types that a machine can perform.
- *Material handling flexibility:* The ability to move the products within a manufacturing facility.
- *Operation flexibility:* The ability to produce a product in different ways."
- *Process flexibility:* The set of products that the system can produce.
- *Product flexibility:* The ability to add new products in the system.
- *Routing flexibility:* The different routes (through machines and workshops) that can be used to produce a product in the system.
- *Volume flexibility:* The ease to profitably increase or decrease the output of an existing system.
- *Expansion flexibility:* The ability to build out the capacity of a system.
- *Programme flexibility:* The ability to run a system automatically.
- *Production flexibility:* The number of products a system currently can produce.

- *Market flexibility*: The ability of the system to adapt to market demands.

These definitions yield under current conditions of the system and that no major setups are conducted or investments are made (except expansion flexibility). Many of the flexibility types are linked to each other; increasing one flexibility type also increases another. But in some cases tradeoffs between two flexibility types are needed.

Labour Market Flexibility

Labour market flexibility refers to the speed with which labour markets adapt to fluctuations and changes in society, the economy or production. In the past, the most common definition of labour market flexibility was the neo-liberal definition.

This entailed the ease of labour market institutions in enabling labour markets to reach a continuous equilibrium determined by the intersection of the demand and supply curve. In the words of Siebert labour market institutions were seen to inhibit "the clearing functions of the market by weakening the demand for labour, making it less attractive to hire a worker by explicitly pushing up the wage costs or by introducing a negative shadow price for labour; by distorting the labour supply; and by impairing the equilibrating function of the market mechanism (for instance, by influencing bargaining behaviour)."

Theory

The most famous distinction of labour market flexibility is given by Atkinson. Based on the strategies companies use, he notes that there can be four types of flexibility.

External Numerical Flexibility

External numerical flexibility refers to the adjustment of the labour intake, or the number of workers from the external market.

This can be achieved by employing workers on temporary work or fixed-term contracts or through relaxed hiring and firing regulations or in other words relaxation of Employment Protection Legislation, where employers can hire and fire permanent employees according to the firms' needs.

Internal Numerical Flexibility

Internal numerical flexibility, sometimes known as working time flexibility or temporal flexibility. This flexibility achieved by adjusting working hours or schedules of workers already employed within the firm.

This includes part-time, flexi time or flexible working hours/ shifts (including night shifts and weekend shifts), working time accounts, leaves such as parental leave, overtime.

Functional Flexibility

Functional flexibility or organizational flexibility is the extent employees can be transferred to different activities and tasks within the firm.

It has to do with organization of operation or management and training workers. This can also be achieved by outsourcing activities.

Financial or Wage Flexibility

Financial or wage flexibility is in which wage levels are not decided collectively and there are more differences between the wages of workers. This is done so that pay and other employment cost reflect the supply and demand of labour. This can be achieved by rate-for-the-job systems, or assessment based pay system, or individual performance wages. Other than the 4 types of flexibility there are other types of flexibility that can be used to enhance adaptability. One way worth mentioning is locational flexibility or flexibility of place. This entails employees working outside of the normal work place such as home based work, outworkers or teleworkers. This can also cover workers who are relocated to other offices within the establishment.

Flexibility For Workers

However, labour market flexibility does not only refer to the strategies used by employers to adapt to their production/business cycles. Increasingly the common view is

that labour market flexibility can potentially be used for both workers and companies/ employers and employees.

It can also be used as a method to enable workers to 'adjust working life and working hours to their own preferences and to other activities'. As companies adapt to business cycles and facilitate their needs through the use of labour market flexibility strategies, workers adapt to their life cycles and their needs through it (Chung, 2006).

The European Commission also addresses this issue in its Joint Employment Report and its new Flexicurity approach, calling for an adequate methods to enhance flexibility for both workers and employers that is "capable of quickly and effectively mastering new productive needs and skills and about facilitating the combination of work and private responsibilities." (Chung, 2008) ETUC also emphasize the importance of the development of working time flexibility as an alternative to implementing external flexibility as the sole method of increasing flexibility in the labour market (ETUC, 2007). In their report on working time, TUC has also argued that flexible working should be extended to all workers through stronger regulations (Fagen *et al.* for TUC, 2006).

Working time

Working time is the period of time that an individual spends at paid occupational labour. Unpaid labours such as housework are not considered part of the working week. Many countries regulate the work week by law, such as stipulating minimum daily rest

periods, annual holidays and a maximum number of working hours per week.

Since the 1960s, the consensus among researchers (anthropologists, historians, sociologists), has been that early hunter-gatherer societies enjoyed much more leisure time than is permitted by capitalist and agricultural societies; For instance, one camp of !Kung Bushmen was estimated to work two-and-a-half days per week, at around 6 hours a day. Aggregated comparisons show that on average the working day was less than 5 hours.

Academic consensus was reversed from after the 1960s by new research findings. Popular perception is still aligned with the old academic consensus. The industrial revolution made it possible for a larger segment of the population to work year-round, since this labour was not tied to the season and artificial lighting made it possible to work longer each day. Peasants and farm laborers moved from rural areas to the factories, and work times during a year has been significantly higher since then.

Before collective bargaining and worker protection laws, there was a financial incentive for a company to maximize the return on expensive machinery by having long hours. Records indicate that work schedules as arduous as twelve to sixteen hours per day, six to seven days per week were practiced in some industrial sites.

The automobile manufacturer, Henry Ford, was an ardent proponent of shorter work hours, which he introduced

unilaterally in his own factories. Ford stated that he pursued this policy for business rather than humanitarian reasons. He believed that workers (who were also the main consumers of products) needed adequate leisure time to consume products and thus perceive a need to purchase them. Over the long term, consumer markets needed to be grown.

This view of the economy has become the predominant one since then. Recent studies supporting a four-day week have shown that reduced work hours not only increase consumption and invigorates the economy but also improve worker's level of education (due to having extra time to take classes and courses), worker's health (less work-related stress and extra time for exercise), and saves money on daycare costs and transportation, which in turn helps the environment with less carbon-related emissions.

The aggregate of all these extra benefits, actually improves overall productivity, since workers can be more productive on a per-hour basis, due to improved health, reduced stress and better overall quality of life. Over the twentieth century, work hours declined by almost half, mostly because of rising wages brought about by a renewed economic growth, with a supporting role from trade unions and collective bargaining, and progressive legislation. The workweek, in most of the industrialized world, dropped steadily, to about forty hours after World War II. The decline has continued at a faster pace in Europe: for example, France adopted a 35-hour workweek in 2000, but North America has not. In 1995, China adopted a 40-hour week, eliminating half-day work on Saturdays. Working hours in industrializing

economies like South Korea, though still much higher than the leading industrial countries, are also declining steadily.

Technology has also continued to improve worker productivity, permitting standards of living to rise as hours declined. However, in the absence of declining work hours in goods-producing industries, there has been a shift in the nature of output in national economies. Economic growth in monetary terms tends to be concentrated in health care, education, government, criminal justice, corrections, and other activities that are regarded as necessary for society rather than those that contribute directly to the production of material goods.

Annual hours over eight centuries:

Working time is a quantity that can be measured for an individual or, in the aggregate, for a society. In the latter case, a 40-hour workweek would imply that employed individuals within the society, on average, worked 40 hours per week. Most often, the concern of sociologists and policy-makers focuses on the aggregate variables. Some industrialized nations legally mandate a maximum work week length of between 35 and 45 hours per week and require 2 to 5 weeks per year of holiday. However, the actual hours of work per week cannot fall below a certain minimum without compromising a nation's ability to produce the material standards of living its citizens are accustomed to.

If the work week is too short compared to that society's ideal, then the society suffers from underemployment of labour and human capital. All else being equal, this will tend to result in

lower real incomes and a lower standard of living than what could be had with a longer work week in the same society. In contrast, a work week that is too long will result in earning more money at the cost of stress-related health problems as well as a "drought of leisure."

Furthermore, children are likely to receive less attention from busy parents, and childrearing is likely to be subjectively worse. The exact ways that long workweeks affect culture, public health, and education are debated. Several nations have imposed limits on working time in an effort to combat unemployment. The theory is that less work hours per a worker will create a demand for more workers, and give those that are already hired more leisure time. This has been done both on a national level, as in France's 35-hour workweek, and on the company-union level, for example the agreement between Volkswagen and its union to temporarily reduce the workweek to 29 hours to preserve jobs. This policy is controversial among economists.

The structure of the work week varies considerably for different professions and cultures. Among salaried workers in the western world, the work week often consists of Monday through Friday or Saturday with the weekend set aside as a time of personal work and leisure. Sunday is set aside in the western world because it is the Christian sabbath.

Several countries have adopted a workweek from Monday morning until Friday noon, either due to religious rules (observation of shabbat in Israel whose workweek is Sunday to Friday afternoon)

or the growing predominance of a 35-37.5 hour workweek in continental Europe.

Several of the Muslim countries have a standard Sunday through Thursday or Saturday through Wednesday workweek leaving Friday for religious observance, and providing breaks for the daily prayer times. Among salaried workers in the western world, Monday through Friday structure of the work week has led to the coining of phrases reflecting shared states of mind or moods among workers as they traverse the week.

'Blue Monday'

'Hump day' is a synonym for Wednesday. The idiom is based on the notion that if a worker has made it half-way through the week, struggling uphill from Monday, that the rest of the week is an easier slide towards Friday and the weekend; the end is in sight from the hump, the top of the hill.

'TGIF' is an acronym meaning "Thank God It's Friday" or "Thank Goodness It's Friday" an expression of relief that the work week is finally over and that even if the weekend is not full of leisure, at least the drudgery of the workplace is temporarily over. 'Pau Hana' (pronounced "pow hana") is a Hawaiian phrase literally meaning "finished work" but generally refers to the practice of leaving work early on Friday to start the weekend. POETS day is an acronym meaning "Piss Off Early Tomorrow's Saturday", a term for Fridays, used in industries where it is common practice to finish work early at the end of the week.

Variations on this are "Punch Out Early Tomorrow's Saturday" (referring to a manual punch time clock), "Push Off Early Tomorrow's Saturday" and "Push Off Early Tomorrow's Sunday" (based on the old 6 day work week). Used in UK and Australia but appears less popular in the US. By far, workers in South Korea have the longest work hours among OECD countries. The average South Korean works 2,390 hours each year, according to the OECD. This is over 400 hours longer than the next longest-working country and 34% more hours than the average in the United States.

A typical workweek in South Korea is 44 hours or longer. Most people start their day at 8am and end at around 10pm or later, often having dinner before returning to work. Until legislation in 2004 virtually abolished the six-day workweek in large corporations known as chaebol, South Korea was the only country in the OECD that worked Saturdays. Despite the legal framework many office staff are regularly required to work on weekends or stay at their desks idle, waiting for their superiors to leave.

Work hours in Japan are decreasing, but many Japanese still work long hours. Recently, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) has issued a draft report recommending major changes to regulations that govern working hours. The centrepiece of the proposal is an exemption from overtime pay for white-collar workers.

Even though the Japanese work long hours, there is an expectation that on Wednesday and Friday, the work day ceases

after 8 hours. This is included in many union practices and is a generally accepted norm. In most Western European countries, working time is gradually decreasing. The decrease is inversely related with productivity, though overall, less is produced. The European Union's working time directive imposes a 48 hour maximum working week that applies to every member state except the United Kingdom (which has an opt-out meaning that UK-based employees may work longer than 48 hours if they wish, but they cannot be forced to do so). France has enacted a 35-hour workweek by law, and similar results have been produced in other countries such as Germany through collective bargaining.

A major reason for the low annual hours worked in Europe is a relatively high amount of paid annual leave. Fixed employment comes with four to six weeks of holiday as standard. Law in Mexico provides for a maximum of 48 hours of work a week. However, due to loopholes in the law, the precariousness of labour rights in Mexico and its underdevelopment in relation to other OECD member nations, this is rarely observed in the private sector, with workers more often than not working overtime without getting any due compensation for it. Fear of the employees' losing their job or threats by the employer partly explains the reason for these irregularities. Law in Colombia provides for a maximum of 48 hours of work a week.

In Australia, between 1974 and 1997 no marked change took place in the average amount of time spent at work by Australians of "prime working age" (that is, between 25 and 54 years of age). Throughout this period, the average time spent at work by prime working-age Australians (including those who did not spend any

time at work) remained stable at between 27 and 28 hours per week. This unchanging average, however, masks a significant redistribution of work from men to women. Between 1974 and 1997, the average time spent at work by prime working-age Australian men fell from 45 to 36 hours per week, while the average time spent at work by prime working-age Australian women rose from 12 to 19 hours per week.

In the period leading up to 1997, the amount of time Australian workers spent at work outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays also increased (Bittman and Rice, 2002). In 2009, a rapid increase in the number of working hours was reported in a study by The Australia Institute. The study found the average Australian worked 1855 hours per year at work. According to Dr Hamilton of The Australia Institute, this surpasses even Japan. The Australia Institute believes that Australians work the highest number of hours in the developed world.

Beginning in 1950, under the Truman Administration, and continuing with all administrations since, the United States became the first known industrialized nation to explicitly (albeit secretly) and permanently forswear a reduction of working time.

Given the military-industrial requirements of the Cold War, the authors of the then secret National Security Council Document 68 proposed the US government undertake a massive permanent national economic expansion that would let it "siphon off" a part of the economic activity produced to support an ongoing military buildup to contain the Soviet Union:... the United States could achieve a substantial absolute increase in output and could

thereby increase the allocation of resources to a build-up of the economic and military strength of itself and its allies without suffering a decline in its real standard of living ... With a high level of economic activity, the United States could soon attain a gross national product of \$300 billion per year, as was pointed out in the President's Economic Report (January 1950).

Progress in this direction would permit, and might itself be aided by, a buildup of the economic and military strength of the United States and the free world; furthermore, if a dynamic expansion of the economy were achieved, the necessary build-up could be accomplished without a decrease in the national standard of living because the required resources could be obtained by siphoning off a part of the annual increment in the gross national product. These are facts of fundamental importance in considering the courses of action open to the United States.

This proposal was adopted by President Truman, who, in his 1951 Annual Message to the Congress, stated: In terms of manpower, our present defence targets will require an increase of nearly one million men and women in the armed forces within a few months, and probably not less than four million more in defence production by the end of the year. This means that an additional 8 per cent of our labour force, and possibly much more, will be required by direct defence needs by the end of the year. These manpower needs will call both for increasing our labour force by reducing unemployment and drawing in women and older workers, and for lengthening hours of work in essential industries. These manpower requirements can be met. There will be manpower shortages, but they can be solved.

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, working time has remained unchanged by subsequent administrations and Congress. A 2007 C.I.A. estimate of United States labour force participation placed it at approximately 153.1 million individuals. Assuming each individual worked a 1987 average work week of 1949 hours, working time rose from 121 billion man hours per year to 398 billion man hours per year. This represents an actual extension of the working time by 247 per cent over the fifty-seven year period. The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics states that between 1950 and 2000 the number of individuals in the active labour force grew 227 per cent from 62 million to 141 million, and was projected to reach 192 million by 2050.

Most significant, as President Truman's 1951 message predicted, the share of working women rose from 30 per cent of the labour force, in 1950, to 47 per cent, by 2000 - growing at a particularly rapid rate from 1970 to 1980. "In the 1950-60 period, population growth alone was responsible for the growth of the labour force. During the 1960-70 period, population growth contributed about 94 per cent of the growth in the labour force. In the 1970-80 period, when the labour force participation of women underwent rapid growth, 76 per cent of the labour force growth was the result of population growth, and the rest was related to the growth of participation rates, mainly of women."

The report continues: "In 1950, the overall participation rate of women was 34 per cent. [...] The rate rose to 38 per cent in 1960, 43 per cent in 1970, 52 per cent in 1980, and 58 per cent in 1990 and reached 60 per cent by 2000. The overall labour force

participation rate of women is projected to attain its highest level in 2010, at 62 per cent."

The inclusion of women in the work force is seen as a symbol of social progress, but, since this participation has not been offset by an overall reduction of individual average work time, the net effect, once the vastly improved productivity of the United States labour force is factored in, has been a labour force that is today worked to more extreme lengths than any earlier period in United State history.

Although it is not yet supported by independent research, one argument states the lengthening of work time in the United States may be implicated in the secular persistence on inflation. Between 1950 and 2007 official price inflation was measured to 861 per cent. President Truman, in his 1951 message to Congress, predicted correctly that his military buildup "will cause intense and mounting inflationary pressures." Yet even he did not appear to sense the permanent and long term price implications of a longer working time.

The official inflation statistics may actually understate the real impact of the lengthening work week on prices. To give a closer estimate, it is necessary to correct for productivity increase during the same period. Using the data provided by the United State Bureau of Labour Statistics, Erik Rauch has estimated productivity to have increased by nearly 400%. Says, Rauch:"... if productivity means anything at all, a worker should be able to earn the same standard of living as a 1950 worker in only 11 hours per week."

The increase in productivity since 1950, ideally, should have had the effect of lowering prices of material goods. Given this, a truer measure of inflation during this period might be as much as four times higher than government figures.

In the United States, the working time for upper-income professionals has increased compared to 1965, while total annual working time for low-skill, low-income workers has decreased. This effect is sometimes called the "leisure gap." In 2006, the average man employed full-time worked 8.4 hours per work day, and the average woman employed full-time worked 7.7 hours per work day. There is no mandatory minimum amount of paid time off for sickness or holiday. However, regular, full-time workers often have the opportunity to take about nine days off for various holidays, two weeks of sick leave and two weeks of paid holiday time, with some workers receiving additional time after several years.

Many professional workers put in longer hours than the forty-hour standard. In professional industries like investment banking and large law firms, a forty-hour workweek is considered inadequate and may result in job loss or failure to be promoted. Medical residents in the United States routinely work long hours as part of their training.

Workweek policies are not uniform in the U.S. Many compensation arrangements are legal, and three of the most common are wage, commission, and salary payment schemes. Wage earners are compensated on a per-hour basis, whereas salaried workers are compensated on a per-week or per-job basis,

and commission workers get paid according to how much they produce or sell.

Under most circumstances, wage earners and lower-level employees may be legally required by an employer to work more than forty hours in a week; however, they are paid extra for the additional work. Many salaried workers and commission-paid sales staff are not covered by overtime laws. These are generally called "exempt" positions, because they are exempt from federal and state laws that mandate extra pay for extra time worked. The rules are complex, but generally exempt workers are executives, professionals, or sales staff. For example, school teachers are not paid extra for working extra hours. Business owners and independent contractors are considered self-employed, and none of these laws apply to them.

Generally, workers are paid time-and-a-half, or 1.5 times the worker's base wage, for each hour of work past forty. California also applies this rule to work in excess of eight hours per day. In some states, firms are required to pay double-time, or twice the base rate, for each hour of work past 60, or each hour of work past 12 in one day in California. This provides an incentive for companies to limit working time, but makes these additional hours more desirable for the worker. It is not uncommon for overtime hours to be accepted voluntarily by wage-earning workers.

Unions often treat overtime as a desirable commodity when negotiating how these opportunities shall be partitioned among union members. The Kapauku people of Papua think it is bad

luck to work If flexibility programmes are so beneficial and inexpensive, why is it that they are not more widely used? According to Hill, one of the largest obstacles is making flexplace and flextime culturally acceptable. To accomplish this, organizations need to move away from a “face-time” business culture to a “results-oriented” culture. “We hear much about the changing nature of families as we enter the 21st century.

Less often do we attend to the substantial transformations occurring in the way we work. Just as flexibility in family processes diminishes potential family stress, flexibility in [the] work process can help employees manage the contemporary stresses associated with balancing work and family demands.... As more companies offer flexibility in the timing and location of work and more individuals use that flexibility, the work-family imbalance that was problematic for employees in the twilight of the 20th century can become the balance so many seek in the 21st century.”

Employees working for job flexibility

The concept of flexibility in work arrangements is being raised more frequently — in major newspapers and magazines and even on national news programmes. The focus is often on the desire by employees to find a better balance between work and the other parts of their lives.

And more companies are realizing that offering “family-friendly” work options can help to attract and retain good employees -- especially in a strong economy with plentiful jobs. Improvements

in computer and telecommunications technology also play a role by allowing more options for where and when work can be done. MIT has had a policy about accommodating alternative schedules for many years and this article will highlight the topic and introduce a few of the MIT staff members who have negotiated for alternative work arrangements, both full- and part-time.

"MIT needs to continue to provide greater flexibility for our employees," said Joan Rice, vice president for human work at home, connected to the office via computer, fax and/or telephone. Telecommuting not only reduces wear and tear on a car but also avoids the time and stress of traveling to work. (One telecommuter noted another advantage: she hasn't had to buy new clothes in years.)

Information Resources

Several MIT offices provide information for those exploring alternative work arrangements, including the Personnel Office (for MIT policies) and the Benefits Office (for impact on benefits). The Family Resource Centre (FRC) sponsors a workshop on "Negotiating Job Flexibility" covering MIT and federally mandated leave policies and valuable tips on developing a detailed, individual proposal for situations not covered by a leave policy.

This workshop will be offered again on Tuesday, Dec. 1 from noon-1:30pm in Rm 16-151. Of course, some positions are better suited to telecommuting and flexible arrangements than others. For example, jobs that require significant amounts of writing, research or programming may be more workable than positions

supervising a staff or providing face-to-face customer service. Sometimes employees will need to change jobs if flexibility is not possible in their current position.

As the FRC workshop materials point out, flexible arrangements at MIT "are a result of individual negotiations between employees and their supervisors, when it is mutually beneficial." For instance, adjusting one person's schedule to accommodate his or her personal needs could also improve coverage by extending an office's business hours. This could be a "win" for both the individual and the office. Employees and their supervisors may need to use new skills to make a flexible work arrangement effective. For example, they must deal with the potential questions of co-workers, and they need to plan how they will communicate and assess the work, especially if the employee telecommutes.

It may be advisable to test a new arrangement for a trial period that includes specific evaluation points. A flexible agreement could be short-term or perhaps vary throughout the year, depending on the seasonal workload of an area. It's also best for an employee to have child-care arrangements in place even for the time she or he is working at home. For telecommuters, practical considerations like who will pay for an extra phone line and the necessary equipment also need to be resolved. At MIT, these questions are handled locally and depend on the particular situation.

Several people interviewed for this article believe that having a solid track record in their department contributed to being

allowed to try a different schedule. Also, there was unanimous agreement that employees should be flexible about their flexibility. For instance, if they are really needed in the office for a meeting when they normally would be working at home, it's essential that they come in. They also may need to attend conferences or training classes that fall on days when they would not usually be at work.

However, these MIT employees put such value on the alternative arrangements they've negotiated that they are very willing to make adjustments that help ensure continued flexibility in their jobs. Following are some specific examples of MIT staff members who have negotiated flexible work schedules. Each of their supervisors is pleased with the results of these customised arrangements and was glad that they were able to accommodate the needs of valued employees.

One Day in the Office

Ginny Hillen is a full-time senior analyst/programmer in the Personnel Office. She provides enhancements and overall support for Personnel's human resource computer system. Her current schedule involves coming into the office on Mondays and telecommuting from home the rest of the week. Prior to this telecommuting arrangement, Ms. Hillen had negotiated for a flexible schedule in the office, beginning her work at 7am, simply because she is a morning person who is most productive early in the day. "The flex hours saved travel time and also allowed me to be on duty and have start-up problems solved before anyone else got to work," she said.

The trial period for the early-hours schedule worked so well that her supervisor, Claire Paulding, asked if Ms. Hillen would like to try something which was then even more unusual — telecommuting. The Personnel Office was running out of space, and Ms. Hillen was more than willing to do her computer work from home.

“We can always reach Ginny by phone or e-mail,” Ms. Paulding said, “and I think she produces even more work being at home, perhaps because there are fewer interruptions.” When Ms. Hillen comes in on Mondays for meetings, she uses whatever desk space is vacant.

After Maternity Leave

Christine Cavanna, a senior financial business analyst in Information Systems, now works a full-time schedule that consists of telecommuting on Monday and Friday and working in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. She is involved in projects such as contract negotiations for long-distance telephone rates as well as financial and administrative work.

While she was on maternity leave, Ms. Cavanna developed and submitted a work proposal for the future that outlined various flexible options and the benefits and barriers to each of them for herself and her department. She had agreed to return to full-time work after her leave, so no decision was made right away.

However, other changes in the office necessitated some creative staffing options, and Ms. Cavanna was able to try a part-time

telecommuting arrangement, with three days in the office and one at home. She noted that one of the challenges of her current full-time schedule is helping staff to understand that they shouldn't hesitate to contact her when she's working at home. She intends to look into the idea of having her MIT phone number ring at home when she's working there to help resolve that issue.

Technical know-how

Another administrative staff member who telecommutes for part of her full-time schedule is Laura Lucas, training coordinator for the Department of Facilities (formerly Physical Plant). She assesses learning opportunities for the department and implements training programmes that are aligned with the organization's mission and vision.

Ms. Lucas noted that telecommuters need to be technically astute (or become that way) because they are pretty much on their own if they have computer problems while working unusual hours. Two other employees, both with young children, have arranged part-time positions. Elizabeth Gift is a research specialist in the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

Her 60 per cent appointment involves lab work done at MIT, and writing and literature searches that can be done at home. She develops protocols for experiments that are carried out by students, and also helps design and implement programmes used to control experiments and gather data. Ms. Gift preferred a part-time schedule so she could spend more time with her two young children, and the availability of a flexible arrangement is a major

reason she decided to stay at MIT. Another part-time staff member is Ellen Finnie Duranceau, assistant acquisitions librarian for digital resources in the MIT Libraries.

She has a 75 per cent appointment and works three longer days at MIT with some extra work done at home. Her current position involves the acquisition of digital resources, mostly web-based databases. "When I became a mother, it was clear to me that I couldn't work full-time and also be satisfied that I was meeting my daughter's needs, or my own needs to be with her," Ms. Duranceau said. "I really wanted to stay at MIT and was thrilled that that was possible through the creation of my part-time schedule." Alternative working arrangements that are carefully planned and evaluated can benefit both employees and their departments. And if national trends are any indication, the use of both flexible schedules and telecommuting is likely to grow at MIT in the future.

Is Job Flexibility Right For You?

Many societal trends are leading job-seekers to seek flexible work schedules, from caring for young children to dealing with elderly parents to simply seeking a better balance between work and family obligations. And according to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, flex-time is the most popular alternative work schedule offered by the responding companies, with two-thirds of the companies offering such a benefit. About a quarter offer job sharing, while 41 per cent allowed at least some telecommuting options. Other flexibility options include meal-time flexibility, part-time work, and compressed workweek.

Experts agree that most employers are open to flexible work scheduling, even if they don't currently offer it or have a relevant policy. Many employers see the benefits of boosting loyalty, strengthening morale, and minimizing turnover while reducing recruitment costs, training programme expenses, and lost productivity yet incurring minimal new expenses. A key component of obtaining a flexible job schedule is your boss - and if you are considering requesting some type of job flexibility.