

OD Quarterly

*Published by
OD Alternatives in
collaboration with OrgLens*

Why Social Capital should matter to you and your Organization

An in-depth, exploratory study using
qualitative research

Revealing the Informal Organization

A Case Study of using ONA for
leveraging groups of personal
interactions towards organizational
success

October 2022

Dr. Jacob L. Moreno and His Impact on Social Network Analysis (SNA)

An overview of Moreno's contribution
to social network research

You cannot teach a fish to fly, but you can apply models for solving challenges

A conceptual article

Career Path- New Talent Currency

An article exploring emerging
concepts

And many more..



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From the Editor's Desk

Dear Reader,

We are all connected in some way or the other! We tend to connect the dots, look at the larger picture, and make sense of the nuances that form our world. Imagine, you might already have some of our readers as your LinkedIn connects or maybe you were somehow related to them in the past. In fact, given that the degrees of separation have shrunk, that should not be surprising. And sometimes, we discover astonishing connections. If we keep our eyes and ears open, we can unravel these connections in the concepts we learn, the skills we have, and the people we know.

This issue primarily addresses interconnectedness. Our first three papers delve into the concept of social capital and networks. Our other papers look into basic principles in leadership, career journey, and solving organizational challenges for diversity and inclusion and the significance of culture and well-being. Many topics have been treated with apathy in the past, but with the rising consciousness in the age of knowledge, we found it imperative to discuss them in this issue to keep the thoughts alive and the sensibilities ingrained.

There was a heartwarming observation that we made as we were creating this issue. As we, at OD Quarterly, spoke to a lot of senior HR leaders across India, we realized – most HR leaders care about their employees. That notion seemed to be present at the core of their heart. They also want to be a part of the strategic development of the firm keeping people in mind. They want HR to mean a lot more than how it is perceived to be generally. More importantly, they have a humanistic approach. In the current times, we have seen neologisms that helped conceptualize the workplace and shape our sensibilities. The HR leaders seemed to be empathetic of that rather than brushing them off as buzzwords that were created to generate hype. The depth of the neologisms may be up for another debate, but to see the concern was delightful. To see such a positive disposition was encouraging for us at the Quarterly.

We have received articles and comments from various illustrious academicians and practitioners. We would like to thank Prof. Prasad Balkundi and Vinod Kumar for putting together an article on Moreno's work for us. That was extremely relevant given the type of studies we have for this issue. We would also like to thank Priya Vasudevan (Liberty Insurance) for presenting an alternative perspective of looking at women leadership. Gargi Banerjee's (Gulf Pharmaceuticals) article on career path which is informative and succinct, addresses best practices concerning the Great Resignation. Sadhan Bhattacharya (Johnson & Johnson) wrote for us about how culture is ever so important by analyzing three companies lucidly for readers to understand. Saikat Saha's article revisits leadership with the concept of 'nudge'. And lastly, we have Aman Zaidi's article which reminds us practitioners again that well-being is important and the intention to promote well-being is necessary – something tangible must be done!

It was a pleasure to know and coordinate with all the contributors. They have been helpful and delightful to speak to. Knowledge and well-wishers lurk everywhere. Sometimes, we just need to reach out and try! Please do write to us about what you think of this issue. With your feedback and involvement, we will continue to generate knowledge and enable our fraternity to shape our practice.

Founder of ODA
Santhosh Babu

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Why Social Capital should matter to you and your Organization

ODA Team



About ODA

We are passionate about supporting individuals and organizations that strive for continual growth and excellence. Our work is embedded in the philosophical foundations of being appreciative, holistic, and interconnected to the whole. These philosophical foundations are built into the DNA of everything we undertake, whether designing an intervention, writing in a publication, or doing a keynote speech.

To cite this article :

ODA Team., 2022. Why Social Capital should matter to you and your Organization. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.3-16

Please feel free to reach out to OD Alternatives and OrgLens if you are interested in exploring this topic as an individual or for your organization.

Why Social Capital should matter to you and your organization

ODA Team

While we have heard so much about human capital, [social capital](#) relatively is an unknown concept for many.

What is social capital?

The term social capital refers to a positive product of human interaction. Social capital is the potential of interpersonal relationships made through social networks giving rise to tangible or intangible positive outcomes that may include favors, useful information, innovative ideas, and future opportunities. It may be used to explain how interpersonal connections and networks both inside and outside of an organization contribute to the success of that company. It may also be used to define the interpersonal connections among employees inside a business, especially those pertaining to trust, respect, and engagement, that contribute to the development of trust and respect, which improves business performance. Social capital allows one to leverage information and resources. A widely cited definition (Adler & Kwon, 2002) of social capital is:

“Social capital is the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor’s social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor.”

Social capital may be demonstrated by asking a friend to lend you their automobile in an emergency or by asking an old college classmate about a job opening!

Although the concept of social capital has been around for a while, sociologists James Coleman, Robert Putnam, Pierre Bourdieu, and Mark Granovetter are credited for formalizing it. Social capital is widely used in development economics (Hayami, 2009), medical sciences (Pitas & Ehmer, 2020), policy-making (Wu, 2021), and social media marketing (Gil de Zúñiga, et al., 2012) to name a few. There has also been a considerable

focus in organizational studies, such as on inter-organizational relationships, knowledge management, and entrepreneurship (Kwon & Adler, 2014). Past literature suggests that social capital can be measured by [trust](#) (Halpern, 2005). Putnam (1995) used the intensity of involvement in community and organizational life as indicators of social capital. Similarly, Coleman (1988) looked at the trustworthiness of the social environment since it promotes reciprocity, the creation of norms, and the fulfilment of effective sanctions that can protect an institution. Social capital also has consequences on the level of [employee engagement](#) in organizations (Clausen, et al., 2019).

Social capital primarily relies on goodwill and trust. It is not based merely on authority and compulsion. The networks, norms, connections, values, and informal sanctions that influence the quantity and cooperative nature of an institution’s social interactions make up social capital. We use the term “goodwill” to describe the compassion, belief, and pardon shown to us by friends and acquaintances (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Social capital’s impacts derive from the information, power, and solidarity that such goodwill makes available if goodwill is the essence of social capital. Social capital is found in their interpersonal connections (Claridge, 2018). It really depends on other people’s willingness and availability to be realized. As a result, it is distinct from the conventional idea of ownership. Regardless of the established duties, goodwill, or trust, a person has the discretion to offer or decline aid when needed. And this is why the subject of social capital is tricky and needs reflection.

Then we could say that social capital is

- A set of shared values or resources enabling individuals to work together in a group to effectively achieve a common purpose.

- The potential ability to obtain resources, favors, or information from one's personal connections.
- The glue that holds the members of an institution together by promoting harmony, a sense of shared values, and mutual respect.

Why is it called social CAPITAL?

The concept is commonly used to describe the relationships that help contribute to the success of businesses. Just like human capital and financial capital, social capital has been realized to be beneficial to organizations. Social capital consists of professionals forming networks and bonds inside their organization and with entities external to the organization. There has been considerable attention on networking and collaboration in professional practice. But social capital exceeds this understanding of relations beyond this premise. Capital in this sense can be metaphoric since it represents the tangible and intangible character of the resources. In this study, we will look into the aspects of social capital organizations and individuals can tap into to gain access to resources which can be favors, ideas, or information.

Characteristics of social capital

- Social capital is a long-lived asset into which other resources can be invested, with the expectation of a potential flow of benefits.
- Collective actors can strengthen their collective identity and augment their capacity for collective action.
- Social capital can be "constructible" through deliberate actions.
- Social capital is both "appropriable" (Coleman, 1988). Associations can be used for other purposes, such as information gathering or advice.
- Social capital can be "converted" to other kinds of capital: the benefits one receives from their social network status can be transformed into financial or other benefits (Bourdieu, 1986). Compared to economic capital, social capital may be less easily converted, but it is stickier.
- Social capital may either replace other resources or serve as a supplement. Actors occasionally use their better "connections"

to make up for a lack of resources (financial or human). It can also improve the efficiency of economic capital by reducing transaction costs.

- Social capital, unlike financial capital, requires upkeep. Social ties must be frequently reaffirmed in order to maintain their effectiveness. Social capital does not depreciate at a predictable rate like most other forms of capital.
- The use of social capital is non-rivalrous, meaning that one person's use of it does not reduce its availability to others. However, unlike the use of pure public goods, its usage is excludable, meaning that other people can be left out of a particular network of links.
- Social capital is not "located" in the actors per se but in their relations with other actors.

How can we look at social capital? Exploring the basic approaches

According to some scholars, social capital is not the exclusive property of any one individual. It can extend to all the members of the community or the said institution such as an organization. According to Coleman (1988), social capital exists in different forms including trust, reciprocity, norms, sanctions, and social networks. Here, norms frequently allude to forms of social support and group efficacy. This approach highlights the social cohesion perspective. Hence, it may be considered a public good (Coleman, 1988). Similarly, Putnam (1995) defined social capital as

"Features of social life networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives".

Contrary to viewing it as a public good, Bourdieu (1986) viewed social capital through the lens of a **private good**. In this approach, individuals own their social capital, thus it is advantageous for them to be familiar with the norms, or game rules. According to Bourdieu (1986),

"Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital,

a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word”.

As one experiences a sense of belonging to one’s family, community, career, nation, etc. at the same time, social capital exists at different levels and these levels overlap and interact. Bourdieu had a network approach since he was concerned about the resources that lay in the social networks. He recognized that inequalities may occur in a society given access to social capital, or a lack thereof. Some networks are more powerful than others. The widely talked about PayPal Mafia is a classic example of a powerful network in current times. Within powerful networks, Bourdieu posited that there lie material and symbolic resources. This view enables us to explore the “dark side” of social capital since it informs us about the haves and have-nots of social capital. As a private good, social capital has the potential to produce both positive and negative consequences.

Since social capital may be thought of as belonging to both individuals and communities, it can be studied from both an individual and a contextual perspective (Wu, 2021). As evident, social capital occurs at macro, meso, and micro levels. At a micro level, generalized trust, networks, and ties are investigated to understand social capital. At a meso level, social capital is concerned with institutions such as organizations, civic participation, clubs, etc. Group-level corruption happens at this level. At a macro level, social capital looks at the relations with the government, economic freedom, and decentralization, to name a few.

Hence, it is beneficial for both organizations and their employees to be aware of the processes and consequences of social capital since the study of social capital involves the knowledge of unlocking resources in one’s social environment.

Types of social capital

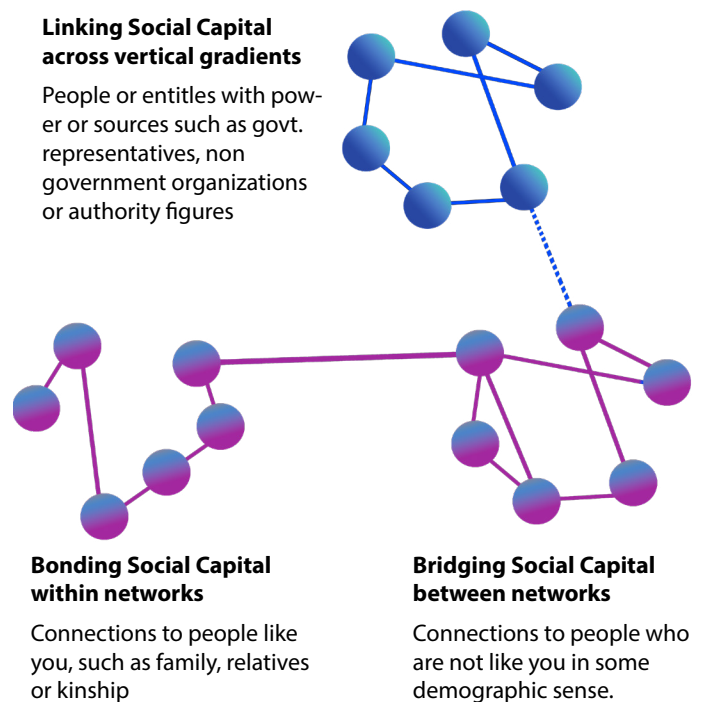
There are three primary functions of social capital: bridging, bonding and linking (Halpern, 2005). A community or a person may be high on one and low on others. The entity can also be high on all or low on all. This is not apparent and quick judgements without analyzing the entity’s network could be very misleading.

Bonding social capital: internally focused with a propensity to strengthen exclusive identities and homogeneous groups

Bridging social capital: outward looking and inclusive of individuals from all social strata

Bridges are the only route of ideas, favors, or information that connect 2 collectives of people.

Linking social capital: links people vertically across asymmetric power relations and can be perceived as a type of bridging social capital where asymmetric power and resources are concerned



Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital figure from Aidrich 2012

Ties and structural holes

As we have seen, social capital can happen at a macro, meso, or micro level. **Ties investigate the micro-level relationships which are interpersonal in the social environment** (Granovetter, 1973). The seminal paper by Granovetter (1973) looks into ties which are positive and symmetric. His study on ties has been found useful for career progress, such as in job search (Brown & Konrad, 2001). According to Granovetter (1973), ties can primarily be of two types – strong and weak, depending on the frequency of the social interactions.

a) Strong and weak ties

Strong ties are the connections we regularly return to— those friends and coworkers with whom we feel at ease because we like, trust, and know

(Burkus, 2018). There is a high likelihood of knowing the friends and acquaintances of our strong ties (Brown & Konrad, 2001). Strength of a tie as defined by Granovetter (1973),

“is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie”.

Weak ties are the ones with whom we have a lesser frequency of interaction. However, they are the ones that can provide us with new ideas, opportunities, and connections. They open to us a whole new world. Hence, they are likely to be more useful (Burkus, 2018; Granovetter, 1973).

b) Dormant ties

Dormant ties are a form of weak ties. They consist of those connections that have not been maintained over time but can be revived upon attention (Burkus, 2018). Dormant ties could have been strong ties once upon a time. They are also known as latent ties.

c) Potential and mobilized ties

Access to ties does not guarantee mobilization. Having social capital does not mean using social capital. Recent research suggests the assumption of social capital is beneficial fails if the networks are not activated or utilized actively. These are potential ties, which means they are present and active, but not utilized for the purpose of acquiring resources.

Hence access does not mean mobilization. It has been found that ties can be activated to generate informal support and the structures of an individual's core networks influenced its extent (Hurlbert, et al., 2000). High-density core networks activated ties to a greater degree. This type of core network is marked by a high number of individuals connected within the network. Individuals with low-density networks have been found to have more difficulty in generating informal networks. Networks can be activated by business owners to gain legal, financial, and technical advice and they are likely to connect with high-status individuals for the same (Renzulli & Aldrich, 2005). Over time, potential ties can be mobilized and vice versa.

Research suggests that potential ties can help identify new ideas and latent or dormant ties can help maintain relationships. Sometimes, latent ties are preferred over new ties if the individuals have previously displayed expertise and high reliability in terms of the desired objective (Kwon & Adler, 2014). Latent ties can prove to be a quicker and smoother option to get work done due to an already established equation, albeit not so desirable, and there is less uncertainty associated since these are not new equations with emerging problems. Incidentally, it has also been studied that latent ties formed during university years can prove to be useful over the years to come!

d) Structural holes

An “empty space” between contacts in a person's network is referred to as a structural hole. It indicates a lack of interaction between these connections (though they may be aware of one another). Different informational streams are available to the actors on either side of the structural gap. People with networks that bridge structural gaps have early access to a variety of interpretations and information that are frequently in conflict, which offers them a competitive advantage in spotting outstanding ideas (Burt, 2004). These individuals form the bridges and hence have bridging social capital.

e) Brokers

Brokers span the gap or the structural holes between clusters and have the ability to leverage the situation to get paid more, get promoted more often, and produce innovative ideas (Burt, 2004). And as Burt wrote,

“People who stand near the holes in a social structure are at higher risk of having good ideas.”

But here is the surprising thing. Brokers were found to be “organizational misfits”. They were typically the ones who instead of pursuing the slow and steady ladder-climbing in their organization, followed an atypical career having jumped across different functions and done various things. This locates them in their social structure in a unique place near the structural holes where they can connect various clusters with each other.

f) Silos

According to research, getting overly isolated can hurt one's career, while not being sufficiently segregated can also be detrimental to progress (Burkus, 2018). The most successful people understand the need of finding groups or siloes of like-minded people who can support their growth and development, but they also understand that they cannot spend all of their time in these groups. They alternate between interacting with other silos and the larger network.

Relevance of social capital in organizations

Social capital has been studied in the organizational context and the findings have been promising. In this section, we see how social capital has influenced organizations. As past research suggests, social capital positively influences the following (Adler & Kwon, 2002):

- Career success
- Executive compensation
- Job search
- Pool of talent for recruitment
- Interunit resource exchange
- Product innovation
- Cross-functional team effectiveness
- Creation of intellectual capital
- Mobilization of human capital
- Entrepreneurship
- Formation of startup organizations
- Relations with suppliers
- Regional production networks
- Interorganizational learning

Social capital also decreases turnover rates and organizational dissolution rates. While due to Covid-19 traditional forms of social capital might be at a low, social capital has found its new manifestation over social media and technological tools (Wu, 2021). Social capital has not only been found to positively impact aspects of organizational success but it has been found to impact individuals' well-being and learning as well (Halpern, 2005).

Why it matters for you

By now you must have realized that the constituent elements of social capital are trust, norms, and networks. And we know that trust is developed over time as individuals gain confidence in the reliability of others in a series of interactions.

Newcomers take some time to trust their colleagues and that's natural. Another interesting thing to note is that it is not just about trust between two individuals. We can see that Suresh trusts Kamal because Santosh trusts Kamal and Suresh trusts Santhosh. Thus, relatively large networks may exhibit generalized trust without close personal contact among all members. These norms of appropriate behavior develop within a system – something that is very important for organizations that are interested in creating a unique culture. We all know that the norm of reciprocity is fundamental to productive relationships. This norm can be also known as the “favor bank.” Remember the famous opening scene in the movie Godfather? The undertaker Bonasera seeks help from Don Corleone only when he found he could not get justice from the courts and police.

After Corleone agrees to have some men beaten at Bonasera's request, he tells Bonasera with no small degree of menace: “Someday, and that day may never come, I'll call upon you to do a service for me.”

Closely linked to reciprocity is a norm that actors will forego their immediate self-interest to act not only in the interest of the group but in their own long-term self-interest. Something extremely important for organizations that would like to increase engagement and collective identity.

“Your ability to build relationships with people around you is a lead indicator of your success in life. It's not just at work, because it's that relationship that you leverage in so many situations. So that becomes a critical indicator of people who will succeed with people and in life.”

Animesh Kumar
President – HR and Transformation
Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited

Innovation

Innovation also thrives when there is a safe environment which can be created with the help of social capital.

“Social capital has a huge impact on innovation. This is because, psychological safety is the bedrock of building innovative organizations. If I don't have the ability to comfortably say what comes to my

mind without thinking of what the consequence of that statement will be, which is at one level psychological safety, you're never going to get all the ideas that are churning in my head because I'm already, self-selecting what is going to be acceptable to this group of people. But when I have social and relational capital, my willingness to say things as they come to my mind to ideate with you to share my thoughts is a lot higher. I will feel a lot safer psychologically ideating with somebody whom I relate with and I know that I will not be judged."

Animesh Kumar
President – HR and Transformation
Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited

Hiring, retention, and boomerangs

We have heard many instances of boomerang employees. Both the employees and the organization stand to benefit since there is already trust and understanding between the two parties. The connections in the organizations might be the strong ties that the employee had left behind. If dormant, the ex-employee can reactivate the tie and mobilize it. All this comes under the scope of social capital. This can save costs for the organization since the ex-employee would need less time to get adjusted and yet may come back with fresh aspirations and determination due to revised life choices.

According to both research and our findings, it was observed both strong ties and weak ties can be useful when we seek information.

"The best way to hire good talent is through good word of mouth. Employees are our brand ambassadors, whether they are existing or past employees. An alumni portal helps to reach out to past employees to get referrals and references. Having a connection with them and engaging them with the organization helps in rehiring some of them through mutual interest."

Nandini Mehta
Chief Human Resource Officer
Metro Brands Limited

Social capital within the organization creates stickiness and extending it to the other ties of the individual may create loyalty.

"Mid-career employees may make the choice thinking it's better to stay back because it's keeping their family happy. It's keeping them engaged very often. We've even had young people, who've come back to us and told us that this aspect attracts them. Their family appeals to them from the heart. I'm not saying we do it consciously, but we found it's a significant stickiness factor. As far as people are concerned, it's almost like leaving your family."

Amit Chincholikar
Global Chief Human Resources Officer
Tata Consumer Products

Collaboration

Organizations have superordinate goals but with competing objectives, the superordinate goals may get compromised. Social capital may play a crucial role in realizing the higher order goals by creating more understanding within the employees.

"In the kind of company that we are in, which is FMCG, the dependencies are very high. In situations where there are always conflicting priorities between the marketing, sales, and operations employees, priorities inherently are in conflict. For the sales guys, it's about maximizing revenue. For operations guys, it's about minimizing costs and for the marketing guys, it's about the forecast. But, when you are in a social setup you understand where the other person is coming from, and you're able to focus on larger organizational goals.

When you are aware of the individual's personal background, individual likes and dislikes, it just helps calibrate and make things happen more effectively. This means you are saying that I, you know and may not agree with everything professionally, but I respect what you're saying. So, when I say, I respect your point of view, it means I'm respecting you as an individual."

Amit Chincholikar
Global Chief Human Resources Officer
Tata Consumer Products

Efficiency

Our findings suggest that social capital helps in getting work done smoothly since there is already an established understanding.

"Informal relations help. Formally, we are very used to sending emails to get things done and if it has

not happened but if you're connected well with people, you just have to speak to them. Otherwise, there are so many follow-ups. If you're really not connected to people, you have to do multiple follow-ups. You have to keep reminding them that you might have to escalate."

Nandini Mehta
Chief Human Resource Officer
Metro Brands Limited

"Social capital is going to help in productivity in the long run. In the short run, it might take away from productivity. For example, when you and I first meet, we might want to shake hands. We might want to ask about each other's families. Maybe if there's a small child in the home, maybe there's a bit of advice I might have for you, etc.

And then we get into a proper discussion and get to work. We might have wasted the first 10 minutes of a one-hour meeting. But the next time we meet and maybe we work together on some very big projects, then I'm going to be far more productive and you're going to be far more productive because we invested the first 10 minutes of our meeting to get to know each other. That way I know your strengths better, you know my strengths better when I work with you. I would know that you don't like B, C, and D. So, I can decide not to go to B, C, and D because you will not enjoy doing that work. I'll get that B, C, and D done somewhere else. But to do E and F I will go to you because that is where your strengths lie and you enjoy it. I know that because I've invested the first 10 minutes with you. So, in the long run, productivity will be positively impacted by social capital but maybe in the short run, it could see that we've lost some time."

Ravi Kumar
Senior President & Chief People Officer
Page Industries Limited

Wellbeing

Being connected with people also has a positive impact on mental well-being. There are forums that people use to stay connected with others and these may not be the people one encounters every day. They might be people doing other types of jobs but they still can be a great source of ideas, comfort, and information.

"A forum is such a fundamental thing. It is a group

of women (who call themselves Power Women), from different walks of life, professions, and are doing path-breaking work. If I were to really even talk about the college admission of my son, or, how do I become an executive member of a company board, or if I were to start a startup, I can resort to my forum. We also discuss women-specific issues such as health. We are all connected without any agenda over a period of time. It's now two to three years and we keep broadening our base and we get to know so much more just by the discussions because different people are talking about different topics. It just broadens your perspective. This contributes to your emotional well-being because you feel connected. Therefore, social capital contributes to emotional well-being, and psychological safety and you would feel you're not alone. And you feel much more equipped at the end of the day that if there is something that comes up your way, you have a place to go."

Rachna Kumar
Head – HR Asia
Whirlpool Corporation

"I have benefited a lot of times from reaching out to colleagues, and this was true for me, especially during the pandemic. A lot of people in our broader circle were affected. Their families and their extended families were impacted, and I had to rely on my network - people I hadn't spoken to for 10 years, to reach out to them and call in a favor. Most of my batchmates, juniors, and seniors are in positions of influence today and I was able to reach out to them just on the basis of being an alumnus or having met them at a conference to support colleagues and acquaintance's during the pandemic."

Santana Ramakrishnan
Chief Human Resources Officer
DealShare

Ideation

Past research has amply suggested how ties can help in the exchange of new ideas especially when one is situated near a structural hole. Our findings too supported the same.

"There were points in time when in my decision making when something was required from an organizational perspective, but I wasn't too sure if this was the right thing to do. I was just thinking,

who can I reach out to, to give me a different perspective, and analyze how I was looking at it? I was getting a little sad about the situation. So, I remember I called up two people, both of them, after many years. And I don't think it just really felt that I was connecting with them after so many years. We just exchanged how our lives were. And then got the point though. Though my intention was more professional, I did not feel uncomfortable with the discussion. And I guess she was more than useful to be able to give the advice that she thought was her point of view."

Rachna Kumar
Head – HR Asia
Whirlpool Corporation

Disadvantages

There is a dark side to social capital. The detrimental impact on social capital might come from negative behaviors, especially those that amount to abuse or betrayal of trust.

Generation of warring factions which end up ignoring the superordinate goal

Strong in-groups in an organization can also jeopardize the functioning of other employees in the organization. Established strong ties can also come at a cost.

"This is the yin and yang of life, for every good there is a negative side. In any organization, community, household, or country there will be a tendency for people of similar or common likes/backgrounds to conform with each other. While intentions maybe right for organizations to get people together, it definitely could lead to groupthink and conformity. While we cannot stop it, we can reduce its impact if organizations communicate more regularly and strongly, drive the common goals, and convey what is in it for the employees."

Nandini Mehta
Chief Human Resource Officer
Metro Brands Limited

"Human beings are social animals. Social capital would always generate a bit of pull and push politics, which basically means you are vying for the resources. You will do everything to get your share of the pie. As long as it's a constructive conflict and it really remains above board, it is

absolutely a smart way of working. But when it goes beyond that and creates skepticism, internal conflicts, and mistrust between people, then it is harmful."

Yuvaraj Srivastava
Group Chief Human Resource Officer
MakeMyTrip

Costs of building and maintaining social capital

While social capital aid people, their access to resources can hinder others' opportunities. Additionally, the process of building social capital comes with its costs (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Investing in social capital would require the individual to

- Invest time in growing and maintaining relationships and fulfilling obligations
- Take out time from engaging in other tasks to hold on to the strong ties leading to increased time in completing tasks

The costs attached may not always be favorable given the context. Hence, many a time, weak ties are more effective since they are less time-consuming and they open individuals to new ideas and possibilities.

What enables social capital? How do we grow social capital?

The built environment, our family, history, education, and culture are all likely to have an impact on our social capital. We exist in societies with economic inequalities and social class. This makes us have unique vantage points which can weave into our values, purpose, and personality. The question is, can we consciously and intentionally expand our social capital? We have discussed some key concepts on social capital previously in this study. One can ask himself or herself the following questions to understand this phenomenon better:

- Where is your location in the structure of social relations?
- Which type of social capital do you associate yourself most with? Bridging, bonding, or linking?
- How diverse are your networks?
- Do you think you are in a silo in your organization?
- How many people reach out to you and how often? Is it always about work?

- Do you think people find it easy to reach out to you? Are you approachable?
- Do you think you can easily reach out to people if you need any resources (advice, ideas, information)?
- Do you think you extend favors only to receive gain something one day?

Social relations can be market relations, network relations, or hierarchical relations (Kwon & Adler, 2014). Market relations are those in which products and services are exchanged for money or other items. Hierarchical relations pertain to exchanges that occur due to obedience to authority and in social relations, favors and gifts are exchanged based on goodwill, trust, and other intangible factors. One might need to be cognizant of the types of relations and the limitations of each. A market relation can turn into a social relation just like a hierarchical one. And these relations reserve the potential for future exchanges that were not conducted in the past.

However, as discussed earlier, building and maintaining social capital can be exhausting. Some people are more at ease in establishing new relations and reviving older ones. They are at ease in engaging with multiple people. However, that may not be the case for everyone. In that case, it can be useful for the individual to have ties with an actor who has strong ties with multiple people. This actor may be acting as a bridge but can be very useful. This way, the time consumed to access social capital might reduce for the individual.

Build trust and goodwill!

Social capital is based on trust and goodwill. As past research suggests, this concept is solely based on these elusive concepts. Once trust is breached, relations may not result in other forms of resources.

“Social capital, not just in professional terms, but also in personal terms very often has a significant impact. Now the whole point is that it delivers maximum value in my experience when you build a social relationship with an expectation of nothing in return.”

Amit Chincholikar
Global Chief Human Resources Officer
Tata Consumer Products

“If you meet for an agenda, you can be very well and open about what you want out of it. That’s the starting point of any conversation. Subsequently, when there is no agenda, it provides you with that platform of psychological safety, because you’re not judging anybody else. Then people connect at a more human level and they’re more open.”

Rachna Kumar
Head – HR Asia
Whirlpool Corporation

Capitalize on the power of shared activities

Maybe, parties are not that great at building social capital (Burkus, 2018). Most people stick to similar people they see at parties. They might want to avoid dissimilar people. Also, they may not form meaningful memories with them that would keep them engaged with each other even after the party ends. However, when one engages in shared activities with others, despite dissimilarities, they will keep on engaging. That will be love for that particular activity! They may not become too close, but they are likely to accept each other and create bonds and memories over the shared activities. However, some activities do not last. There are many a time, organizations try to create clubs. Due to the inertia of a few people, the group sustains for some time. But after their departure, the group collapses.

Be intentional!

There is only limited energy and some people find it extremely strenuous to maintain bonds. Maintaining multiple strong ties over a period of time can be exhausting and distracting for some. However, a few may do it with utmost ease. Now, what happens when one finds it exhausting even though that individual might want to invest in relationships? Weak ties come to the rescue. Form as many weak ties across diverse functions! And also, be intentional about the functions lest you find yourself spread too thin. In order to be mindful of the relations might want to have, one can ask himself or herself the following questions:

- What is your purpose?
- Where are you situated and where do you want to go?
- Who are the relevant people and what are the relevant circles for you which will help you to grow? Who are those who will enrich you, give

you ideas, cheer for you, and give you access to intangible resources that align with your purpose?

- Can you be a possible resource for others who have a similar purpose?

But, beware! The intention should be to have goodwill. If it is only transactional, it may actually backfire by creating mistrust. The aim is to be there for others and ask yourself how you can make a difference.

What can organizations do to enable social capital?

Create programs and opportunities to interact

Organizations can have various opportunities, programs, and initiatives to facilitate interactions with employees across different functions and geographies. These can prove to be very helpful for employees as they see and appreciate the wider organization and its context within which they work helping inculcate a sense of purpose and develop loyalty to the organization. These can give the employees the platform to seek advice, exchange new ideas, and get exposed to other facets of the organization.

“One of the most critical organizational level initiatives would be to build a culture of open and transparent communication. There are forums which are more formal, strategic and business focused. Some of the initiatives for such forums that we have done have been conducting quarterly Town Halls where management communicates the key initiatives, achievements, and plans for the quarter and employees are free to ask any questions or give any feedback. We have an Annual Strategy Meet to plan the coming year and review the year gone by. We do this at an organizational level, regional level, and departmental level. We also have structured goal-setting, feedback, and appraisal conversations that help employees develop themselves.

There are also get-togethers that bring teams together in a more informal way and help them bond and get to know each other more and also see how we can extend them to families as well.

Some of these initiatives that we have are Family

Fiesta and People Icon Rewards and Recognition where employees and teams are recognized for their achievements, and Sports and Cultural events. Then there are interventions that help in growth and development. Some such initiatives were a program on career progression, learning journeys, and assessments with IDPs. All these initiatives help employees not just bond with each other but to connect well with the organization. It makes them feel like they are in an extended family. They not only are loyal and satisfied but also very productively engaged and this helps the organization build a strong culture with a high sense of ownership.”

Nandini Mehta
Chief Human Resource Officer
Metro Brands Limited

Creating social capital helps employees to gain recognition. Organizations can facilitate opportunities for employees who want to further their growth and career opportunities and help close in on structural gaps.

“When you connect with anyone in the organization, you are connecting with them as an individual. It is important to try and strike a chord at a personal level as human beings and understand what binds us and what separates us. I have always been curious about the “person” I am interacting with and that has certainly helped me to build better relationships. We must also realize that organizations are not ideal places for personal conversations and I have always relied on cues that I get from others on how much they are willing to open up and be led by that.

As a senior leader, I made it a point to meet with everybody who came there, either business or HR. And, you know, continue to establish that relationship and grow it. That is one thing that I would say helped build my global network.

I had an opportunity to meet leaders from the entire cross-section of the company because every time they came to India as part of their business travels, I had time to spend with them and use the opportunity to build a relationship. And I also, in many cases, continued to keep that relationship going. So, every time they had an issue, many of them would say reach out to me because they were able to connect my name to this place. It's very

important in a global organization to have these networks because you should be able to reach out to them for any help that you may require. They should, at some point, reach out to you, in case they have a question or they have a problem, or they need some kind of support.”

Gangapriya Chakraverti
India Site Head and Managing Director
Formerly Director -Human Resources
Ford Motor Company

Understand your organization's social networks

You could do a social network analysis to understand the current way work flows, the trust levels, engagement and inclusion in your organization. Once you have this network map, you could figure out how to increase social capital. You can also try using the network diagram/graph to understand the silos in the organization. Silos tend to isolate employees and disrupt the flow of information and ideas. This might also hinder the career progress of the employees in the silos. While silos may be effective to a great degree to focus on work, they may create a myopic result. To find out if you have silos in your organization, you may want to feel the pulse of all the employees. If that is a tall task, you may want to invest in organizational network analysis. Silos may hamper employee engagement which can affect your organization's overall performance.

“We have the concept of culture ambassadors wherein we have a set of team members in the organization who are aware of the company's culture. They are also leveraged for the selection processes to ascertain the culture fitment of the prospective candidates. These Go-Trippers are also our speakers and assessment panel members on various campuses for hiring drives and other forums.

Opinion makers are those who basically influence others for the right things and also build the right perspectives on various issues. They are not for driving individual agendas but to help the organization build its culture. These opinion makers reach that stage only because of certain demonstrated traits and value-based behaviors. They have walked the talk. They have been very, very upright. They have had successful careers.

They're the ones who have been very positive in their attitude. They're respected by people, they're high performers.”

Yuvaraj Srivastava
Group Chief Human Resource Officer
MakeMyTrip

According to the Head of Human Resources in a leading pharmaceutical organization,

“The balance of decision making that you'll create out of relationship analytics is by continuously looking at how people are engaging and facilitating at how proactively you can engage rather than reactively.” Think about your leadership

Leadership can make a difference in how a team interacts internally and with other teams. Organizations can focus on training their leadership to inculcate group norms that encourage the exchange of ideas and support of those ideas. Leaders should be able to question themselves and their assumptions and have the mindset to take risks. Failure of an idea should not discourage the leader to be receptive to other ideas.

“It always starts with leadership because when leaders speak, people watch their feet. So how demonstratively open a leader is to either receive feedback and then change their point of view based on what they hear. I think it is also about the connection that you are able to build with the frontline of your organization because that's the place where money gets made or money gets lost. I think what happens is, a lot of organizations tend to focus on what I like to call a twenty-four forty-eight principle – which is, you sit in a cabin where the temperature is 24 degrees making a decision without knowing what's happening on the ground, where the temperature is 48 degrees. So, one demonstratively strong way of doing this is to adequately spend a lot more time with the frontline on the ground, be it at a plan, be it at a factory, be it, you know, with your distributor, because then what happens is people really get a sense to see the human side of a leader, right?”

Amit Chincholikar
Global Chief Human Resources Officer
Tata Consumer Products

Understand the role of family and friends

According to our findings, extended ties of the employees, such as family and friends, played a role in the employee's loyalty to the organization. This also helps employees to know each other in other capacities and grow their social capital.

"We work very closely with communities. When initiatives of such nature come, we found that employees and their kids are more than happy to kind of come over and spend time.

There's no doubt a lot more of this actually happens when we allow people to engage, not because they have to, but because they want to. We believe in the power of the collective, that's what we've been trying to do as a company. It is a very simple principle."

Amit Chincholikar
Global Chief Human Resources Officer
Tata Consumer Products

"Employees come to work in order to support themselves and their families. When an organization involves the families of employees it definitely helps build a stronger bond and loyalty. When families meet each other, it helps them settle well and there is extended support that they get from each other. These bonds do take place informally. However, organizations can organize events that involve families where they meet and bond with each other. We have organized a day event where families spend time with each other and have loads of fun, followed by a cultural evening and dinner and this is for the entire corporate office. We have also organized a Senior Management dinner with family which has helped create a good social network."

Nandini Mehta
Chief Human Resource Officer
Metro Brands Limited

Conclusion

In this study, we covered the salient aspects of social capital and how it can benefit us. We described how one can fit in one's social structure. The underlying phenomenon of goodwill and trust cannot be more emphasized. Shared activities are powerful to create bonds with dissimilar people. And lastly, it is wise to be intentional when one has a purpose to adhere to.

Organizations stand to benefit from social capital in numerous ways. While social capital will happen without us consciously thinking about it, a purposeful approach can only harness the true potential lurking within the organization.

***But as it is said,
social capital
is the glue that
holds societies
together, social
capital is also the
glue that holds
the organization
together.***

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Revealing the Informal Organization: A case study of using ONA for leveraging groups of personal interactions towards Organizational Success

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To cite this article:

Ruhi, A., 2022. Revealing the Informal Organization: A Case Study of using ONA for leveraging groups of personal interactions towards Organizational Success. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.17-23

Please feel free to reach out to OD Alternatives and OrgLens if you are interested in exploring this topic as an individual or for your organization.

Revealing the Informal Organization: A case study of using ONA for leveraging groups of personal interactions towards Organizational Success

Asmath Ruhi

Beyond the formal roles and relationships, there lies an informal structure, which is a natural outgrowth of the de jure structure of any organization. Its existence is inevitable, and inseparable from the formal organization, each affecting the other in many ways. An undeniably powerful social network, that goes beyond the norms of official authority, lies behind the organization chart. This emerges as, apart from work-related conversations, individuals interact with one another to fulfil their socio-psychological and affiliation needs. These ties have a direct impact on both individual and organizational performance, productivity and activities. An informal organization network which complements the formal organization can make the achievement of extraordinary goals, competitive advantage, and stellar performance possible. Similarly, an unfavourable departure from the formal process can create opposition, hurdles, and costs for the company.

Although it is much publicized how managers should leverage the informal organization for achieving organizational goals and objectives, not much importance has been given to meaningful and quantitative ways of actually identifying this shadow structure. How can you improve something if you cannot identify or measure it?

Organization Network Analysis (ONA), also known as Relational People Analytics, makes this possible, by mapping out the relations between employees in organizations to reveal the informal relationship networks and uncover hidden patterns and formations previously unknown to managers. These informal networks are analogous to the nervous system of an organization, showing

how people react to different stimuli, and thereby better enabling managers to fully comprehend the situation on the ground and reconfigure systems to achieve company goals and objectives. It allows managers to tap into an important, often overlooked aspect of Social Capital in their organizations.

Informal Groups in Organizations

What is interesting is that just as the formal organization is made up of well-defined functions, roles, and hierarchies, the informal organization too has group formation. Informal groups or communities are formed as a result of trust, friendship, proximity, or similarity in certain aspects.

“Groups exist, they are inevitable and ubiquitous, they mobilise powerful forces having profound effects upon individuals; these effects may be good or bad, and through a knowledge of group dynamics there lies the possibility of maximising their good value” (Champoux, 2011).

Organization Network Analysis gives insights at an organization, group, and individual level. Research shows that social capital can be identified at any level of analysis, right from an individual level to the largest units like nations (Claridge, 2018). An organizational level analysis gives a big picture or macro insight, whereas an individual level analysis gives a micro or granular insight. Taking action or driving a change initiative on the basis of these two might be too broad or narrow of an approach. A group level analysis adopts a mesoscopic lens towards understanding the network of relationships of employees, allowing the managers

to take an effective and efficient approach to attain their goals, in a much faster and targeted manner. In the coming pages, we will illustrate how identifying informal groups/communities in 4 different organizations led to some interesting insights and discoveries. But first, we need to understand,

Why do companies need to identify their informal groups or communities?

Dense groups of personal interactions between employees play a key role in the way an organization functions, right from the prevailing culture, to the competitive advantage it has in the form of an innovative and agile workforce. These groups are essentially where the real social capital in an organization lies. Identifying and analyzing them paves way for leveraging the social capital, addressing issues, and framing strategies relating to Diversity and Inclusion, Leadership, Culture, and Engagement. According to Putnam (2000), social capital can be defined as:

“the features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”.

Informal Groups in the light of Social Capital

Informal groups formed as a result of personal interactions are an embodiment of the different dimensions of social capital. A popular framework for analysis at a group level is the distinction between structural, cognitive, and relational social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The actual network of relationships or ties between group members reflects the structural dimension of social capital, the shared understanding between them reflects the cognitive dimension and the trustworthiness and reciprocal relations reflect the relational dimension. Another perspective looks at social capital as bonding and bridging social capital (Claridge, 2004). The close relations within informal groups show the bonding social capital and the interactions between different groups show the bridging social capital. Organizations need to have a balance of both.

Informal Groups in the light of Culture

Although organizations may have a dominant culture, it is not necessarily consistent across all parts. Subcultures exist within companies, arising from the experiences and values of group members. Identifying informal groups helps

members. Identifying informal groups helps unearth these subcultures and countercultures if any. Pairing the contextual understanding of the organization with these groups would enable a manager to identify specific pain points and make necessary interventions.

Informal Groups in the light of Engagement

The formation of groups based on trust, common grounds, and friendship implies social cohesion among members. This means that they have bonding social capital, acting as a glue in holding them together, making them socially embedded. According to the social embeddedness theory, a cohesive group may induce more supportive interpersonal relationships, which provide tangible and emotional support, thereby leading to higher levels of well-being (Momtaz et al., 2014). The levels of engagement of certain members of the group will most likely spread to other members as well. This is because people in groups identify with other members, making it a part of their social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This identification motivates members to adopt behaviors and attitudes that reflect the values and beliefs of the group (Eun-Suk et al., 2015).

Informal Groups in the light of D&I

Informal groups will reveal if the current diversity is a mere representation, or if the workplace is actually inclusive. Employees who are a minority may share their experiences and challenges with one another, resulting in an informal group. Although the formal structure may look inclusive upfront, they might not get support from the majority around them. This may result in two things – either they flock with others similar to them, even if it is in other parts of the network. And if that doesn't happen, they may be completely left out of the personal conversations and appear as isolated outside the groups of the organization. Such a situation impacts employee engagement and turnover levels.

Informal Groups in the light of Leadership

Leadership is popularly connotated with influence, power, and authority. But in reality, they may not be the actual people influencing the behaviors and direction of the employees! No doubt the formal structure allows power to be vested with top executives, but the real power to move people may be with individuals who hold no such position. Identifying Informal groups also reveals the true leaders or influencers who have a high emotional

connection with an impact on people. This allows for a company to truly leverage its relational social capital and achieve organization-wide goals requiring the cooperation of the employees quickly and with ease.

Identifying groups of personal interactions: An ONA case study

Data Collection:

To practically demonstrate the concepts mentioned earlier, an organization network analysis was conducted on 4 companies of varying sizes belonging to different industries. The relational data of employees (how employees connect to one another for various reasons) was collected by administering an ONA survey. For the purpose of this study, only the questions relating to the personal connections of employees and NPS were considered. They are:

- “In the last 6 months, whom all have you reached out to share personal challenges and aspirations?” – this signifies **trust**
- “In the last 6 months, whom all have you reached out to know “What is going on in the organization?”” – this signifies **informal conversations**, even though it relates to work
- “In the last 6 months, whom all have you reached out to feel energized?” – this signifies **friendship**
- “On a scale of 1 to 10, how much would you advocate your organization as an Employer or Service Provider?” – this is used to gauge **satisfaction and loyalty**

Organization	Industry	Sample Size	Survey Response Rate
A	EdTech	163	97%
B	Banking	310	90%
C	Real Estate	540	79%
D	Vertical Transportation	1062	86%

Table 1. Summary of ONA Sample

For an ONA study to be meaningful, a response rate of ~80% is required.

Analysis

Networks or sociograms of employees were created, where each connection between

employees represented trust, energy, or awareness ties, indicating personal interactions between them (Bastian, et al., 2009). The dots represent the employees in a given organization, and the lines between them represent the personal connections between them. The thicker the lines, the greater the level of personal connect. A network analysis algorithm was then used to identify the naturally occurring, organic groups/communities in these organizations, and the strength of this group formation (Hagberg, et al., 2008). A group or community comprises employees closer to one another compared to other employees in the organization. The color of the dots corresponds to the community/informal group to which they belong. These groups are formed by individuals such that the members within a group interact with each other more than those outside the group (Bedi & Sharma, 2016). Overlaying demographic variables and employee data like gender, tenure, department, hierarchy levels, location, NPS (Net Promoter Score), and performance ratings, with the identified groups/communities, gave insights into the informal organization of these companies. The actual influencers/informal leaders of these groups were also identified (people with whom the group has the greatest personal connect, and who are also connected to others high on this aspect).

Organization	Number of Informal Groups/Communities	% of Total Employees in Informal Groups (out of sample size)	Strength of Group Formation
A	8	96%	0.56
B	10	93%	0.67
C	10	89%	0.60
D	16	88%	0.63

Table 2. Summary of the basic results of the ONA analysis

The percentage of total employees in informal groups shows that people who didn’t respond to the survey were also included in the groups, as their colleagues mentioned their names for personal interactions.

The strength of formation is a measure that shows how dense interactions are within groups as

opposed to between groups. It ranges from -0.5 to 1, a higher value indicating denser interactions within the groups.

Insights

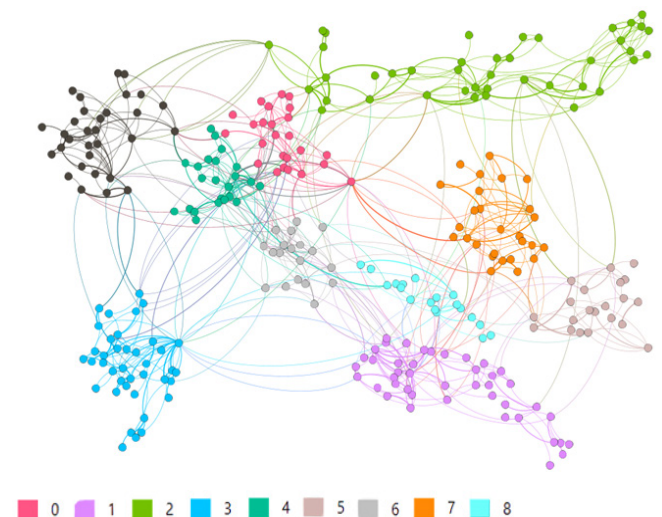
Analysing the informal groups of these organizations led to the following insights:

Organization A



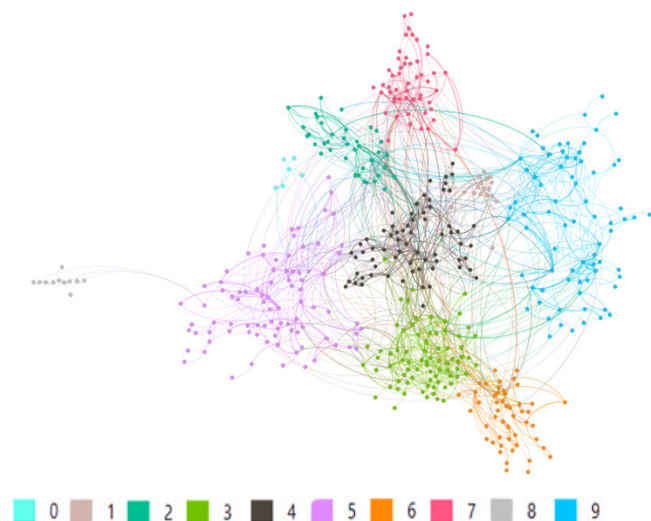
- For a small organization, there seems to be lesser social cohesion within informal groups and the strength of group formation is relatively low. There is relatively lesser bonding social capital compared to the other organizations.
- Most groups are formed between people from the same department and resemble the formal organizational structure
- There is little cross-functional interaction, despite having only one office space
- Individuals in Tech functions like engineering and product constituted the largest informal group, had a relatively high average NPS, and greater degree of personal interactions in terms of their size
- 5/8 of the informal influencers were middle managers or lower hierarchy employees, and 2 of them had low NPS (less likely to advocate for their organization). This sentiment can be seen spreading to other members of their informal groups. This proves that middle managers are in fact, the connecting leaders, playing a crucial role in building the bonding, linking & bridging social capital in the organization. They hold the true power of influence over the employees.

Organization B



- This organization has the highest cohesiveness within informal groups, and lesser connect between these groups.
- Top Performers were in informal groups of their own (Communities 1,2 and 7). These groups consisted of ~50% of the people in the organization who were given “exceeds expectations” and “far exceeds expectations” performance ratings. What’s interesting is that these top performers have a close personal connection with themselves
- Communities 3 and 9 have people from the same departments and have similar tenures, but different locations. However, 46% of the individuals in Community 3 hold VP-level positions and have the greatest locational diversity compared to other groups, along with a high average NPS. Community 9 has relatively lesser NPS than Community 3, composed mostly of middle management. Structurally equivalent individuals have close personal connections, in spite of being geographically distributed
- Community 0, comprising members from a department in one particular state, has the lowest average NPS, and mostly female employees
- It was observed that employees who have close personal connections with their reporting managers share the same sentiment toward the organization as them
- The Top Leadership was present in all of the 10 informal groups in this organization

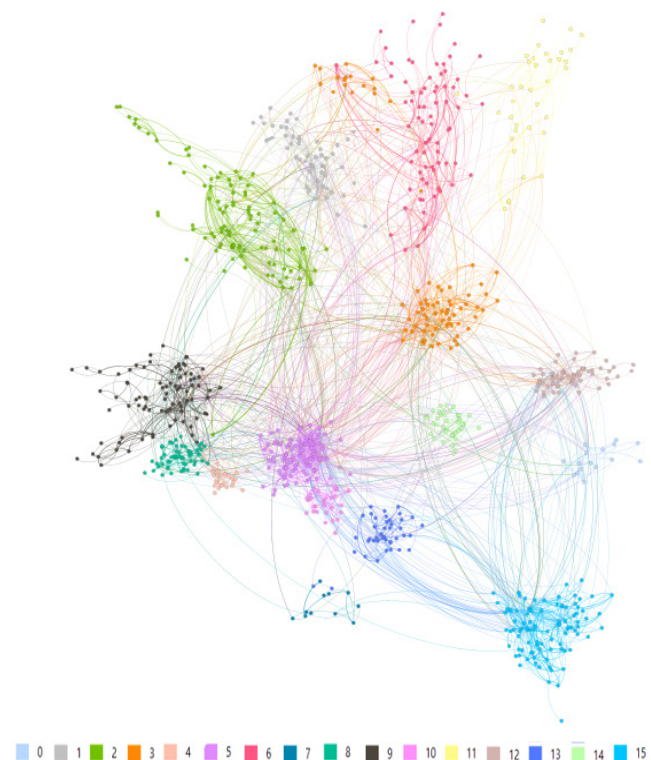
Organization C



- Community 0 and 1, although small in size, have the lowest average NPS compared to other groups. They have cross-departmental and locational connections and a high level of cohesiveness among themselves. The fact that one group has only lower-level employees, and the other group has individuals from top leadership, may be of concern.
- Community 6 is made up of individuals with a greater-than-average age, tenure, and NPS. Although these individuals mostly belong to one department, they are spread across 18 different locations spanning 4 regions and form a sizeable informal group in the organization
- Community 5 is the biggest informal community. Interestingly, 38% of the low-performing employees are present in this group.

The majority of informal group influencers belong to top leadership.

Organization D



- Community 10 is comprised mostly of lateral recruitment employees, who have embedded well into the informal organization quite early into their tenure
- Community 1 is made up of the most tenured employees, having a high average NPS, and great departmental and locational diversity. They do not occupy very senior roles and are mostly middle managers.
- Community 5 is the largest informal group in the organization, having close personal connections across 10 different departments, and 19 different locations, spanning 9 regions. It has employees from all hierarchy levels and a high NPS. However, there is a small subgroup within this community, where an unfavorable sentiment is spreading from certain managers to their surroundings
- Although most informal group influencers are from the top leadership, Communities 0, 11 and 12 have influencers from lower hierarchy levels

How to leverage these findings?

Employees forming dense groups of personal interactions are indicative of psychological safety, which plays a significant role in workplace effectiveness and team learning. Ideally, there

should be a healthy alignment of the formal organizational structure and informal groups. Identifying top influencers in the personal/informal communities makes the possible achievement of goals, impossible to achieve otherwise, and increases efficiency. They can help in the quick and effective implementation of organizational initiatives, as they are the ones given authority by the group members. Informal groups having low advocacy influencers and less satisfied members may be indicative of a common difficulty faced by them. This could be work overload, lack of inclusivity, hurdles in voicing their opinions, or any other reason. By identifying employees of high tenure and experience and high influence in the communities, we can leverage them for the transfer of valuable tacit knowledge to their community members, to enhance the collective knowledge of the community. **This is because much of the social capital is embedded within dense networks of organizations and has an important influence on intellectual capital.** By intellectual capital we mean, the knowledge capability of a social group collectively, not individually (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). People would readily learn from people they already trust, and managers can use this for building intellectual capital to gain a competitive advantage. Informal groups in organizations encourage managers to prepare, plan, organize, and control in a more professional fashion. Managers who comprehend the power of the informal organization recognize that it is a check and balance on their use of control and authority (Daniel, 2018). The relational dimension of social capital (respect, friendship, trust, etc.) influences an employee's behavior greatly. Two people with similar positions may have different actions on the basis of their personal and emotional attachment to their network. Dense communities of trust and personal connection with the right Influencer reduce the probability of managerial opportunism and the need for a costly monitoring process. On the other hand, high-trust communities with an unfavorable influencer help in identifying conflicts of interest in the workplace.

To conclude, the informal organization, when identified and viewed from a constructive lens, can be a strategic tool to achieve organizational goals, streamline initiatives and drive change positively without resistance. Communication

spreads much faster in the informal grapevine and is also a great way to solicit honest feedback from employees. Organizational network analysis provides a quantitative and proactive approach to using the informal organization towards overall organizational success.

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Dr. Jacob L. Moreno and His Impact on Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Prof. Prasad Balkundi and V. Kothapalli



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To cite this article :

Balkundi, P. and Kothapalli.V. 2022. *Dr. Jacob L. Moreno and his Impact on Social Network Analysis (SNA)*. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.24-26

Dr. Jacob L. Moreno and His Impact on Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Prof. Prasad Balkundi and V. Kothapalli

“Mankind needs to be educated; education means more than intellectual enlightenment, it isn’t emotional enlightenment, it isn’t insight only, it is a matter of the deficiency of spontaneity to use the available intelligence and to mobilize his enlightened emotions... it requires action research and action methods continuously modified and sharpened to meet new inner and outer environments.” (Moreno, 1947, p. 11)

The situation

It was 1932 and the situation at a juvenile penitentiary in New York State for teenage girls was bad as 14 girls ran away from jail within a two-week period. This was 30 times more than the typical runaway numbers. In order to address this issue, a psychiatrist named Jacob Levy Moreno was commissioned to identify and reduce the runaway rate. Very quickly Moreno realized that this toxicity was not due to mental issues but because of social issues and interpersonal conflict between the girls. He also noted that the girls who ran away all were socially connected to each other. This, in contemporary terms, was a social contagion such that friends of girls who ran away were more likely to run away. During his interactions with the girls, he developed an intervention based on whom they preferred to have lunch with who and who they disliked. Based on their mutual attractions, he reassigned both the cottages the girls lived in and the workspace they worked in such that girls who mutually liked each other were together. And girls who disliked each other were physically kept far apart. The intervention worked! The number of runaways declined to 6 over an 8-month period!

This was one of the first network-based interventions that have been recorded.

However, the foundation that Moreno laid out

mathematics behind social network analysis and Organizational Behavior

The math behind SNA

Though it is typically not known, but Moreno did influence several of Kurt Lewin’s students. Kurt Lewin or the Father of Organizational Development had interacted with Moreno and so had his students including Bavelas who went on to pioneer the area of social networks but from an experimental paradigm. So, for example, even in today’s Organizational Behavior textbooks there are descriptions of different communication networks such as all-channel networks, chain networks etc. These were the primary network structures that Bavelas and his student Levitt used in their seminal work on networks which formed the basis of contemporary math behind SNA. Using the experimental approach, they assigned students to different network structures and then gave all the groups the same problems. Then they measured different outcomes such as leader emergence, member satisfaction, and effectiveness. They formulated and discussed the implications of both node-level and network-level properties such as centrality and centralization for these different outcomes.

These network measures are used 6 decades later even today when describing the networks and explaining their impact on different organizationally relevant outcomes such as job satisfaction and team performance.

The influence of Moreno on mainstream OB

The popularity of the network approach (it was called sociometry then) developed by Moreno had a deep impact on the study and understanding of teams and leadership in organizations. For example, we think of leadership theories such as the Ohio State leadership studies spearheaded by Ralph Stogdill that highlighted the significance of leaders and their behaviors. However, what is less known is that the sociometric approach was frequently used by Stogdill and his colleagues not just to study leadership and teams in the US military, but to even predict their combat effectiveness and soldier morale. For example, Hemphill used the sociometric approach to evaluate which network structure among bomber crews had the highest bombing highest accuracy. What we see here is the application and value of applying the network approach, not in any general organizational setting but in the most stressful and dangerous work contexts with life-or-death consequences.

The one area that Moreno focused on but was neglected by other scholars was the negative relationship. It was after several decades, that Joe Labianca and his colleagues brought the significance of negative relationships and ties back to the front burner.

So why did our understanding and usage of social networks as an organizational paradigm decline? Very briefly there are two possible reasons. First, the champion of the network/ sociometric approach declined and eventually died. Moreno was a controversial figure who had a polarizing effect on scholars and even though there was a lot of interest in social networks research initially, researchers slowly moved from the network approach as they preferred to avoid Moreno. Second, given the complexity of the math, it was difficult to scale from the small network size lab-based studies conducted by Bavelas, to large networks with fifty or more network nodes. Other than simple measures such as incoming or outgoing ties, more complex measures such as betweenness and closeness centrality were difficult to measure in larger networks. Finally, the emergence of easier alternatives such as Likert scales with corresponding statistical analyses

such as factor analyses allowed researchers to shift away from the network approach to the psychometric approach. For example, Fred Fiedler, the pioneer behind the contingency approach to leadership initially used the network approach to measure leader-member relations. But, later on, he too abandoned the network approach and instead used the psychometric approach to measure group atmosphere using a Likert scale. This shift pushed the network approach to the backburners till the emergence of computers and more user-friendly network software such as Ucinet.

Conclusion

The work of Jacob Moreno has influenced our contemporary usage of social network research and methodology. In fact, as we go from a remote to a hybrid work environment, the shift in our work relationships can be understood using the sociometric approach developed by Moreno. His idea of using our relationships to develop interventions that have a positive impact on our work lives is more than relevant today.

This was written by Prof. Prasad Balkundi and Vinod Kumar Kothapalli. Special thanks to Ved Balkundi for his help.

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You cannot teach a fish to fly, but you can apply models for solutioning challenges

Shibani Priyadarshini



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To cite this article :

Priyadarshini, S. You cannot teach a fish to fly, but you can apply models for solving challenges.
OD Quarterly, 3, pp.27-31

You cannot teach a fish to fly, but you can apply models for solutioning challenges

Shibani Priyadarshini

We use models or frameworks to make sense of the world we live in. There are models or frameworks that can be used to understand and improve organisations health and effectiveness. In a reality that is as intricate as ours, we need organizational models to simplify concepts, make connections between ideas and most importantly separate the wheat from the chaff.

Additionally, if the models represent a variety of theories, disciplines and perspectives, they can be applied together to tackle problems in a much more holistic and three-dimensional manner. A single model is never perfect, and it is only by combining different models, that we create magic. After all, stars shine best when two atoms of hydrogen combine to make helium!

Below are summaries of a few models that I have found deeply interesting and insightful, and how they can be applied to different Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) practices. You might find other applications in your context. This is a very small cross-section of the multitude of models that are out there and brewing them together gives you a powerful framework to make sound decisions.

And if the models don't work for you at first, you can always have cake 🍰.



The Pareto Principle

The first one called the Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, was one of Vilfredo Pareto's most noteworthy theories, which illustrated that 80% of outcomes often come from 20% of the related inputs.

Pareto was an Italian economist in the 19th and 20th centuries. The legend goes that one day in his garden, Pareto noticed that only around 20% of his pea plants generated 80% of the pea pods. Extending the observation beyond his vegetable patch, Pareto also noticed that the wealth distribution in Italy followed a similar principle and almost 20% of the people in Italy owned approx. 80% of the land.

These observations led him to formulate the idea that a small number of key variables have a larger impact on the final result than all other variables combined. It is a brilliant technique in decision-making that can help you select a limited number of tasks, which in turn will produce a significant overall effect.

Firstly, out with the difficult one!

We are all invariably drawn to tasks and activities that don't have much real impact. Unimportant and insignificant tasks usually have a way of getting in the way (pun intended) of more meaningful tasks. In case you are wondering, there is a simple reason why this happens. Impactful tasks are often much harder to execute in comparison to non-impactful tasks. Which is why we are instinctively drawn to the latter. For example:

- It is much easier to spruce a presentation rather than meet 15 different stakeholders
- It is much easier to brainstorm, discuss or debate different approaches rather than to

choose one and implement it extensively

- It is a cakewalk to answer e-mails, chat with colleagues, and give in to other distractions than do some deep work

Simply put, it is harder to prioritize because the most important tasks are the most difficult and challenging ones to execute. They demand every ounce of your creativity, focus, diligence and determination. They are not as easy as pie.

When you clock out of work and kick your feet up with some hot coffee and a Netflix queue, you are not even aware of how low-impact tasks have stolen your day. This is because frustrating as it might sound, we are spinning wheels most of the time. The impact of unimportant tasks is quite minimal in terms of progression of a career, advancement or addition of relevant skills. Though exasperating to hear, this reality-checking could help pull you out of a rabbit hole that you might have slid down.

At this point, it can be immensely relieving to know, this is where the Pareto principle plays a significantly powerful role. To start with, consider what outcome you want to create by applying this uniquely disruptive principle.

For example, when it comes to the arena of D & I hiring, by identifying which D & I sourcing channels contribute to the most hires in your organization, you can focus your maximum hiring efforts on them. By doing an analysis of the diversity hires sourced through multiple channels, one can identify the specific source contributing to maximum hires. For instance, if your analysis shows that referrals are the strongest source, then it would make all the sense in the world to focus on sourcing the diversity candidates through referrals. Incentivizing referrals and paying additional referral payouts for diversity hiring would be a given.

Applying the Pareto principle can lead to a laser-sharp focus on efforts and result in enhanced productivity.

To illustrate further, knowing that 80% of hires are made by 20% of your recruiters indicates where you should focus your attention and

resources. Identifying high-performing recruiters and boosting their skills through different interventions can be one of the ways to up the game.

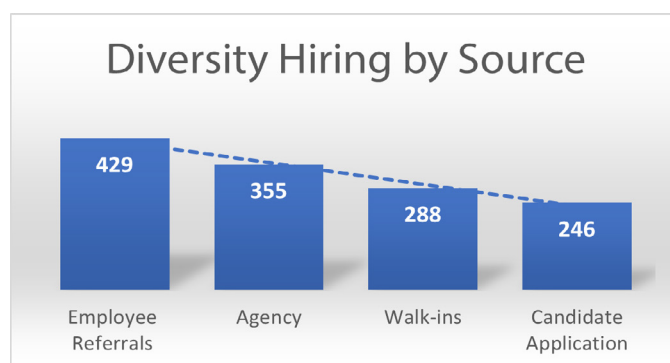
Similar to the quintessential key, the Pareto principle can have an astonishing power to change an otherwise seemingly difficult situation.

So, what do you do? Knock everyone's socks off and ask:

- Which 20 % of initiatives will really be responsible for 80% of inclusion success?
- Which 20% of your Leaders are responsible for the mass of diversity hiring?
- With what behaviours that you engage in 20% of the time, will you increase 80% of chances of hiring a diverse candidate?

Recognizing and focusing such leads and increasing efforts on them will yield astonishing results. Essentially identifying 20% of initiatives that generate 80% of your success, can be an ace up your sleeve in different aspects of life; especially when you are crunched on resources.

However, at times the answer to a given riddle is not always right in front of you. And it might be occasionally frustrating while trying to identify those two or three major disruptors. Nevertheless, the idea is to scratch the surface and peel the proverbial onion to examine multiple scenarios. You can then cherry-pick the most beneficial opportunities available.



A Pareto diagram can also often help:

- Analyze different contexts and establish the most important ones
- Analyze specific components of a defined problem

- Analyze data when not achieving desired results

It is important to highlight here, that a key element to remember is that the Pareto principle is not sacrosanct.

Natural variations of the Pareto principle can occur. For example, 27% of initiatives might be responsible for 59% of hires. Furthermore, one could be tempted to make it too simplistic for one's good. Meaning people often assume that they should focus all their attention on the 20% and completely forget about the rest.

To elaborate, while you might focus most of your attention on the 20% of Leaders who support your inclusion efforts most, you should not abandon the other 80%.

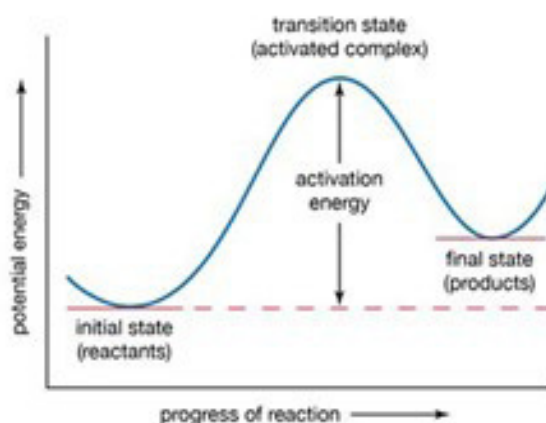
The principle does not mean one starts to altogether turn a blind eye to the other 80%. The idea is to trim your sails, and not neglect them downright. You still need to steer the boat!

Eventually, the objective of the Pareto principle is to prioritize tasks by deciding where to focus your attention on. Assigning resources smartly can be one of your biggest contributors to change success and change effectiveness.

Catalyst

The next concept is of a catalyst that has its origins in chemistry. It is a substance that can accelerate a chemical reaction without itself being consumed in the reaction. Catalysts increase the rate of reaction essentially making the whole process considerably easier and more efficient.

We all have an intuitive understanding of how a catalyst works. For example, we know that lighting a match to a log of wood won't start a fire while adding fuel can be explosive. But there is a sweet spot somewhere in between, which is just the right amount of heat required to get the fire going. This initial heat is the catalysis required for the reaction. Likewise in cooking, bakers add vitamin C as a catalyst to increase gluten formation. Need I say more? You get the drift.



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By the same token, we can apply approaches at work to design solutions that reduce resistance and overcome existing inertia. This is illustrated best in diversity programs. Barring a few adequate developments, it is hardly surprising that most diversity programs are not dramatically increasing diversity.

A case in point is diversity training. We have long relied on diversity training to reduce biases. Though well-intentioned, do people who undergo diversity training eventually shed their biases? In fact, years after establishing mandatory diversity programs, the direct correlation of training with an increase in the proportion of diversity remains to be evidenced.

The sheer reason being tools such as mandatory programs, play out as coercion and incite reactions of resistance in people rather than help them adopt a pro-diversity approach. Try to coerce me to do a certain task, and I will not conform, just to prove that I rule the roost. Instead, make it a point to involve me in carving out a solution, and I will be much more accommodating.

Building on this idea, it is more effective to design a solution that does not focus on control, but rather engages the people we are trying to influence (managers in this case) in being part of the answer. It is much more impactful to build a consensus by directly involving managers in solving the problem. Involving people also evolves around "cognitive dissonance". We experience "cognitive dissonance", whenever there is a disconnect between our inner values and our external behaviours. In case of such dissonance, there is a strong tendency within us to correct that dichotomy by either changing

Likewise, when managers are actively associated with boosting diversity in their companies, they react similarly and start to think of themselves as diversity ambassadors. This behaviour can be observed clearly when managers are involved in visiting campuses to hire women. They shed their initial reservations about diversity hiring (assuming they had some) and take the responsibility very seriously. Mentoring is another example of eliminating this dissonance. Mentors champion their proteges because they believe the latter is deserving since they are mentoring them. They overcome their cognitive dissonance by being invested in their proteges' success. Cognitive dissonance ensures managers who were earlier non-committal become pledged in their allegiance. They feel very driven and passionate and do not hesitate to move mountains to ensure we bring more women into the company.

Another form of catalyst that can be utilized to reduce biases is to consciously create teams that allow people representatives from different roles, functions and levels to work with managers on various projects. Such teams enhance contact between different sections of people and blur ethnic or gender lines. Working together breaks the barriers of gender and allows a much more blended culture to simmer.

The same principle can be experienced with rotational management trainee programs, that ensure the trainees work with different departments. Deliberately designing a program that allows trainees to work with people from diverse groups exposes them to different functions and allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the company. Eventually, the more latent benefit of this approach is that it enables department heads and leaders to work with a wider variety of talent, creating a positive impact around inclusion. The leaders who operate with such diverse groups develop a less biased approach as they realize they can vouch for someone whose performance they themselves have scrutinized and evaluated.

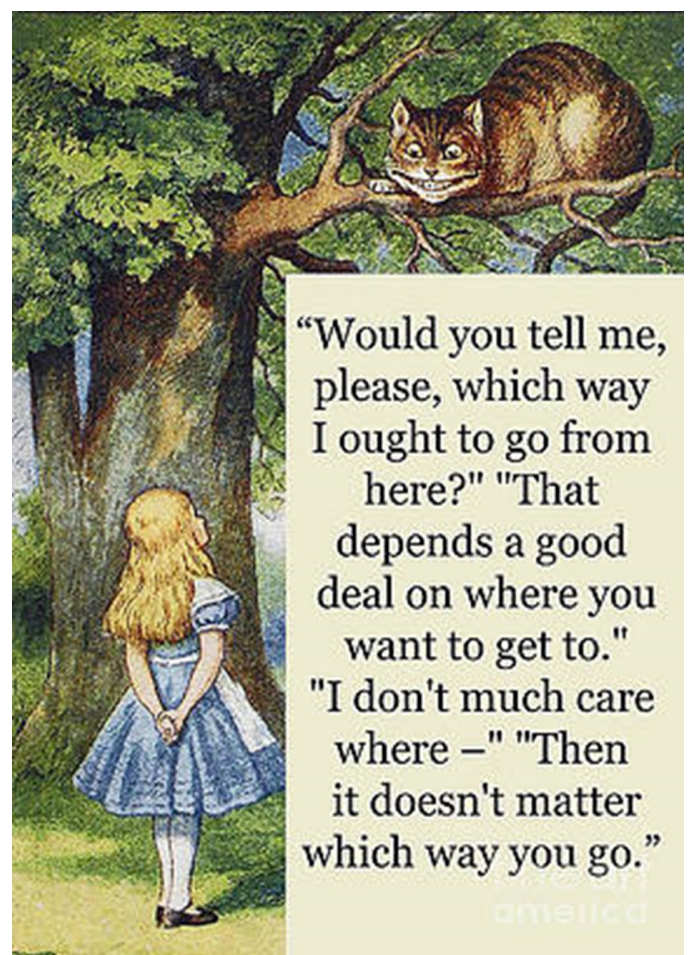
Lastly, I believe, these shifts in thinking and the application of new ways requires deep and profound changes within us. It requires dispelling inherent myopia, experimenting with fresh practices, and unlearning old habits. Dyed in the

wool perspectives never get us anywhere.

It is not a surprise, then, that change serves us a few lessons (albeit with some tough love!) and forces us to reconsider some of our deeply ingrained behaviours. It makes us realize that the key question is not if we need to consciously adopt forces that drive behaviour shifts, but when and how.

You have to change how you think before you can change what you do; to ultimately get anywhere with anything. The Cheshire cat wasn't kidding when Alice asked

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" and the cat quipped, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to".



Women in Organizations: A study of their Inner Journeys through Iconology

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To cite this article :

Vasudevan, P. Women in Organizations: A study of their Inner Journeys through Iconology. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.32-36

Women in Organizations: A study of their Inner Journeys through Iconology

Priya Vasudevan

The common view of an organization through the lens of the employee is that of the workplace or the source of livelihood, while promoters see organizations as a means to make profits, impact society, or simply leave a legacy. Other stakeholders who are neither employees nor shareholders, consider organizations as soulless mechanistic entities – corporations that are feared more than loved or respected. While all of these views have some amount of validity in them, none of them is comprehensive, if that can be ever achieved. However, there are some other life-giving views of organizations as captured below:

- Organizations are places where most employees spend most of their waking time (even in hybrid or remote environments – they are doing so virtually). Organizations pulsate with intentional human energy.
- Just as in homes/ families – workplace culture and colleagues constantly shape who we are as people and whom we are becoming.
- It is a medium through which most employees realize the dreams they had for their lives – a certain lifestyle, travelling to far-off places, having the ability to support a family, making friends for life, carrying a well-groomed and coiffured look, or achieving social status and respect.

Men and women participate in the corporate cauldron over many years and journeyed through life-enriching and being enriched. While doing so, they have displayed their masculine (animus) or feminine (anima) irrespective of their gender. These energies impact the direction of the organization – thus enabling a cycle that feeds off each other. The management literature for many years has devoted much page space and mind space to the masculine side of leadership

and organizations, almost making it as the means to success. Women in organizations and to some extent the feminine has been undermined and have remained in the shadows. Women leaders who went on to become successful attributed their success to masculine traits and also described their success in such terms.

I have been a curious observer of gender, perception of gender (by self and others), and the shaping of the inner journeys of women in organizations. I have been also fascinated by the stories of Gods, Goddesses, and their retinue as passed on across generations in India through 'shruti' and 'smriti'.

As an HR Leader for many years, it gave me the opportunity to have heartfelt conversations with women of all ages, across sectors, at different phases of the employee lifecycle and at various levels of the organization. While conversations could have been of any topic – a common thread seems to be – of 'a woman connecting with a woman' – sometimes as a friend or sometimes as somebody in power. Either of these stances elicited trust – where women offered me the privilege of hearing their life stories and struggles. More importantly, they described how they saw it and what they felt about it. Mythology and gender studies intersected in the tapestry of these conversations – giving birth to archetypes that offer a framework that attracts their being, inner realities, fantasies, hopes, and dreams.

An archetype, according to Carl Gustav Jung is "an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time".

Janaki/ Sita – the consort of Rama and a vibrant and dominant character of Ramayana personifies the obedient daughter, dutiful wife, and doting

mother. Yet, her life has a sad ending when she ends her worldly life by plunging into the chasmic embrace of Bhoomi Devi or Mother Earth. Rama and Sita are familiar characters across people professing different faiths. Women who resonate with this archetype abound in organizations. Their educational achievements speak of potential – while the education gives them the keys to corporate careers, they are anchored in the social roles of a woman and often subjugate corporate achievements to their families' needs. Till they are single, the women retain a sense of strong career direction. They are disciplined and conscientious employees who are cited by their managers and leaders as good team players and contributors. The managers don't feel threatened by these women employees and instead, they often play the role of 'work fathers' or 'rescuers'. As marriage and motherhood milestones are crossed, these women choose not to endure the tension of a tough balance. They take a sabbatical or if for financial reasons are unable to do so, they slow their career refusing to take on higher or larger responsibilities. Family life gives them great satisfaction and solace, however, there is always a nagging question of 'what if'. Sometimes, the 'what if' – what if I had continued, what if I had taken that promotion, what if I had chosen to balance my career and family more aggressively? – leaves them with little peace. They choose to rejuvenate or rejoin careers sometimes to be only disillusioned by how much the corporates have changed or how their earlier peers are so ahead and catchup seems a wild idea. Sometimes for financial or emotional reasons, these women come back to their careers, but end up leading unsatisfied work lives if they do not make peace with their inner worlds.

Lakshmi – the prosperity-endowing goddess of wealth, proudly perched amongst the Hindu pantheon is the goddess of wealth, adorned in gold ornaments with gold coins flowing through her giving hands. Though the Goddess is worshipped and invoked in traditional poojas, we in India, have a strange social relationship with money – the gift of Lakshmi. It is almost a continuum where at one end money is sought after and conserved ceaselessly and at the other end, it is seen as cause of evil with the rich often associated with exploitation. Many young Indians especially those growing up in a pre-dependent

India, experienced a dichotomous relationship with money. Women unconsciously carried the prudence in finances – perhaps picking up the way in which their mothers controlled and creatively used the home budgets every month. Young women who got into careers in early the 90s' – inherited this thirst for economic independence from their mothers who were largely homemakers who perhaps instilled the value of financial independence into their daughters so that they 'stand on their own feet'.

Children of erstwhile middle-class parents, they saw education as a key to a bright future – thus toiling away and honing their academic selves gave them hope. Unwavering education and then career focus was sharpened by doting parents who removed every obstacle that stood between them and academics. They further pursued professional careers entering into the citadels of corporate at mid-manager or highly sought-after individual contributor roles. Often, the father retired from service and the young women naturally took up the role of breadwinner. Organizational life brought the opportunity to interact with men and women of varied socio-economic strata – thus increasing chances of choosing their own life partner. As careers advanced, so did the opportunity to travel and see the world – bringing with it openness and aspiration to adopt and adapt to different lifestyles. In this journey, many women shied away from agreeing to 'marriageable partners' that their parents identified – choosing to hold on for a match according to their own sensibilities. Sometimes the choices were limited due to age, income or status, and many women chose to remain single and happy. Those who did marry continued to pursue career milestones alongside their partners who did the same. However, tussles on gendered roles at home showed up leading to distance and drift between spouses. This tension rolled over to the workplace. Women who resonate with this archetype experience ambiguity at work, oscillating between their masculine and feminine sides – especially during conflicts. Several women prioritized staying with their independent selves and pursuing careers. Some even made the liberating decision of separating from their spouses if the marriage became a misery. They continued to be effective leaders by corporate terms with a finetuned competitiveness intrinsic by now. Blessed with abundance and a spirit to match, they

often wondered 'what did I finally achieve?' later in their careers.

Durga – is the warrior goddess, the slayer of demons, who is invoked to protect. She wears deep red, has eight hands holding various weapons and rides the fearsome lion. In our collective, she holds a place of fear and awe. Durga came into being to slay the shape-shifting demon Mahishasura whom she vanquishes in a battle – however she completed her task and then quietly leaves the battle, not pausing for any trophies or adulation. Thus, the warrior in Durga is balanced by serene and calm.

Women who associate with this archetype are often born into households with reasonably strong gender roles. Patriarchy favoring brothers over herself is part of her daily life and she witnesses both parents colluding with patriarchy or benevolent patriarchy. The inequity brings out a vocal expression and anger stoking the rebel spirit. These young women get termed 'disobedient' or 'ziddi' in early childhood and unconsciously they hold on to these as their identities. As they enter the workforce, the women are seen as sharp in intellect and they equalize with authority with ease. They are unabashed with their ambition and start charting out the career path that they associate with power. She is sensitive to power dynamics and constantly holds and expands her role boundaries often with people in authority. The vanquishing or subjugation of authority using all means available to her brings a sense of accomplishment and calm. Corporates define leadership in masculine terms and this aggression and single-minded task focus that she brings to the table is often exalted and valued. Career progress and associated abundance are bestowed on these women. As life progresses, she marries – often choosing a mate of her choice and sometimes against her parents' advice. The power struggles manifest at home with spouse and kids often leading to subjugation or separation. She continues unwaveringly on what she feels is the right path conceding to none. At work, she climbs levels of leadership with ease and becomes admired but a more feared leader. Serenity and calmness find her when she reaches a point where there is no visible threat or competition. She savors her pinnacle but is often alienated and alone. Her inner world is accepting and even

detached from alienation

Shakti/ Adiparashakti – is an abstract goddess but she is described in several verses and literature. She is referred to as a Mool Prakriti – the primordial matter or energy of the universe. Shakti is the power or material energy of the Trimurtis – the creative force residing in Brahma, the preservative force of Vishnu and the destructive force of Shiva. Without Shakti, the trinity becomes inert. Shakti, the sacred feminine power complements the virya of the male Gods. Shakti is anashawara (the indestructible) and an all-pervasive power – independent of and yet at ease with the masculine. Shakti resides in several Shakti Peethams or temples of Shakti – 18 of them being prominent. They are energetic places of worship – personifications of the iconic goddess in her bounty, wisdom, and mystery.

Women who identify with this archetype are curious about their identity (as women) and also their macro identity (as human beings). Usually quiet, curious, and thoughtful – they receive the moniker of 'mature' beyond their age in their growing up years. They find themselves living on the fringe in their social settings – views and opinions very different from the expectations of women. At the same time, they are not considered rebels by society – from within the society, they modify several old definitions. In spite of the ethos of secularism and scientific temper, they recast their search for relatedness with the cosmos into a spiritual frame.

Their focus is on the unfolding of their human potential – and they find the purity and potency of existential self.

They are in search of union with a counterpart to create an integrated existence and discover their wholeness in relatedness and then unfold their spiritual being. The encounter with her counterpart frees the woman from her moorings in the social role. The masculine in the man holds the space for her to unfold and create. She accepts her definition of herself, experiences and owns her own qualities of magic and mystery – and thus is self-born.

In the corporate realm, such women are diligent, successful, and sensitive. They work in close collaboration with their teams, managers, and colleagues. By the dint of their work and person, they are truly admired and respected. They hold their rise lightly and usually don't evoke envy. Even in political organizations, they are seen as mediators or 'sensible' people. Their leaders seek their opinion and are often 'power behind the power' – only the power they hold is benign and positive. Women who reach this archetype take roles that are available or given – but very quickly they 'make' the roles central to their function or organization.

Goddesses can be also life milestones where women move from Janaki to Lakshmi, and then to Durga and eventually Shakti.

Sometimes the journey can take generations and multiple lifetimes.

While the above framework offers some distinction, very often they blend. Sometimes women find themselves moving from one archetype to the other in the same lifetime due to life circumstances.

Career Path- New Talent Currency

Gargi Banerjee GPHR, SPHRi



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To cite this article :

Banerjee, G. Career Path- New Talent Currency. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.37-40

Career Path- New Talent Currency

Gargi Banerjee

The Great Resignation was coined by Dr. Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at Texas A&M University. In May of 2021, Klotz shared the term in a Bloomberg interview to describe the decisions of millions of workers to quit their jobs during the pandemic.

For many months, the Great Resignation has dominated the news. But as a matter of fact, even if the trend sees a downward motion, talent professionals know that it will continue to impact the workplace for years to come. The balance of power has permanently shifted, giving employees more options and more leverage than ever before, and employers must do a better job of delivering what employees want or risk losing valuable talent to organizations that already are. The good news is that we can reverse this trend because we already know what employees need to stay in their organizations. In numerous surveys based across every sector, in organizations of every size, and in roles of all types and seniority levels, the answer is the same. Employees want both enriching and meaningful ways to develop and advance their careers.

Career advancement is one of the most important issues for employees, often ranking higher on the priority list than money, flexible scheduling, or work-life balance.

Career pathing enables employees to explore and visualize multiple career trajectories based on their knowledge, skills, abilities, interests, and career goals as well as the organization's talent needs. And when we empower people to freely explore their organization's opportunities and their own potential, we show them that we are committed to helping them be their best and most authentic professional selves, wherever that journey takes them.

Growth – Not Money is the New Talent Currency

According to research from IBM, employees are now prioritizing career advancement ahead of compensation. Similarly, research from Monster found that 86% of workers feel that their careers had stalled during the pandemic, and 29% of workers wanted to quit their job due to a lack of growth opportunities.

At a time when talent has never been more elusive, the most impactful thing talent leaders can do to position their organization ahead of the competition as an employer of choice—and there's no better way to support internal career mobility.

Also, various other research studies suggest that career pathing is important today and will remain so as millennials and Gen Z, the demographics that are even more focused on self-actualization, become the predominant generations in the workforce. Providing clear career paths for employees is an excellent way for organizations of all sizes to avoid turnover and retain their top talent.

Positive outcomes of Career Path



Engagement

Employees are more engaged when they believe that their employer supports their growth and when they are given tools to help them reach their career goals. Career pathing helps to maximize the potential of all employees through focused development.



Upskilling

A career development path provides employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance existing skills and acquire new skills and knowledge that can lead to new responsibilities, positions, and promotions.



Recruitment

Younger workers, especially Generation Y, are least interested in pay increases and more interested in learning new skills. They are more likely to value career pathing than any other generation, and that will factor into their decision-making around employment.



Agility

Career pathing can enhance and accelerate the organization's responsiveness by strengthening the bench, identifying, and redeploying talent in ways that not only support employee goals but also departmental and organizational objectives.



Talent Identification

Career pathing helps organizations identify employees who are interested in leadership roles and prepare them for the future with focused development plans.



Employer Brand

Offering career pathing is a way to differentiate an organization from competing employers and enhance its brand as an employer of choice. Career pathing sends a clear signal that an organization truly cares about its employees and is committed to investing in their long-term success.

Competency-based career pathing can seem intimidating to HR practitioners who are launching one for the first time, but it does not need to be. Focusing on an initial pilot project that addresses a specific business challenge and reflects the unique characteristics of the organization can help to keep the project manageable while optimizing its impact.

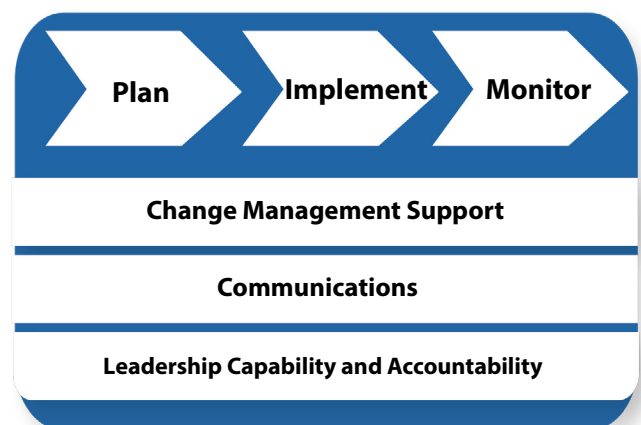
Following a proven process for launching a career pathing initiative will also smooth the path to success.

Here is an outline of the steps for planning and implementing the first initiative as well as monitoring and measuring its impact.

As an integral part of the strategic implementation, listing down a few important questions for the HR & business leaders is crucial. The leadership engagement should answer these questions:

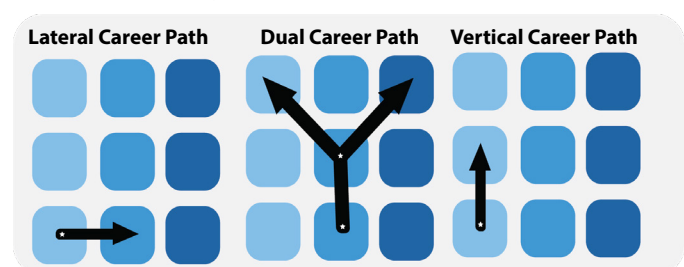
- Do you have an executive sponsor from the C-suite?
- Do your leaders share the same vision (executive sponsorship)?
- Is your leadership team aligned and supportive of this initiative?
- Are your leaders supportive of career mobility?
- Is this a priority? Does this initiative address a critical business challenge?

Career Path Mechanism



There are no right or wrong choices. The objective is to build a program that best serves your workplace realities and organizational culture.

Types of Career Paths



Successful competency-based career pathing involves careful planning, an intensive implementation process, and an ongoing commitment to measurement and iteration.

It involves both process changes and culture changes, and supporting this multidimensional change require coordination and diligence.

For the talent teams who are ready to take on the challenge, following these best practices will ensure that your initiative maintains momentum and stays on track.

Proven Best Practices



Build a Competency Foundation

The quality of the program depends upon the quality of the foundational inputs. Accurate, well-crafted competency profiles also provide a vital reference point during career conversations between managers and employees.



Engage Leaders

The foundational elements of career pathing are vitally important, but the program comes to life in the regular conversations that managers hold with employees to discuss performance, career aspirations, and development areas. Ensure that leaders are trained in coaching techniques so that they know how to initiate these conversations with employees. Without this piece of the puzzle, the most carefully constructed

career pathing program will not get off the ground.



Start Small

Starting small with a pilot project is always the best approach. Start by developing career pathing for a specific department or function, then test and validate the program. Once you've launched the pilot and measured your success, use the learning to inform the next, more ambitious stage in the process.



Iterate Over Time

For most organizations, career pathing is an iterative process that evolves over time, so it is best to prioritize progress over perfection. As you collect program metrics, you will be able to see where things are working and where the process may need to be adjusted.



Partner with Experts

If your talent team is new to career pathing or competency-based talent management, you may want to hire a specialist to provide guidance and accelerate the process. A career pathing consultant can help you with the design, implementation, and measurement of your initiative, ensuring that your efforts stay on track and your results prove the impact

There is no question that talent is harder to hold on to than ever before. And while the Great Resignation may seem as though it has sprung from nowhere on an unexpected whim, there is no indication that it will subside as quickly as it appeared. This is the new normal, and organizations can choose to address it or watch their best people take their talents to their competition.

At a time when career development and advancement is the single most compelling value proposition that a company has to offer its employees, a career pathing program is no longer

a “nice to have.” When an employer offers career pathing, it signals that they are making a commitment to nurture every employee’s potential, to support a lifetime of learning and progress, and to recognize each employee as an active participant in their own career trajectory.

Today’s employees want to be the CEOs of their own careers, and a competency-based approach to career pathing gives them the visibility, flexibility, and control they need to feel empowered, motivated, and supported.

If organizations start listening to what their people want and commit to giving it to them, employers may yet reverse the trend, turning the Great Resignation into the Great Retention.

Culture-chasm!

Sadhan K. Bhattacharya



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To cite this article :

Bhattacharya, S. Culture-chasm! OD Quarterly, 3, pp.42-45

Culture-chasm!

Sadhan K. Bhattacharya

Only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked.

-Warren Buffett

At the cost of being cliched, the recent pandemic has proven to be the biggest transformation agent in people's lives, organizations, societies, and even countries. Digitization, health & well-being, and healthcare are some of the biggest imprints of Covid. Various governments have doubled down on healthcare expenditures despite budgetary deficits. Employee health & wellness have seen greater fillip within organizations. Various forms and formats of EHS (Employee Health & Safety) initiatives in different companies and industries have often revealed their culture, practices, innovation, and fresh thinking.

In this narrative, I will contrast three such companies in terms of their responses to Covid and how they are sustaining them or going back to their previous avatar and how these reflect on their deep-seated beliefs and culture. For the sake of treating them as anonymous, I will not name them and will slightly remake their background while retaining the factuality of the practices since the pandemic broke out.

Company A:

It is one of the largest global healthcare conglomerates. Driven by the deep-seated values and purpose of its founders, this transnational organization is known as a trailblazer in people and patient practices for over a century. When Covid hit the world, this organization, like many of its peers, transitioned almost 80% of its workforce into virtual except for the manufacturing, R&D, and some critical functions being on-site.

Irrespective of the nature of work its employees did, the organization doubled down its focus on employee health and well-being. Many industry-

first people practices were introduced. Different employee-resource groups (ERGs) were brought into sharper focus. Mental Health became one of the most talked about and supported groups among others. Medical insurance coverage was doubled across the board for all employees. Three fully paid additional day-offs in a calendar year, called global recharge days, were introduced for all its 140000 employees during 2020 and 2021 which even continues in 2022.

In some of the affiliate companies, it is a standard fixture to have one of the Fridays as 'Focused Friday' for the past two years. The objective is to allow employees not to schedule team meetings but to focus on meaningful one-on-one conversations and invest in self-development etc. besides attending to any personal needs back home. The organization now has hybrid and flexible work practices across the globe.

These policies and practices are widely hailed both within and outside the organization.

Company B:

It is one of the largest Indian pharmaceutical companies with significant global footprints. Part of the Nifty50 composite index and a category leader in many of the therapeutic areas, Company B started as a family-run business but now boasts of being an Indian multinational with professional leadership steering its aspirations.

During the pandemic, the organization provided remote working facilities for all its employees whose work did not require them to be physically present at the offices. Their employee assistance programs for those contracted with Covid were generous. For those employees lost to Covid, it offered a comprehensive support package to secure their families' future, including support in areas like education of their children, ongoing medical insurance, and additional financial benefits.

Now that the Covid scenario has eased out in the country and many parts of the world, it has returned to business as usual. Talking to employees, you can immediately sense their pride in the organization. to business as usual. Talking to employees, you can immediately sense their pride in the organization.

Company C:

It is a mid-sized Indian domestic pharmaceutical player with a couple of top 50 Indian pharmaceutical brands. Promoter-driven and privately held, the organization has been growing fast in the Indian pharmaceutical market. Recently you might have heard the news of several venture capital and PE firms evincing interest in the buy-out of the firm.

Never known for its people practices, it was quite tight with the working norms even during the onset of the pandemic and throughout its course. It offered its employees just a fortnight in April 2020 to work remotely and thereafter asked all its office-based employees to resume onsite. Sales and business teams were shortly undertaking business trips and many of the senior leaders I spoke to were rightly very apprehensive. Some of them even contracted infection along with family members.

The shocker was that the management even threatened to deduct salaries for the field-based employees who were unwilling to resume their fieldwork in meeting medical professionals at the height of the pandemic!

These three stories of companies beg certain fundamental questions about organizational culture and practices not only in times of crisis but even otherwise. In times of unprecedented crises like Covid, all organizations, by and large, step up their game in securing employee well-being and health through employee-friendly policies. The trick is, what do you sustain and build forward when the stress is loosened?

The following tenets of organizational culture need to be revisited and scrutinized in the context of the aforesaid real-workplace narratives over the past two years.

Tenet# 1. Culture flows from the organizational lived purpose & values.

Like in the case of Company A, all the initiatives directly and naturally extended out of its long-held purpose statements which is a living document in its 79th year of existence. A corporation over 136 years old and guided by its credo values will always find a way out of such crises through the guardrails of such a living document. Interestingly, this document is not cast in stone and every three years there is an internal challenge to scrutinize it by a select band of employees chosen across geographies and hierarchies. Being a multi-stakeholder-centric philosophy, which accords relevant priorities to customers, employees, society, and then shareholders (in this order), employee well-being and safety ranked way higher. No wonder, all employees swear by it while the external business world envies it.

Tenet# 2. The entire organization is the custodian of culture; HR merely facilitates it.

Culture is no longer a touchy-feely and lofty inscription on the walls of corporate headquarters. Employee participation in preserving and evolving culture is paramount and organizational leaders must live their words through action. HR's role is that of a mere curator and facilitator of such activities and dynamics.

In the aforementioned case studies, Company A undertakes the regular voice of employees and holds biennial workshops to shape priorities that need to be reinforced or redirected. Contrary to the popular belief that culture flows from the top which is often taken as gospel truth, the enterprise believes that culture rather than flowing from the top actually diffuses across the organization.

Tenet# 3. Culture is a softer element and has no bearing on an organization's financial performance

The right culture, which emanates from an organization's purpose and sacred values, has a strong correlation with the organization's financial performance. No wonder, Company A is the only other organization to be triple-A rated in the US besides Microsoft. Culture is hard to evolve and even harder to maintain. It serves as the north star.

In all, being a proud member of Company A, I have

seen employees and co-workers have grown in their commitment and love for the organization with a deep sense of gratitude through the course of the pandemic. It is not every other year that you confront such brutal dealings of a pandemic when the true character of both the individual employees and organization comes for a real test.

Glancing through the above comparison, it should be pretty evident that in organizations with a rich

legacy of culture, the elements of it become part of the organization's DNA and any decision-making process. Everyone in the organization is expected to uphold and practice these explicitly stated mandates and such organizations leverage their cultural elements to further their financial and talent imperatives. No wonder, to the outsiders, there appears to be a real chasm in the way organizational lives differ across such a continuum.

Dimensions of culture across the three organizations

Dimensions of culture	Context	A	B	C
Relevance	Place in everyday life of the org?	Part of org DNA	Culture as a strategic lever	Adhocism
Stewardship	Who owns the culture?	Each unitary member	Leaders setting the tone	Leaders aided by external consultants
Socialization	How's it communicated?	Diffuses across the organization	Top-down	Chaotic
Evolution	How does it evolve over long period?	Strong core values amenable to evolving with environment yet retaining their essence	Largely depends on founders' shoulders	Erratic
Longevity	How's it sustained?	Enduring many decades, even centuries	Depends on generations of leaders	Transient
Financial pivot	Any attempt to factor in cultural dimensions into the balance sheet?	Strong correlation with financial performance	No apparent relationship	No apparent relationship
Talent Connection	Do talent practices leverage culture?	Culture as a talent magnet	No obvious leverage	Non-existent

Leaders as ‘choice architects’!

Saikat Saha



Saikat Saha is a leadership development professional at a Fortune 50 company. He is also among the top 25 HR influencers in Social Media according to SHRM India. Saikat describes himself as ‘Passionately Curious’. In case, you feel Saikat can learn something valuable from you & you are willing to help him learn then mail him at saikatsaha23@gmail.com”

To cite this article :

Saha, S. Leaders as ‘choice architects’! OD Quarterly, 3, pp.46-49

Leaders as ‘choice architects’!

Saikat Saha

It is popular and almost intuitive now for leaders to design psychological safe spaces for team members to deliver value at work which otherwise would not have been possible. Google’s ‘Project Aristotle’ on the study towards understanding the secrets of effective teams at the company gave some compelling insights in this regard. In addition, there is enough empirical evidence supporting the value of psychological safe spaces in the context of effective teams (Christian, et al., 2011; Frazier, et al., 2016; Rich, et al., 2010; Schaubroeck, et al., 2011).

Imagine the value of similar (not the same) spaces for leaders as well. The space I am referring to here is the one that the leaders create for themselves to lead effectively – a space that allows them to grow because of the informed choices they make and the informed choices they help others to make towards a specific direction. For example, it is the time of the day that the leader does not trade off for anything else; a time that is reserved for deep reflection towards the leader’s actions that matter the most. It is the time when there is the least distraction and evaluating choices becomes easy. The choices could be towards which prospective client that should be followed up with – which vendor to choose for wireframe designs, which team member to nominate for the annual award, or even as seemingly simple as which dress to wear for the panel discussion.

When leaders do not create the space for the above, the context in which they make their leadership choices are left to randomness. And that can have costly consequences. One of the intuitive consequences is poor choices made by the leader and the other ‘not so intuitive’ consequence is that of feeling ‘loneliness’.

The reason it feels lonely at the top (especially for new senior leaders) is due to the lack of deliberate

effort from the leader to create a space which acts as a vantage point for them towards deeper reflections and to make informed choices. So being alone is important to not feel lonely. This space I am referring to is most effectively used when the leader seeks questions and not answers. And it is these questions that can nudge them towards leader actions to find the answers or ally with partners who can find the answers for them.

Irrespective of the context in which the leader works towards achieving an outcome, what truly helps the leader achieve any visible/ verifiable result are their leader actions. Leader actions are what a leader does to influence others to put discretionary effort towards a specific outcome. A leader’s job does not end with creating the vision for the team and aligning them towards it. The real value that the leader adds is through helping the team make great choices by making them reflect deeply on what truly matters in the given context. This deep reflection helps the team members take actions that are significantly different & more valuable from what they would have otherwise taken.

To assume that leaders bring about change is to overestimate what they can do. Leaders can merely take great actions. And great choices precede great actions.

Let me explain this with an example:

An IT services company has a target of 1 billion in revenue by the year 20XX from its digital portfolio. You are new to the company and have been given the above target as a senior leader. There are specific actions you can take which may help the firm to achieve the target.

But these specific actions have to be further informed by the context in which you are leading. Also, your actions have to influence a host of other

influencers and decision-makers who will influence and inspire their respective stakeholders to do what it takes to bring the transformation. The aspect that is obvious above is the relevance and significance of your and the other decision-makers and influencers' actions.

The actions could be as simple (but not easy) as influencing one of your direct reportees to gather intel on potential clients within a challenging timeline. Or, it could even mean addressing the senior managers in a town hall over an unpopular but much-needed initiative.

However, it is not the actions which is the most fundamental lever for change. The most fundamental lever for change is the intent. It is the intent that gives direction and energizes the leader's actions and the actions of those whom he/ she influences.

That space between intent and action is an opportunity that the leader must be mindful of and leverage. And to leverage that space, he/ she needs to juxtapose choices that do not mandate the desired behavior yet make it easy for the team members to choose the best option required to achieve the outcome.

In other words, the leader must nudge the team members towards the desired behavior.

A specific example could be Amazon's meeting ritual of keeping one chair empty for the customer. This ritual nudges the participants in the meeting to empathize with the customer in all their discussions. I read about this example in an INC magazine article and am not sure whose idea this was but I assume that this decision of keeping a chair empty for customers was a leader action (Koetsier, 2018).

The empty chair in the above example does not mandate a behavior but it gives a subtle yet compelling nudge to act in a specific way during the meeting. The intention here is to ensure the discussion includes the customer lens; the action here is to include the empty chair that represents the customer and the nudge is the leader's reminder of that empty chair in a timely manner during the discussion.

In another example, I have seen a leader nudging his team of solution architects to be sure of the problem they are solving by 'extending' the timeline of the 'problem discovery' phase in comparison to the 'solution design' phase.

The leader's intention here is to ensure the right problem is being solved and he does that through a counterintuitive action of extending the timeline of the 'problem discovery' phase. The nudge here is the remaining time that the team members have after seemingly figuring out the problem they have to solve.

I strongly recommend every leader to read Richard H Thaler & Cass R Sunstein's popular book 'Nudge' if they are interested in the nudge theory. This will help them to become more deliberate about using nudges in their own workflows and the workflows of those they need to influence. One key takeaway for me from the book is that a choice architect has the responsibility for organizing the context in which people make decisions.

I leave every leader with a few questions to reflect on:

1. Which intent-action gap are you or your team clearly struggling with?
2. How can you close that intent-action gap without mandating anything?
3. How & when will you clearly know that the intent-action gap is closed?

The author of the article is a Leadership Development professional at a Fortune 500 company. The article doesn't represent his current or any of his past employers.

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Every leader is a choice architect helping her team members make choices to close the intention-action gaps.

Organisational Accountability for Well-being

Aman Zaidi



For 23 years, Aman has been developing and leading people at some of the finest organisations in the world such as Wells Fargo, HSBC, Deloitte, Walt Disney, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Tata Motors, BMC Software, Schlumberger, Abbott Laboratories, L&T, Voltas, Infosys and Intelenet among others. He specialises in Leadership Development, Business Storytelling, Strengths Coaching and Experiential Education.

He is the co-creator of Inclusion Circles, a webcast focused on furthering DEI causes and earned his certificate in DEI from the University of South Florida. He is a graduate of the prestigious Diploma in Experiential Education and is also an accredited Strengthscope® user, its foremost champion in India and has advocated a strengths-based development approach in his talk at TEDx and on podcasts in India and the UK. He is also an occasional contributor to Wikipedia.

To cite this article :

Zaidi A. Organisational Accountability for Wellbeing. OD Quarterly, 3, pp.50-54

Organisational Accountability for Well-being

Aman Zaidi

This is a contemplation on a theme I am passionate about and first mentioned during my 2021 TEDx talk – imagining organisations as centres of human thriving. This article is a thought exercise on creating greater workplace well-being and it is divided into the history, the roadblocks and some suggestions on making it happen.

Every single Industrial Age has brought its own set of illnesses with it. From pneumoconiosis and silicosis among pre-industrial miners to limb or digit amputations and deaths caused by machinery during the decades that are widely known as the 'Industrial Revolution', to pandemics of cholera, typhus, smallpox and tuberculosis that were caused at least in part by workers being forced to live in crowded urban spaces with poor sanitation facilities. In the Digital Age we inhabit, we must contend with sedentary work and long working hours that have led to spine and joint injuries, repetitive stress syndrome (RSS), carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), cardiovascular disease (CVD), eye strain, computer vision syndrome (CVS), headaches, disrupted biorhythms, insomnia, social isolation, anxiety and depression.

Have we done enough to address it?

Historically, the record of the industry isn't that great. Workplace well-being has had a long and turbulent history. The transition from 16-hour workdays, rampant child labour and zero protections from, or compensation for, injuries to a point where modern nations enacted laws to protect workers from such harm, has involved tremendous struggles. It took nearly a hundred years before legislation outlawed the employment of children, compelled factory owners to pay compensation for ill health and injuries incurred at work or pay some attention to worker wellbeing, in the form of accident prevention, sick leave, paid maternity leave, and health insurance.

So, do we live in better times today? Only in comparison to the 19th century. While some laws exist to protect workers, these laws continue to be violated on the one hand and weakened by politicians on the other. Recent lawsuits and protests against work conditions at Google and Amazon, the targeting of protesting workers, and the move for unionisation at these behemoths, all point towards the fact that employees are not happy with how they are being treated even at global MNCs. As the FairWork India rankings demonstrated in 2020, new-age startups like food delivery companies fare poorly on fair wages, health and safety, and fair representation. Clearly, this does not create well-being among workers.

While the scope of Occupational Safety has evolved since the days of the machine age, guidelines and legislation have been slow to keep up. Action has been lacking even though we know that modern work adversely affects spinal, eye, limb, cardiovascular, and mental health and causes stress and burnout in the workforce. This knowledge has not led organisations to measure and report, or more importantly, prevent and compensate for these risks to well-being.

Why is employee well-being largely ignored?

There are many reasons and I shall attempt to list the main ones here:

1. **Employee well-being is not considered a parameter at par with financial results.** Stakeholders are content to view performance solely through the narrow lens of Tayloristic or financial measures – productivity and profitability. That lens has not changed in decades. Measures of organisational performance have not evolved.
2. **The sourcing of leaders and employees is done primarily from the education streams of**

commerce, finance, engineering and business management. MBA courses draw primarily from production, finance, IT, HR, and marketing, even in this age! **Employee well-being is not yet sexy enough to include as a course, let alone a specialisation.** Even though business is an endeavour by humans and for humans, management education (and therefore practises) does not include enough focus on biology, neuroscience, psychology, sociology, philosophy, art or history – the subjects that can arm managers with the knowledge to do better by human beings. Still, there is cause for cautious optimism. In rare instances, there are leaders that recruit people from those fields in the hope of building more creative, diverse, and thriving organisations.

3. The usual expectation is that the worker will take accountability for their own well-being, over and above the accountability they must take for work results, self-development, career growth, networking, work-life balance etcetera. While it is rarely possible for one human being to do justice to all these areas on their own, we are often encouraged to believe that we can; trying to do so contributes to stress, anxiety, and a loss of self-worth. Psychotherapists will tell us that there is a cognitive flaw called “taking excess accountability”.

4. The knowing-doing gap exists. Even in the rare cases that people do possess knowledge of how well-being in organisations works, that knowledge does not translate into action and policy-making for a variety of reasons. Among other things, leaders and organisations are measured and incentivised on things that do the opposite of creating well-being.

5. Outdated models of leadership, where decision-making privileges are cornered by a few. This goes to the root of the matter – the key stakeholders in employee well-being – the workers, do not have any say in determining policies, KPIs, incentives etcetera. Leadership and decision-making are exclusionary and the real meaning of inclusion is not grasped. Any attempts by workers to be heard are met with punishment, as was seen in the instances at Google and Amazon, or worse legislated against.

So, what can we do to improve the state of well-being in workplaces?

Broadly there are 3 areas that we can take action in:

- Allowing workers personal time to rest and recharge
- Creating work environments of psycho-social safety
- Building a sense of community and relationships at work

In Annexure 1 at end of this article, I offer a detailed diagrammatic (Minto pyramid) representation of how each of these can be supported. In addition to that, here are some other things that we can do to enhance employee well-being:

1. Take a systems approach – address the entire ecosystem that causes or prevents the well-being of employees. Don’t make the mistake of assuming that employees are solely responsible or even capable of managing it on their own. We know that every single accomplishment in life is the product of both individual effort and environmental support. This is true in well-being as well, as the research of Dr. Michael Unger, an expert in mental health and resilience, has demonstrated (Ungar, 2019). The Globe and Mail published an article on his work, aptly titled ‘Resilience is not a DIY endeavour’, which you can look up in the References section.

2. Include well-being metrics in quarterly reports. Create a board of directors and a leadership team with people from more diverse backgrounds – biology, psychology, medicine, sociology etcetera. Have well-being experts sit as directors on boards to ensure that these metrics are discussed in depth. Align incentives with performance on these metrics.

3. Adopt a new leadership paradigm. Peter Senge said years ago, “Leadership is the capacity of a human community to shape its future”. Note that it’s about the community shaping the future, not just the select few. It’s a less oligarchical approach to leadership and one that ensures that all voices are included in the shaping of the future of the organisation. With reduced power distance and aligned incentives, the knowing-doing gap will shrink.

4. Implement ISO45003 and WELL v2 standards. The former will audit for and alert you to the psychosocial hazards that exist in your organisation and might erode wellbeing. The WELL v2 standard, from the International WELL Building Institute, covers 10 key areas that contribute to well-being, including ones such as Movement, Mind, and Community guidelines for accreditation including green spaces and facilities for rest and recovery and for physical activity (Well v2, 2022).

5. Make rest a priority for your employees and yourself. This means limiting working hours and encouraging breaks at the workplace. Tony Schwarz of The Energy Project urges people to nap in the office if that's what it takes them to rejuvenate. As this old HBR piece reminds us, Resilience Is About How You Recharge, Not How You Endure (Achor & Gielan, 2016).

6. Educate every single person in the company about well-being. Help them understand the role of the parasympathetic system in workplace well-being, their own role in setting boundaries, nutrition, sleep etcetera. Help them absorb the 5 elements in Martin Seligman's PERMA framework. Build "causing well-being" into your leadership development curriculum.

We may now have more ideas on how to go about it. All of this will come to nought if we don't have the overpowering will to make the change happen! In 1594, Philip II of Spain passed a law that read something like this:

"All the workers will work eight hours a day, four in the morning, and four in the afternoon in fortifications and factories, which are to be distributed at the most convenient times to get rid of the rigor of the sun, more or less what seems to the engineers, so that not missing a point of the possible, it is also attended to ensure their health and conservation." Do our industry leaders have the vision that a Spanish monarch had in the 16th century?

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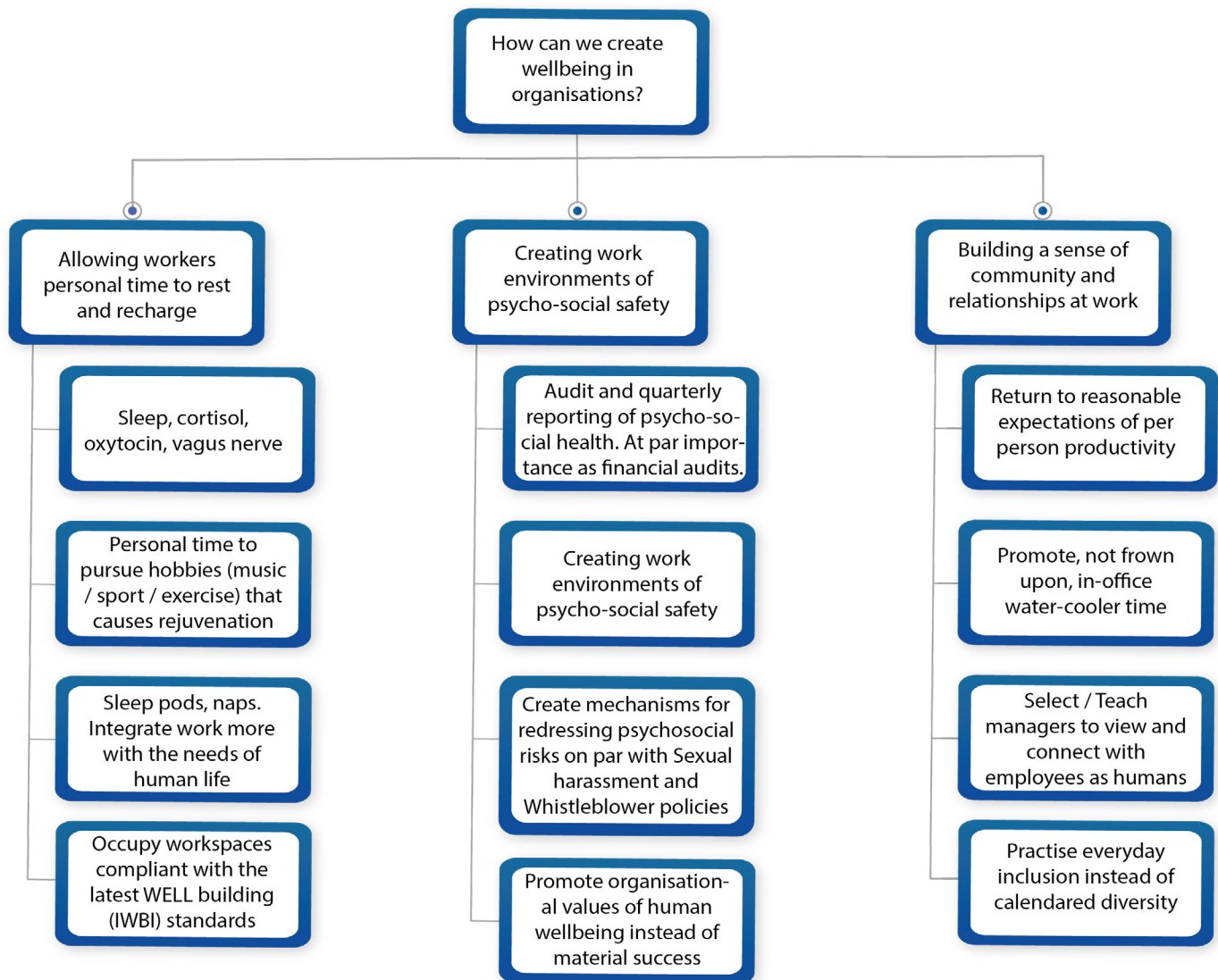
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Do our industry leaders have the vision that a Spanish monarch had in the 16th century?

Annexure 1



Well-being Minto Pyramid – by Aman Zaidi, October 2022

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