

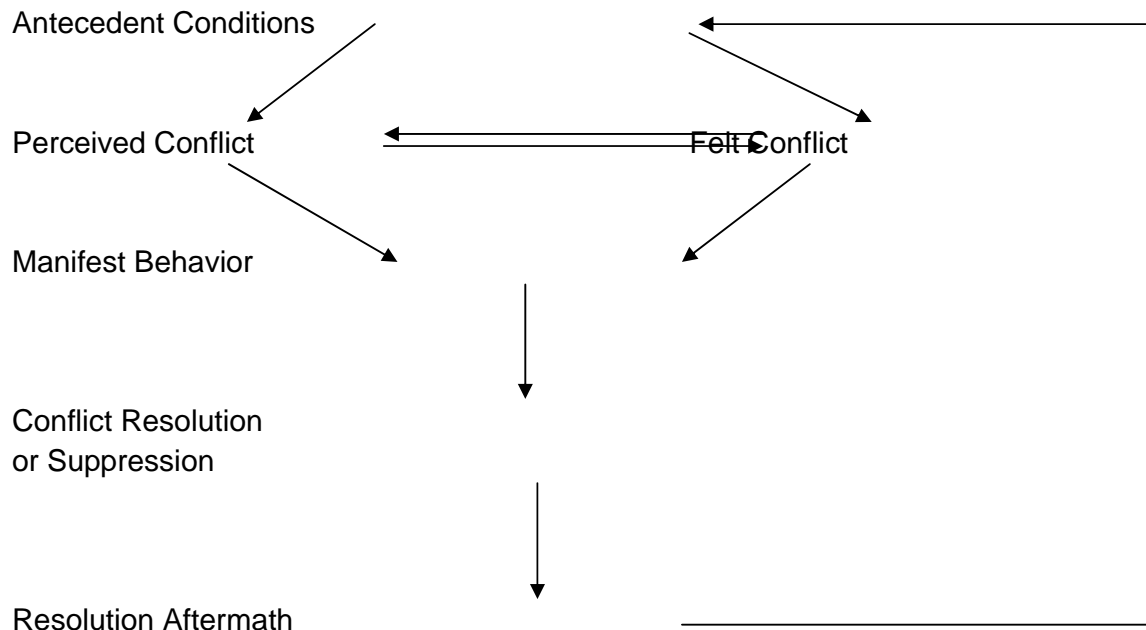
Lecture 31: Questions

1. What is conflict?
2. Based on the origin of conflict, how may conflict be categorized?
3. Describe the process of conflict.
4. Describe the factors that may affect the outcome of organizational conflicts.

Lecture 31: Answers

1. Conflict refers to disagreement between two or more people or ideologies. It is a situation in which the goals, values, interests, and perceptions of one individual or group are incompatible with another individual or group. Harwick (2004, in Roloff & Chiles, 2011) defines conflict as, "...a dynamic process that occurs between independent parties as they experience negative emotional response to perceived disagreements & interference with the attainment of their goals."
2. Based on the origin of conflict, the types of conflict may be categorized as (Angell, 2007; O'Rourke & Singh, 2006):
 - *Economic Conflict*: Economic conflict is the conflict that results from an unequal distribution of resources, where the parties disagree on the allocation of material resources among them.
 - *Interaction Conflict*: Interaction conflict refers to conflict that is manifested as the discomfort members feel while interacting with each other as a result of their behavior towards each other.
 - *Internal Conflict*: Internal conflict refers to a situation in which one party cannot make a decision because they are being pulled or pushed in two opposite directions at the same time. It may also be termed as intrapersonal conflict.
 - *Structural Conflict*: Structural conflict refers to conflict that occurs as a result of the size, bureaucratic structure, diversity of team members, levels of involvement of members, and other internal process and structure related aspects of an organization.
 - *Personality Behavior Conflict*: Personality behavior conflict is conflict that one experiences as a result of irreconcilable differences between the interacting parties, or the dislike they have for each other's personalities or styles of behavior etc.

3. Lewis (1980) describes the conflict episode as follows:



Adapted from: Lewis, P.V. (1980). *Organizational Communication* (2nd Ed.). Columbus, OH: Grid Publishing Co. 389.

Permission to use the diagram awaited.

Let us see what this diagram means.

Every conflict begins with some background or *antecedent conditions*. Something in the past always sparks of a conflict situation. This something could be a state of mind, a situation, or any other trigger that helps us notice that something in the environment is different.

This then forces us to pay attention to this change in the environment which leads us to either start developing feelings of anxiety or nervousness or discomfort regarding this change in the environment, or start noticing repeated patterns of this change in the environment. Repeated instances of the change in the environment that we feel should not be taking place lead us to analyze these patterns and come to a conclusion that something is wrong. So we start *perceiving the conflict*, and that feeds into our feeling of discomfort with the situation. We may also start feeling uncomfortable as soon as we notice the change in the environment, without really analyzing the reason for our discomfort. Repeated feelings of discomfort about the change in the environment lead us to feel that something that should not happen, is happening. So we start *feeling* conflict before we have had a chance to analyze that something is wrong.

As this feeling of discomfort becomes stronger, it forces us to look for unfavourable patterns of change in our environments, and actively look for patterns that may have caused our discomfort. As these feelings grow, we start expressing our discomfort. The conflict *manifests itself in our behaviour*.

We reach a tipping point and say, "I've had enough. I need to do something about this unpleasant situation." We decide to either *resolve or suppress the conflict*. The way we deal with the conflict situation decides our next course of action. If we try to suppress the conflict, we add more ammunition to our feeling of discomfort. If we decide to resolve the conflict, there can be two outcomes. We either succeed at the resolution and come out feeling good about having dealt with the conflict, or we fail at the resolution and come out of the situation feeling hurt and angry at having tried to resolve the conflict. The results of our attempts to deal with or suppress conflict are collectively termed as *resolution aftermath*.

This aftermath then feeds into the antecedent conditions for future interactions with the same person or group of people or situation.

4. Modaff and DeWine (2002) propose the influence of the following factors on the outcome of organizational conflicts:

- *Origin of the conflict* – substantive vs. personal: Where does the conflict start or what is the conflict a result of – issues inside of the people involved, i.e. personality or behaviour related issues, or issues in the situation, e.g. access to resources etc. Substantive conflicts or conflicts related to material reasons and issues in the situation are usually easier to deal with than personal or behavioural or interactional conflicts as the goals for resolution are usually much clearer and much more tangible in substantive conflicts. People usually know what they want in terms of tangible outputs.
- *Size of the conflict*: Size of the conflict refers to the quantum of resources and the number of people involved in the conflict. The larger the size, the more complex the conflict and the harder it is to resolve it.
- *Rigidity and age of the issue*: Age of the issue refers to the chronological age of the reason causing the conflict. The longer the conflicting parties have been disgruntled with each other, the more difficult it becomes to reach a solution acceptable to the disagreeing parties.
- *Power differences, distances and the history of the relationships between the players*: Power differences and power distances have an impact on the manner in which the conflict is resolved, and the history of relationships

between the conflicting parties contribute to the antecedent conditions for the conflict episode.

- *Differences between individual personalities, traits, and dispositions* contribute to how changes in the environment are perceived and how conflicting parties deal with different conflict situations.

Lecture 32: Questions

1. What is culture clash?
2. How might intercultural conflict begin?
3. Differentiate between the way High Context and Low Context cultures deal with conflict.

Lecture 32: Answers

1. Conflict is an essential outcome of differences of ideology, personality, ability, goals, and values. And all of these are influenced to a significant extent by cultural differences among people who work together. Johnson (2002) describes this conflict arising out of cultural differences as Culture Clash. According to Johnson (2002), culture clash may be defined as, "... a conflict over basic values that occurs among individuals from different cultures." Johnson (2002) proposes that, "... culture clashes occur because the parties involved are feeling *threatened, confused, or enhanced*."
2. Culture clash, if not dealt with, has a potential to flare up into intercultural conflict. Ting-Toomey (1994) defines intercultural conflict as, "...the perceived and/ or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties from different cultures over substantive and/ or relational issues."

This may be diagrammatically represented as follows:



Incompatibility of values and expectations by people from different cultures may lead to misinterpretation of the messages exchanged between them, which may lead to a perception of conflict or a feeling of conflict (which may not be manifested in their behaviors yet, hence the term, 'pseudo' or false conflict), which may flare up into actual conflict, which may feed into miscommunication, which could potentially lead to misinterpretation and so on...

3. Ting-Toomey (1994) proposes that individualistic and collectivistic cultures have very different ways of understanding and dealing with conflict situations. These differences may be tabulated as follows.

Perceptions of Conflict Based on Culture Differences (Ting-Toomey, 1994)

Parameters	Individualistic, Low Context	Collectivistic, High Context
Expression of conflict	Expressed struggle to air out differences - Encourage	Damaging to social face and relational harmony - Avoid
Outcome of conflict	Dysfunctional or functional	Mostly Dysfunctional
Aftermath	Repression can cause problems & make it dysfunctional	Expression signifies emotional immaturity
Conditions for functional outcome	Functional when problems are solved head on	Facing problems requires skillful negotiation
Addressing of issues	Substantive and relational issues should be handled separately	Both types of issues are always intertwined
Preferred method of resolution	Open and direct resolution	Discrete and subtle resolution
Ideology governing resolution strategy	Win-win problem solving game	Win-win face negotiation game

Let us see what the table above means:

- *Expression of conflict:* Individualistic or low context cultures encourage expression of disagreement with the explicit intention of airing out differences, getting rid of the negative energy and moving on to completion of goals. High context cultures, on the other hand, tend to avoid expression of conflict because they feel that it is damaging to the public image or 'social face' of the interacting parties. They discourage expression of conflict because they feel it disturbs social harmony.

- *Outcome of conflict:* In low context cultures, since the understanding is that expression of conflict is a way of putting all the cards on the table, metaphorically speaking, to facilitate the discovery of the problem, expression of conflict usually leads to removal of the reasons for conflict. Hence the outcome of conflict is usually functional. In high context cultures, since expression of conflict is discouraged because it is assumed to be damaging to the public face of the conflicting parties, expression of conflict usually disturbs the emotional harmony of the interacting parties, and feeds into the antecedent conditions for future uncomfortable interactions, even if expression has led to a solution to the problem.
- *Aftermath:* In individualistic, low context cultures, if conflicts are not expressed, they can result in further problems and feed into the antecedent conditions for future interactions. On the other hand, in collectivistic, high context cultures, since expression has a potential to disturb the social equilibrium within that context, expression of conflict is considered to be an act of immaturity.
- *Conditions for functional outcome:* In individualistic, low context cultures, conflicts result in positive outcomes when problems are solved head on. In collectivistic, high context cultures, issues cannot be dealt with directly. The resolution strategy needs to be subtle and indirect, and manoeuvred in such a way so as to preserve the equilibrium in the social environment.
- *Addressing of issues:* In individualistic, low context cultures, issues regarding interpersonal relationships and issues originating outside of people, are dealt with separately. In collectivistic, high context cultures, issues regarding people and issues originating outside of people are always intertwined and cannot be dealt with separately.
- *Preferred method of resolution:* Individualistic, low context cultures prefer open and direct resolution of conflicts where the interacting parties can see the reasons contributing to the problem, and remove them once and for all. On the other hand, members of collectivistic, high context cultures prefer intrapersonal analysis of conflict situations before they share their concerns especially with other members who they have disagreements with.
- *Ideology governing resolution strategy:* Individualistic, low context cultures see conflict resolution as a win-win problem solving game. They feel that conflicts arise primarily due to incompatibility of goals and so the goals of the conflicting parties must be aligned in order for them to work together. On the other hand, collectivistic, high context cultures see conflict as a win-win face negotiation game. They feel that conflicts arise primarily due to differences in intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions of the interacting parties. However, each

interacting party is right from its own perspective. So, the conflict situation is an opportunity for the interacting parties to understand each other's perspectives and align their perceptions regarding each other and regarding the common situation they are a part of. And this requires skilful 'face-negotiation' or management and preservation of their own and each other's public image.

Lecture 33: Questions

1. What is negotiation?
2. What are the different elements of negotiations?
3. Describe the process of negotiation.
4. What are the differences between collaborative and distributive negotiations?
5. How may conflict be resolved if the negotiation process falls through?

Lecture 33: Answers

1. Various scholars from various disciplines have attempted to define and describe the process of negotiation.

Even though these definitions seem quite different from each other, the few things that all of them convey about the process of negotiation are:

- Negotiation involves two or more independent participants.
 - Each of the participants has some individual goals that may be partially incompatible.
 - The participants are engaged in some form of process together that is being disturbed by this incompatibility of individual goals.
 - Participants with incompatible goals come together to generate alternatives.
 - The alternatives are generated with the explicit purpose of agreeing upon one of them.
2. Schuster and Copeland (1996, in Moor & Weigand, 2004), Moor and Weigand (2004) and Page and Mukherjee (2007) suggest that most negotiation situations include the following.
 - *Context*: Context refers to the physical and ideological environment in which the negotiation takes place.
 - *Norms*: Norms refer to the acceptable patterns of behavior of the people involved in the process of negotiation.
 - *Issues*: Issues refer to the reasons that led to the need for negotiation.
 - *Goals*: Goals refer to the “specific measurable outcomes” at the end of the negotiation situation, or a clear statement of what negotiators desire at the end of the negotiation process.
 3. Dolan (2006) and McKay, Davis and Fanning (2009) propose that negotiation processes go through the following stages:

- *Stage 1: Preparation:* This is the stage in which the participants decide on the goal, the relative importance of tangible and relationship outcomes for them and for the other party, the range of acceptable solutions for them and for the other party, the bottom-line or least desirable solution that will be acceptable to them and to the other party, and the resources they have and the resources the other party has.
- *Stage 2: Discussion:* Individual participants then meet with the other party and discuss what they would like and what the other party might want. The primary objective of this stage is to find out as much as each party can about the other party's interests, needs and limitations.
- *Stage 3: Proposal-counterproposal:* At this stage, the actual negotiation or discussion about the desired and possible outcomes begins. In this stage, one party makes an offer (proposal), and the other party responds with whether it would be acceptable to them and why or why not. Then the other party modifies the offer (counter-proposal) made by the first party and responds with their reasons for the modification and why they think that their offer should be acceptable to the first party.
- *Stage 4: Agreement/ disagreement:* After several rounds of proposals and counter-proposals, the parties either arrive at an acceptable solution or decide to re-convene at another time with more information or range of offers, or agree to cut their losses and move on without each other. This last stage forms the basis for future negotiations based on how satisfied or dissatisfied the parties are with the process, the end result and with the inter-party relationship.

4. Most negotiations fall into one of the two categories:

- *Competitive or Distributive Negotiation:* A situation in which one party wins and the other loses
- *Collaborative or Integrative Negotiation:* A situation in which both parties come to a common understanding and acceptability of drawing part of what they desire from the situation, losing a little on both sides, but resulting in an overall a win-win situation for both parties.

Harvard Business Essentials (2003) and Hocker and Wilmot (2001) attribute the following characteristics to distributive negotiations:

- Distributive negotiations are characterized by win-lose situations in which one party gets all it wants, and the other party does not get anything but is forced to accept the outcome for various reasons.
- In distributive negotiations, the seller's goal is to negotiate as high a price as possible, and the buyer's goal is to negotiate as low a price as possible.
- In distributive negotiations, the lesser one side knows about the weaknesses and real preferences of the other party, and the more it knows about the bargaining strength of the other party, the better the other party's position becomes.
- Since the outcome of distributive negotiations leaves the losing party with nothing at all, distributive negotiations typically signal the end of the relationship between the negotiating parties.

Harvard Business Essentials (2003) and Hocker and Wilmot (2001) attribute the following to collaborative negotiations:

- Collaborative negotiations are characterized by win-win situations in which both parties lose a part of their desired outcome in the interest of increasing the size of the pie and taking away something that means more to each of them than what they lose during the process.
 - In collaborative negotiations, both parties come to the table with a common understanding and acceptance of the fact that they may end up losing a little and gaining a little. So, they make offers that they may not ideally desire but that they know the other party will be in a position to accept.
 - In such negotiations, since both parties accept that the common goal is collaboration, they tend to disclose a realistic and open picture of their bargaining strength to the other party.
 - Since collaborative negotiations leave both parties with a feeling of having gained a little as a result of collaborating with each other, the relationship between the negotiating parties tends to continue even after the specific negotiation situation is over and dealt with.
5. Despite all attempts to make a negotiation situation work, at times, the conflicting parties are just not able to come to an understanding of whether and how they might want to resolve the situation with each other. At such a time, a confrontation meeting between the conflicting parties becomes necessary.

Lewis (1980) describes one of the ways in which a Confrontation Meeting between employees may be conducted to deal with organization-wide disgruntlement.

- *Stage 1: Climate Setting (45-60 minutes)*: Top manager states goals and sets an open, free tone of the meeting.
- *Stage 2: Information Collecting (60 minutes)*: Representative players work in small heterogeneous teams to identify problems in the organization.
- *Stage 3: Information Sharing (60 minutes)*: Each team states what they come up with, and information is compiled and categorized.
- *Stage 4: Priority setting and group action planning (60-75 minutes)*: Work groups comprising of subordinates and supervisors are given these categorized lists, and asked to identify and discuss issues and action steps to remedy the situation.
- *Stage 5: Immediate Follow-up by Top Team (1-3 hours)*: The results and recommendations from the group action planning meeting are reviewed by the top management, and decisions are then made based on these.
- *Stage 6: Progress Review (2 Hours)*: 4 – 6 weeks after the confrontation meeting, a follow up meeting is held to report progress and review actions resulting from the meeting.

Lecture 34: Questions

1. What is assertiveness?
2. What is leadership?
3. What are the differences between authority and power?
4. Describe how communication determines leadership.

Lecture 34: Answers

1. Newstrom and Davis (2002) define assertiveness as, "... the process of expressing feelings, asking for legitimate changes, and giving and receiving honest feedback."

According to this definition, an assertive person is able to convince others to listen to him/her, analyze the information s/he receives and follow it up with honest and relevant feedback.

2. The study of leadership is as old as history itself. To start with, leadership came to be studied in the context of royalty and kingdoms, and in the context of war and accession.

However, the study of leadership in the business environment is fairly young.

- Martin M. Chemers reviewed more than seventy five years of scientific study on leadership and "... divided these studies into three interrelated periods – the trait period, approximately 1910 until World War II; the behavior period, from the onset of World War II through the late 1960s; and the contingency period, from the late 1960s to the present." (Chemers, 1996, in Cathcart, Samovar & Henman, 1996, p. 367.)

According to Chemers (1996), the definition of leadership in the three periods mentioned above was significantly determined by the socio-political environment in which the leadership behavior was manifested and observed.

- Jennings (1943, in Lewis, 1980) propose that leadership is "...the art of inducing subordinates to accomplish their assignments with zeal & confidence."
- Haimann and Scott (1974, in Lewis, 1980) propose that leadership is "...a process by which people are directed, guided, & influenced in choosing & achieving goals."

- Bowers and Seashore (1971, in Lewis, 1980) propose that leadership is “...organizationally useful behavior by one member of an organizational family toward another member or members of that same organizational family.”
- Keltner (1996, in Cathcart, Samovar & Henman, 1996) proposes that leadership is a process of training and facilitation of members towards inspiring them to do what is required to be done to accomplish the organizational goal.

The few aspects that are common to all these theories are:

- Leadership is a function of the goals of an organization.
- Leadership involves influencing other people in an organization.
- Leadership is a dynamic phenomenon that affects and is affected by the intra-organizational and extra-organizational environment (Social, political, economic and cultural environment that the organization functions in and is affected by)

A leader is, essentially, the person in the group whose primary responsibility is to ensure the group’s focus, efficiency, and stability in a constantly changing external and internal environment.

3. Barnard (1938, in Modaff & DeWine, 2002) defines authority as, “...the character of a communication (order) in a formal organization by virtue of which it is accepted by a contributor to or ‘member of the organization’ as governing the action he contributes; that is, as governing or determining what he does or is not to do so far as the organization is concerned.”

Barnard (1938, in Modaff & DeWine, 2002) proposes that in an organizational context, the primary ways in which authority may be exercised through communication may be:

- *Authority of position:* Authority of position refers to authority ascribed to a communication based on the fact that it originates from a superior position in the organizational structure regardless of the relative ability of the person occupying the position.
- *Authority of leadership:* Authority of leadership refers to authority ascribed to a communication based on the knowledge and ability of the person communicating the message, regardless of the position she occupies.

In the context of groups and communication in groups and teams, Cathcart, Samovar and Henman (1996) propose that, "...power is the control that the group gives to one or more of its members for regulation & control."

Referring to past research in the study of power in organizational leadership, Cathcart, Samovar and Henman (1996) remind the readers about the following types of power that may be exercised by leaders in an organization:

- *Legitimate power*: Legitimate power refers to the power assigned to a leader by virtue of the official position the leader holds. This type of power comes with the chair, metaphorically speaking.
 - *Coercive power*: Coercive power is acquired by a leader by instilling fear of negative consequences in the event of non-compliance.
 - *Reward power*: Reward power is the opposite of coercive power. Reward power may be acquired by a leader by instilling motivation for positive rewards in the event of compliance.
 - *Expert power*: Expert power is power that results from genuine expertise in a particular field.
 - *Referent power*: Referent power is a result of established credibility of the leader. Subordinates refer to past instances of competence and trustworthiness that lead them to have genuine respect for their leader.
4. Graen and Cashman proposed the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory in 1975 to describe how leaders define their relationships with their subordinates in and through their words and communicative behaviors (Graen & Cashman, 1975, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010).

The main postulates of the LMX theory are:

- "Leaders form relationships of varying quality across subgroups of subordinates rather than relating to them uniformly.
- Leaders and members form in-group, mid-group, or out-group relationships with each other, and levels of mutual support and influence are usually according to the group the relationships fall into."

Through their treatment of the power distance between them and their subordinates, leaders inform their subordinates where they stand in relation to their leaders. The details of the experiment are outside the purview of this lecture,

but a summarized example similar to the one conducted to explain the concept of in, mid and outgroups is presented here.

In-Group: If the leader is moderating a discussion among the group members, and one member interjects and offers a different viewpoint, and the leader encourages this shift to the interjecting member's viewpoint, then the interjecting member is said to be a part of the leader's in-group, as by allowing the said member to change the course of the discussion, the leader seems to have clearly indicated a reduction in the power distance between him/herself and the interjecting member.

Mid-Group: If the leader is moderating a discussion among the group members, and one member interjects and offers a different viewpoint, and the leader acknowledges the need to listen to the different viewpoint at another time, and asks the interjecting member to hold on to his/her viewpoint until a more appropriate time, then the interjecting member is said to be a part of the leader's mid-group as the leader has politely but firmly reminded the interjecting member of the power distance that exists between them.

Out-Group: If the leader is moderating a discussion among the group members, and one member interjects and offers a different viewpoint, and the leader immediately snubs the interjecting member and reminds him/her to speak only when spoken to or refuses to acknowledge the existence of another way of looking at the issues being discussed, the interjecting member is said to be a part of the leader's outgroup, as the leader has clearly used the interjection to increase the power distance between him/herself and the interjecting member.

The author of this lecture acknowledges the contribution made by the explanation by Fairhurst and Chandler (1989, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) towards her understanding of the LMX theory.

LMX Theory and social construction of perceptions :

Sias (1995, in Krone, Kramer & Sias) and Sias and Jablin (1995, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) describe how the type of relationship a supervisor develops with his/her employees affects the relationships employees develop among themselves. For example,

- *'Boss's blue-eyed boy'* or members of the leader's in-group may feel extremely comfortable dealing with their boss, but by virtue of the boss's favoritism towards them, feel isolated from rest of their peers.
- *'Boss's victims'* or members of the leader's out-group or members treated very harshly by the boss may be drawn in to the social network, or side-lined

in the case of an autocratic boss (for fear of harshness from the boss for including the victim).

Psychological impact of leader's communication style on subordinate

Various studies indicate how a leader's communication style affects the psychological environment of subordinates.

- Fairhurst (1993, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) propose that patronizing and condescending interaction between the boss and subordinates may lead to an undercutting of the formal authority of the boss.
- Parker (2001, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) proposes that an interactive & personal touch to the communication from the boss to his/her subordinates (as opposed to competitive and distant communication) can potentially facilitate communication openness and participative decision making that can ultimately lead to a higher level of satisfaction among employees.
- Abuse of power is detrimental to any organization. Claire (1993 in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) proposes that sexual impropriety at work, especially between superiors and subordinates has a likelihood of resulting in dysfunctional work relationships, ultimately leading to decreased job and life satisfaction and many times, higher employee turnover. Tepper (2000, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) and Bies and Moag (1996, in Krone, Kramer & Sias, 2010) report similar outcomes of verbal and nonverbal hostility and suggest that, "...abused employees more likely to leave their jobs & report lower job & life satisfaction, lower commitment, greater work-family conflict & psychological distress."

Lecture 35: Questions

1. What is power distance and how is it affected by culture?
2. Explain the phenomenon of uncertainty avoidance and describe how it is affected by culture.
3. Describe the relationship between conformity, leadership and culture.
4. What are discussion processes and how are they affected by power distance and individualism?

Lecture 35: Answers

1. Power distance, as described by Hofstede refers to the perceived psychological distance between people at different levels of organizational hierarchy. It is the perception of the ease with which a person at a lower level of organizational hierarchy is able to communicate with and influence a person at a level of organizational hierarchy higher than him/ her. The higher the power distance, the more difficult it is perceived to be to connect with a person at a higher level of organizational hierarchy. Power Distance Index is a measure of this perceived psychological distance.
2. Hofstede described uncertainty avoidance as the inclination to avoid events and situations that could not be predicted. According to Hofstede, some cultures relied heavily on information they had about themselves and their environments to make decisions. Conversely, there were other cultures that relied on their preparedness to deal with uncertain situations. Such cultures did not actively take steps to avoid uncertain situations. Instead, their members took steps to enhance their own capacities and prepare themselves for uncertain situations and events that came their way. Uncertainty Avoidance Index refers to a measure of the tendency to avoid risk and uncertainty.
3. Conformity of behaviour refers to behaviour that matches the behaviour expected in a group. Shaw (1976, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) Conformity is important as it "... introduces order & coordination of individual behaviors & expectations from group members."

Shaw (1976, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that based on the influence individuals perceive their social groups have on them as a result of the information they receive from various sources, the desire of members to conform to their group behaviors is a result of what individual members perceive they will gain by conforming to the group. e.g. If group members see that conforming to the group will bring them opportunities they can use to further their own independent goals, then they will feel the need to conform.

Shaw (1976, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) also suggests that based on the influence individuals perceive their social groups have on them as a result of their comparison of their own behavior with the behavior of other group members, the desire of members to conform to their group behaviors is a result of what individual members perceive their group expects from them. e.g. If group members see that not conforming to the group will disadvantage the group activities, or by not conforming to the group, they may stand the risk of being singled out, they will feel the need to exhibit behavior that is similar to the behavior of the rest of the group members.

Frager (1970, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996), Milgram (1961, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) and Shaw (1976, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggest that individuals who have a tendency to conform, expect others to conform to their directions when the situation arises, and hence may have a tendency to be authoritative. Such individuals also prefer to follow structure, may be traditional, are usually loyal to the group, comply with status & rules, and are dependent upon social approval.

Lustig and Cassotta (1996) referring to Hofstede (1980) suggest that "... individuals less likely to conform are non-authoritative, independent, individualistic, & self-reliant." It may be safely assumed that such individuals do not expect others to conform either and may prefer a more democratic, participative style of leadership than individuals who like to conform.

4. Discussion processes refer to intra-group conversation patterns in the decision making process that group members use in order to accomplish their tasks (Lustig & Cassotta, 1996).

Discussion Processes and Power Distance

Hofstede (1980 & 1984, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that cultures with high Power Distance Index expect their members to adhere to group norms, and depend on the maintenance of social inequality for maintenance of social and organizational structure, in turn resulting in a non-democratic type of decision making process. The focus in such cultures, which from the above description can be safely assumed to be high context, is maintenance of relationships and hierarchies of relationships within organizations and society. The discussion processes among leaders and followers in such cultures are usually directional and informational.

Conversely, Hofstede (1980 & 1984, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that cultures with low Power Distance Index do not insist on adherence to group norms, and instead prefer to afford some flexibility to the group members in the interpretation of group norms. Such cultures encourage maintenance of social equality within groups and encourage democratic decision making processes.

The focus in such cultures, which from the above description can be safely assumed to be low context, is achievement of goals through focus on the tasks at hand. The discussion processes among leaders and followers in such cultures are usually participative and both the leaders and followers have the power to initiate the final decision as long as they are able to convince the rest of the group members.

Discussion Processes and Individualism

McDonough (1982, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that in individualistic cultures, members are encouraged to be verbose and speak their minds at length. Conversely, McDonough (1982, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that in collectivistic cultures members are not encouraged to speak their minds regarding the task at hand. But, Hofstede (1980 & 1984, in Lustig & Cassotta, 1996) suggests that "...Collectivist cultures more likely to engage in long discussions than individualistic cultures", though most of these discussions play the role of face saving and relationship maintenance processes.

Lecture 36: Questions

1. Describe the significance of written communication in business settings.
2. Describe the limitations of written communication in business settings.
3. What is the indirect or opaque style of writing and when and why might it be used in professional settings?
4. What is the stilted or redundant style of writing and when and why might it be used in professional settings?

Lecture 36: Answers

1. Eyres (2003) suggests that written communication is more permanent than oral communication. Writing things down facilitates the creation and maintenance of a historical *record* of events. This record can then be retrieved whenever required. In addition to this, when we speak, the amount of information we exchange with others is limited. And the amount of attention we receive from the person we are speaking to is limited. Writing gives us an opportunity to include as much *detail* as possible without risking the loss of an opportunity to share all the information we have with the person who can do something about it. Written communication can also be used as *proof* to support the claims being made at a later date. Since oral communication is transitory, and our memories are limited, a large chunk of the information exchanged during oral conversations is liable to be forgotten. Writing helps create a more permanent record, which then can be used as an *aid to memory* when required. The detail included in written records can be used to *reconstruct past events* to gain an understanding of the context(s) in which past events took place. The past events so re-constructed can be used to *establish knowledge, notice, or intent* of the organization or individual at a relevant time.
2. Despite its obvious advantages, written communication has its limitations especially where one on one communication is concerned. Firstly, written communication does not provide an opportunity for feedback. This, as discussed in previous lectures, may have a bearing on the manner in which messages transmitted through this channel are interpreted. Secondly, written communication does not provide an opportunity for revisions or explanations. It becomes the proverbial arrow that is taken out of the quiver and shot from the bow. Once it leaves the sender, there is really nothing the sender can do to influence the outcome. And lastly, unlike oral communication that may be supported by non-verbal communication which may support or weaken their intended interpretation, written messages travel alone. The words that are chosen to transmit the message and the way these words are placed in the message and the way the choice and placement of the words, determine the interpretation and subsequently the impact of the message.

3. The *indirect or opaque style* of communication according to Ewing (1974) refers to a style that is specifically designed to leave loose ends and room for multiple interpretations. This style is also used for designing messages that deflect responsibility. The typical word categories used in this style are, modifiers and euphemisms. Hedging may be used to further confound the meanings of words and sentences. Hedging is a technique used to make the message sound tentative and unsure. Messages are usually written in passive voice or third person. For example, "It is expected that team members reach the office on time. Late comers may be penalized." Who expects the team members to reach and who will take note of late-comers is not mentioned. The word 'may' in the second sentence leads the readers to believe that the penalty associated with coming late is not definite. A typical directive for office discipline will not sound like this statement. But an office policy designed to allow room for flexibility for some members of the team may be drafted in this manner.

4. The *stilted or redundant style* of communication according to Ewing (1974) refers to a style that is used to remind subordinates of one's authority, or scare someone or give someone a cold shoulder. This style of writing uses a lot of pompous words, outdated phrases, overly formal words and phrases. Messages are usually written in third person and drafted in a manner that indicates a reference to a higher authority in terms of expertise, hierarchical position, or policy. This style is best suited to discipline more experienced subordinates and experts within a team. For example, "As per rule number 13.a.(iii).7, the staff is hereby directed to report to the aforementioned for further instructions."

Lecture 37: Questions

1. Describe the common categories of mistakes writers commit especially when communicating in professional settings.
2. What might be the reasons for the mistakes mentioned in response to question 1?
3. Describe the communicative purposes of commonly used written messages/ documents in professional environments.

Lecture 37: Answers

1. Hacker (2002) describes some common categories of mistakes written communicators tend to make
 - Abstraction: Abstraction refers to the use of complicated rather than concrete language. For example, "She plunged into a sea of platitudes, and with the powerful breaststroke of a channel swimmer, made her confident way towards the white cliffs of the obvious" (Parody, 2004, p. 51)
 - Bypassing: Bypassing happens when different meanings are associated with the same word symbol or when different symbols are used to identify the same idea or object. For example, when your colleague tells you that her "mouse is dead".
 - Fact inference: Fact inference refers to a need to conclude without taking the time to analyze all the facts. Such errors prevent us from being thorough with our work. For example, if a person finds an important file missing from his/her office, he/she immediately concludes that the cleaning staff may have either taken it or misplaced it.
 - Misused words: Sometimes we get confused between the meanings of similar sounding words or overlapping schemata. This can lead to incorrect usage which can in turn lead to misinterpretation. For example, the fine line between Juxtaposition and Superimposition, OR seeing and watching.
 - Overgeneralization: Overgeneralization refers to stereotyping or sweeping statements. These stereotypes or sweeping statements can prevent us from providing enough information in our messages. For example, after observing a couple of television programs on yoga in which the instructor belongs to India, a person belonging to a country other than India concludes that all Indians are proficient in yoga.

- Extremism: Extremism refers to a tendency to see the world simplistically, in black and white, rather than in shades of grey. For example, statements like, 'Research essentially deals with proving or disproving a hypothesis'
 - Inflexibility: Inflexibility refers to rigidity in our awareness of the world around us. For example, when I was growing up, I learnt that apples cannot grow at the foothills of mountains, so even now I believe that it is impossible to grow apples at the foothills of mountain ranges.
2. The above mentioned mistakes confound meanings of messages and put a question on the credibility of the author of these messages. When one is communicating orally, there is always a chance to seek clarity on the meaning of the message. But in written communication, this is almost impossible.

Many times, the reasons for the above mentioned mistakes lie in the differences in the styles and procedures adopted by different organizations in different kinds of cultures. People write the way they have been trained to, and many times they do not realize that the receivers of their messages may be interpreting their messages in ways that are not intended. Since the attributes of written messages differ across cultures even when the language of communication is the same, often times authors get confused regarding the style they should use while writing to people across the border.

3. Written messages serve specific purposes in professional environments. Some of these purposes with the type(s) of documents used towards these intents are tabulated below:

Intent	Examples of documents
Persuasion	Resume, cover-letter, business proposals, sales pitches, advertisements
Direction	Orders, policies, rules and regulations
Advice	Letters, emails
Giving Information	Reports, memos, notices, circulars, blogs, quotations and other financial documents
Seeking information	Inquiries, requests, calls for explanation
Defending	Legal
Acknowledgement and appreciation	Letters of recommendation, awards
Idea generation	Blogs, discussion boards

Lecture 38: Questions

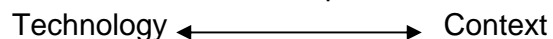
1. What is technology?
2. What are the limitations posed by communication mediated by technology?
3. What are the factors affecting the effectiveness of computer mediated communication?
4. Describe the psychological effects of interactivity.

Lecture 38: Answers

1. According to the Encyclopedia of Science, Technology and Ethics, "Technology may be broadly defined as the making and using of artifacts. In its simplest forms, however, use will involve no more than natural objects, and in more abstract instances fabrication and use can both be concepts..." (Briggle, Mitcham & Ryder, 2005, p. 1908, in Malik, 2007).

Even though technology develops as a result of a need to save time and energy, the actual use of technological innovations may vary from the manner they were designed to be used in.

Jackson (1996) proposes that the context in which technology develops determines its form and the manner in which a technological innovation is used, which, in turn, affects the context in which it is used. So, in effect, technology and the context of development and use are interdependent.



2. Culnan & Markus (1987, in Walther, 2010) suggest that communication mediated by the computer may be assumed to pose the following limitations:
 - "Communication mediated by technology filters out many cues found in face to face interaction
 - Different media filter out or transmit different cues
 - Substituting technology-mediated for face-to-face communication will result in predictable changes in intrapersonal and interpersonal variables."
3. The factors that affect the effectiveness of technology mediated communication may be summarized as follows:
 - *Limitations posed by non-verbal cues*
 - Social presence theory
 - Media richness theory
 - Signalling theory
 - Assessment signals

- Conventional signals
- *Experience and perception*
- *Social influence theory*
- *Channel expansion theory*
- *Interpersonal adaptation and exploitation of media*
- *Hyperpersonal CMC*
 - *Effects among senders*
 - *Attributes of the channel*
 - *Effects due to receiver processes*
 - *Feedback effects*
- *Warranting*
- *Efficiency framework*
- *ICT succession*

4. Psychological effects of interactivity

- *Manipulation check* (Kalyanaramanam & Sundar, 2006; Liu & Shrum, 2002; Sundar & Kim, 2005, in Lee & Sundar, 2010): The scope that technology allows for deception, and the availability of information over the internet to detect this deception seems to have created detectives in the modern day user of communication technologies. The minute we hear an unfamiliar name, we immediately open up our favorite search engine and look for as much information as we can find over the internet in the hope of ensuring credibility of the target of our search.
- *Induction of a sense of telepresence* (Coyle & Thorson, 2001, in Lee & Sundar, 2010): The pervasive use of communication technologies has led to a need for telepresence among the modern day users of communication technologies. Cell phones, which were a luxury even ten years ago, are a necessity now. Your local vegetable vendor, or rickshaw puller may not have a home, but will definitely feel the need to have a basic cell phone to stay connected with his family or customers. Many of us routinely visit the internet and search for our names in the hope of finding out what other people think about us or our work.
- *Need for orientation* (Tremayne & Dunwoody, 2001, in Lee & Sundar, 2010): Since the whole world is now connected over the internet or through the cell phone, everyone who wants to stay connected has had to accept that the people they might want to stay connected to may have changed the way they prefer to communicate and they need to learn to use these new technologies. For example, the older, pre-internet generation has had to accept that receiving typed

grammatically incorrect emails instead of beautifully calligraphed handwritten letters, may not be such a bad thing.

- *Interactive devices on a site such as clicks & drags, tend to trigger conscious processing of stimuli* (Sundar & Constantin, 2004, in Lee & Sundar, 2010): The downside of technology based communication is that actions that we were conditioned to respond reflexively to earlier, are now dependent upon our recognition of and wait for the icon that permits us to click on something we see on the screen before we respond to it. If we look at it closely, this has added another step in our communication processes, and may have affected our spontaneity.
- Research has demonstrated that higher interactivity can lead to:
 - “Distraction, disorientation, cognitive overload, frustration, and high expectations [from participants other than ourselves in an interaction event]” (Bucy, 2004 b; Bucy & Tao, 2007; Sundar, 2000, in Lee & Sundar, 2010).
 - “High levels of engagement thereby forcing central processing and hence close scrutiny of content” (Sundar, 2007 b, in Lee & Sundar, 2010).

Lecture 39: Questions

1. What is a crisis, and what are the characteristics of a crisis?
2. Describe the different types of crises.
3. Describe how communication is affected during a crisis situation.
4. Describe how reputation and public image may be managed during crisis situations.

Lecture 39: Answers

1. A crisis may be defined as, "...[a] major catastrophe that may occur either naturally or as a result of human error. It can include tangible devastation, such as the destruction of lives or assets, or intangible devastation, such as the loss of an organization's credibility. In the latter case, the loss of credibility may be the result of management's response to tangible devastation or the result of human error" (Argenti, 1998, in Schultz, 2006).

Hermann (1963) suggests that, "An organizational crisis (1) threatens high-priority values of the organization, (2) presents a restricted amount of time in which a response can be made, and (3) is unexpected or unanticipated by the organization."

Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2010) propose a 'working definition' of an organizational crisis. According to them, "An organizational crisis is a specific, *unexpected*, and *nonroutine* event or series of events that create high levels of *uncertainty* and simultaneously present an organization with both *opportunities* for and *threats* to its *high-priority goals*."

Described very simply in the context of an organization, an unexpected, irreversible event that disrupts the routine activities of an organization, and results in irreparable damage to some aspect of the organization's work or output or reputation or resources etc. is usually referred to as a crisis.

According to the definition proposed by Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2010), the characteristics of a crisis entail,

- a. An element of surprise
- b. Nonroutine problems
- c. Uncertainty regarding how these nonroutine problems can and should be dealt with
- d. Opportunities that may arise as a result of these nonroutine problems that facilitate new ways of dealing with issues, and growth as a result of these nonroutine challenges
- e. Threats to "image, reputation, or high priority goals."

2. The types of crises or unexpected emergencies that organizations may face may be categorized as (Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger, 2010)

- *Intentional Crises*: Intentional crises refer to disastrous events that effected by human beings, and planned, and executed with the explicit intention of damaging an organization or the social fabric of the environment that the organization is a part of.

These may be further classified as:

- Terrorism: Terrorism damagers the social fabric of the environment. Organizations that are based in a terror-stricken region become vulnerable to crises.
- Sabotage: Sabotage refers to intentional harm brought upon on an organization by someone belonging to the organization, usually for personal gain. Sabotage is unexpected because most organizations thrive on trust, and do not expect their employees to stab them in their backs and misuse the trust placed in them to take advantage of their vulnerabilities. Sabotage can be very dangerous because the word of an employee of an organization is perceived to be believable and credible. So, exposure of the vulnerability of an organization by someone on the inside is easily taken at face value by stakeholders and others, and leaves the organization open to being taken advantage of.
- Workplace deviance: Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2010) talk about workplace violence as a type of intentional organizational crisis. But, for the purpose of this lecture, we will use a broader term – workplace deviance, of which violence is a part. As the term suggests, workplace violence refers to violent behavior in the workplace. This may be a result of poor employee relationships or frustration caused by lack of coherence between employees and employers or uncertainty regarding job stability etc. Workplace deviance may be a result of similar factors in addition to misusing official resources for personal gain on one end, and completely ignoring office responsibilities on the other.
- Poor employee relationships: Poor relationships between employers and employees may lead to unionization, which may affect the smooth functioning of an organization.
- Poor risk management: Poor handling of risks leads to loss of the stakeholders' faith in the organization, which sometimes can be fatal for the organization.

- Hostile takeovers: “Hostile takeovers occur when the majority of an organization’s stock is purchased by a rival organization” (Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger, 2010). This results in change of leadership, which further results in change of the preferences of leaders, which, in turn, results in uncertainty among currently employed personnel, or, at times, even loss of employment for a significant number of frontline personnel. This can lead to disastrous consequences like strikes by current employees or aggressive reactions by the employees that have lost their jobs.
- Unethical leadership: Often times the people heading the organization resort to unethical behaviors to maximize their own personal gain. This results in dissatisfaction among the employees at lower levels, in addition to their loss of faith in the organization. Once their threshold for tolerance for unethical behavior by their superiors has been reached, the employees may react in ways that may be disastrous for their organizations.
- *Unintentional Crises*: The second category of crises proposed by Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2010) deals with crises that are not planned, that, in most cases, cannot be predicted, and that cause complex irreparable damage. These are further categorized as:
 - Natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, etc. which cause loss of human life and property and affect the day to day functioning of organizations.
 - Disease outbreaks like cholera, malaria, avian flu’ etc. These, again, cause a lot of human misery, which in turn affects the human resource input in an organization, which can result in large costs towards provision of health benefits, delays in output, and productivity of the organization in general.
 - Unforeseeable technical interactions, which may include power grid failure, or electronic virus attacks, etc., which could impact the quality and quantity of output.
 - Product failure: Often times, minor lapses in the production process can cause major products to malfunction. For example, the recent recall of Maruti cars that were discovered to have faulty steering wheels (http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-11-27/news/44520252_1_maruti-suzuki-india-dzire-steering-problem, retrieved 01 December, 2013), may have cost the organization a lot of money, in addition to negative impact on the image of the company.

- Downturns in the economy, which cause a reduction in the purchasing power of consumers, which, in turn cause a reduction in the sales of the organization, which affects revenues, which might lead to a need to rightsize and re-structure the organization to maximize returns.

Describing the development of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory, Coombs (2007) describes the types of situation crises by crisis clusters.

The first in this list is the Victim Cluster. This cluster is characterized by “weak attributions of crisis responsibility and hence, mild reputational threat.” Since the organization and its employees are perceived and portrayed as ‘victims’, and the responsibility for the crisis is attributed to reasons beyond the control of the members of the organization, it is assumed that the reputation of the organization among its stakeholders will not be affected. Coombs (2007) lists the following causes of crises in the Victim Cluster:

- *“Natural disaster:* Acts of nature damage an organization such as an earthquake.
- *Rumor:* False and damaging information about an organization is being circulated.
- *Workplace violence:* Current or former employee attacks current employees onsite.
- *Product tampering/ Malevolence:* External agent causes damage to an organization.”

The second cluster of situational crises, according to Coombs (2007) pertains to accidents. The accidental cluster, according to Coombs (2007), refers to accidents that may have happened within the organization, but were clearly not caused intentionally, and hence were unexpected. As a result, the organization resists assumption of responsibility for the crisis, but since the accident took place within the organization, the news of the accident reaching the stakeholders poses a “Moderate reputational threat’ to the organization. Coombs (2007) lists the following causes of crises in the Accidental Cluster:

- *“Challenges:* Stakeholders claim an organization is operating in an inappropriate manner.
- *Technical-error accidents:* A technology or equipment failure causes an industrial accident.
- *Technical-error product harm:* A technology or equipment failure causes a product to be recalled.”

The third cluster of situational crises proposed by Coomb (2007) refers to crises that could have been prevented. It is assumed that, “the organization knowingly placed people at risk, took inappropriate actions or violated a law/ regulation.” As a result,

the stakeholders attribute the responsibility of the crisis to the organization and its employees, and because it is believed that these crises could have been averted, there is a high risk of damage to the reputation of the organization. Coombs (2007) lists the following causes of crises in the Preventable Cluster:

- *“Human-error accidents:* Human error causes an industrial accident [Like breakdown of machinery that was reported to be malfunctioning at an earlier time, etc.]
- *Human-error product harm:* Human error causes product to be recalled.
- *Organizational misdeed with no injuries:* Stakeholders are deceived without injury.
- *Organizational misdeed management misconduct:* Laws or regulations are violated by management.
- *Organizational misdeed with injuries:* Stakeholders are placed at risk by management and injuries occur.”

Whatever the reason, and whatever the type of crisis, an urgent need arises to tackle the crisis immediately, and salvage whatever can be salvaged. In order to be able to tackle a crisis, it is important to know what really happens to the communication processes during a crisis.

3. Smallman and Weir (1999) suggest that during a crisis, communication and transmission of information take on a life of their own. According to them, during a crisis, the “transmission of data [becomes] more rapid and spasmodic”, the “processing of information may [become] erratic and [may occur] on an irregular basis”, cultural assumptions and contexts become more prominent and affect the judgment and perceptions of the participants in such a strong manner that there is a risk of destruction of ‘formal structures’ in an organization, the “communication becomes more fluid”, and silos spring up (Mintzberg, 1979, in Smallman & Weir, 1999). Mazzei and Ravazzani (2010) suggest that in a crisis situation, despite contingency planning and best efforts claimed on the part of the senior administration, high ambiguity occurs in internal communication, and the line managers and junior employees feel left out and not heard and not cared for.

Billings, Milburn and Schaalman (1980) describe how a crisis may be perceived by the affected parties. The process of perception of a crisis, according to Billings, Milburn and Schaalman (1980), may be divided into three primary stages that include, sensing a problem, defining a problem as a crisis, and the resultant perception of the crisis. Sensing a problem is in turn dependent upon the ‘size of the discrepancy between the indicators of the existing state, and the desired state’ of the matter at hand. This contributes to the perceived value of possible loss due to the unexpected event. The ‘confidence in accuracy of desired state and the indicators’ of the existing state, coupled with ‘alternative explanations for apparent discrepancy’,

and the 'response uncertainty about the efficacy of response including inaction, routine solution, or original solution', all contribute to the perceived probability of loss due to the unexpected event. Lastly, the perceived negative consequences of disregarding the problem, and the 'perceived time to search for a satisfactory solution', contribute to the perception of time pressure to solve the problem(s) at hand and bring the organization back to a stable state. These perceptions of possible loss, probability of further losses, and time pressure, constitute the definition of the crisis, and lead to an understanding of the extent of the crisis at hand.

4. Various theories have been proposed for management of reputation during crises through communication:

Coombs and associates (2010) suggest two primary ways of salvaging reputation and public image during crises:

- *Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)*: Situational Crisis Communication Theory posits that reputation management efforts should only occur after addressing public safety, both physical & psychological
- *Corporate apologia*: Corporate apologia refers to a genre of communication that is used to save face and salvage reputation among stakeholders through an amalgam of apology and explanation during a crisis. Coombs and associates suggest that this may be achieved through:
 - Dissociation (Hearit, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2006; Hearit & Brown, 2004, in Coombs et al., 2010):
 - Opinion/ knowledge dissociation: Charges against organization have no merit & do not match the facts of the situation
 - Individual/ group dissociation: A few bad apples are bringing a bad name to the whole organization
 - Act/ essence dissociation: One bad act cannot be representative of the true nature of the entire organization
 -
 - Image repair theory (Benoit & Pang, 2008, in Coombs et al., 2010): Organizations have reputations (images) that are valuable to the corporation and warrant protection when threatened.

Strategies used for image restoration

In many cases, the public image of the organization facing the crisis takes a hit during a crisis. Benoit (1997) discusses the strategies that organizations have been observed to adopt to restore their lost glory following a crisis:

- *Denial*:

- Simple denial: Completely denying any involvement in the activity: 'We did not do this' or 'This did not originate in our organization'
- Shift the blame: Attribution of the causes of the crisis to reasons beyond the control of the organization: 'It is someone else's fault, not ours.' OR 'We could not control the reason for the crisis, so we cannot be held responsible'
- *Evasion of responsibility by attribution of the reasons for the crisis to:*
 - Provocation: Response of an act of another: 'We did this because so and so left us no choice but to act in this manner, else we would not have made this mistake'
 - De-feasibility: Refers to lack of feasibility due to inadequate information & control: 'It was too late to have changed our decision' OR 'We made our decision based on the information we had at the time. If we had a different set of information, our decision would have been different than the one that caused the crisis'
 - Accident: Refers to a genuine accident: 'We did everything by the book and still could not avert this disaster, and we don't know why'
 - Good intention: Refers to genuine interest in acting in the best interests of the organization and stakeholders: 'We had no intention to hurt or inconvenience anyone'
- *Reducing offensiveness of event by:*
 - Bolstering: Emphasizing on the organization's positive characteristics: 'We do X and Y and Z well, so one unfortunate incident does not make us all that bad'
 - Minimization: Reducing the perceived losses caused by the event by downplaying its impact: 'This is nothing. We've seen and overcome much worse.'
 - Differentiation: "Act less offensive": 'We aren't denying our responsibility. We were ready and prepared to deal with an event like this, if and when the need arose.'
 - Transcendence: Appeal to more significant logic and make the current crisis event seem like a necessary setback to achieve a higher, more important goal.
 - Attack the accuser: "Reduce credibility of accuser": 'People staying in glass houses should not throw stones at others.'
 - Compensation: Admission of responsibility and reimbursement to victim(s) for damages they may have suffered as a result of the crisis.

- *Corrective Action*: Admission of responsibility and initiative to solve current problem or prevent similar problems in future.
- *Mortification*: Admission of responsibility and apology for act.

Culture & image repair: The strategies used for impression management and image repair would depend upon the internal culture of the organization and the culture of the social environment the organization is a part of, specifically, the orientation of these cultures towards uncertainty avoidance, face negotiation, and long-term vs. short-term post crisis relationship.

Lecture 40: Questions

1. What are deontological, teleological and egalitarian approaches to ethical behaviour?
2. Describe the concept of dialogic ethics and discuss how one might engage in ethical dialogue during interactions.
3. What are discourse ethics?
4. Discuss the applications of ethical communication in professional settings.
5. What is plagiarism? Why might people resort to unethical practices in written communication?

Lecture 40: Answers

1. *Deontological approaches*

Deontological approaches to ethical behavior suggest that if something is right for one member of a group, it is right for everyone else in that group. This, in turn, points towards the relative interpretation of acts by different members of a group. i.e. The interpretation of an act of a member of an organization as ethical or unethical depends upon the interpretation of similar acts of other members of the same organization as ethical or unethical (Emmanuel Kant, in Anderson & Ross, 2002; Owakah & Aswani, 2011).

Teleological approaches

Teleological approaches deal with a philosophical study of how goals and outcomes can shape human behavior. Teleologists believe that the choices people make about their behavior are a result of their interpretation of the goal they hope to achieve as a result of the choices they make. So, if the end result serves a purpose (utilitarianism), the choices must have been right. Or if the end result seems right, the process involved in achieving that end result does not matter (consequentialist ethic) (John Stuart Mill, in Anderson & Ross, 2002). Teleologists believe that the explanation of events should be based on the 'ends of aims, intentions or purposes' instead of the reasons that led to those aims, intentions and purposes (Flew, 1984, in Anderson & Ross, 2002).

Egalitarian approaches

Egalitarian approaches evaluate communication using the criterion of equality. Egalitarian approaches study whether the "...conditions produced by the communication [have] enhanced or hindered equal treatment for the individuals who are affected by it?" (Anderson & Ross, 2002). Singer (1996, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) describes the *egoistic ethic* as the evaluation of the outcome of the communication event as good or positive or gratifying, for the person doing the evaluating, as opposed to good or positive or gratifying for everyone. Rawls

(1971, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) emphasizes upon the importance of the *veil of ignorance criterion* in ensuring egalitarian consequences of communicative events and describes it as the "...dissociation of oneself while evaluating a communication event so that egoism does not creep in."

2. Dialogic ethics consider the impact of conversation on interpersonal comfort zones. Martin Buber (1958, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) suggested the differences in the impact of the I-Thou relationship versus the I-It relationship on the communicating parties, i.e. in and through communication, creation of a perceptual reality that the target of our conversation is a human being versus an object or a thing to be used. Buber (1958, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) differentiated between the conditions of being and seeming. According to Buber (1958, in Anderson & Ross, 2002), the condition of being refers to responses by the interacting parties in terms of the demands of the immediate situation, and the condition of seeming refers to objectification of one interacting party by the other in an attempt to manipulate the objectified party and its reactions for personal gain. According to Buber (1958, in Anderson & Ross, 2002), the I-Thou relationship is established in conversation when ideas and communication evolve through the quality of communication between the interactants (described as the 'natural unfolding of ideas') and is based on mutual respect, and the I-It relationship is established in conversation through propaganda and persuasion using the relationship of the interactants (described as the 'imposition of ideas') and is based on objectification of the parties by each other. Buber (1958, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) suggests that ethical dialogic communication is effected through inclusion, i.e. maintenance of individual perspectives by the interactants "... while simultaneously imagining the experienced reality of the other communicators from their perspectives..."

Johannesen (1990, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) suggests the following guidelines for ethical dialogue based on Buber's theory:

- Authenticity: Originality in communication
- Inclusion
- Confirmation of each other's existence in and through dialogue
- Presentness: Dialogue partners "... demonstrate willingness to become fully involved with each other by taking time, avoiding distraction, being communicatively accessible, and risking attachment. One avoids being an onlooker who simply takes in what is presented or an observer who analyzes." (Johannesen, 1990, in Anderson & Ross, 2002)
- Spirit of mutual equality: Or monologue versus dialogue: Effected through giving the other interactant enough reason and opportunity to speak and respecting the direction the conversation takes after the other interactant has presented his/ her point of view.

- Supportive climate: “Dialogue is more of a team effort than a transfer of psychologized meanings from one individual to another.” (Johannesen, 1990, in Anderson & Ross, 2002)

3. *Discourse ethics* (Habermas, 1990, in Anderson & Ross, 2002)

Discourse ethics pertain to the process of discourse, rhetoric, and the intended outcome of the communicative event. Ethical discourse may be effected through:

- Communicative rationality: Communicative rationality refers to a clear set of rules, which, if followed by all interacting parties in a deliberation, is likely to result in a consensus (Habermas, 1979, in Anderson & Ross, 2002).
- Ideal speech situation: An encounter of ideal speech has the following characteristics (Habermas, 1990, in Anderson & Ross, 2002):
 - “Cooperative search for truth” which results in a consensus or a mutually agreed upon interpretation, about that truth.
 - “Force of the better argument”: The ‘better’ or more logical argument is always more acceptable to all interactants than a weak one.
 - All interactants are able to participate in the discourse and “...have equal opportunities to question assertions, introduce their own assertions, and express personal attitudes and wants.”

Wallace (1955, in Anderson & Ross, 2002) proposes the following principles for ethical rhetoric in a democratic society:

- “Communicators in a democratic society should uphold a *standard of knowledge*.” We must know what we are talking about if we want others to listen 😊.
- “Communicators in a democratic society should exhibit a habit of justice.” This includes:
 - Fair and accurate presentation of facts by the interactants
 - Encouragement to unfolding of ideas in the communicative event
 - Encouragement to choice making by the interactants
 - Provision of equal access to the communicative event to all interactants
 - Ensuring that the “...communication does not diminish the freedom of, or the equal treatment available to its participants.”
- “Communicators in a democratic society should enact a *habit of preferring public to private motivations*.” This means that communicators should not only say what they believe but they should also be open to discussing why they believe what

they believe and why should the listeners hear what is being said. This adds to their credibility as well.

- “Communicators in a democratic society should demonstrate a *habit of respect for dissent*.” They should not hide information that may counter their own opinions, and develop the strength of mind to receive and acknowledge the existence of opinions that they may not be able to accept.

4. Applications of ethical communication

- *Negotiations*: Malhotra (2004) and Tenbrunsel and Diekmann (2007) suggest that people may lie in corporate negotiations for the following reasons:
 - Temptation: Lying about one’s weaknesses or portraying that one has more than what one really has is perceived to be a powerful impression management strategy. One is tempted to lie about one’s weak points because of the fear of losing an opportunity, or because one feels that one may not get caught.
 - Attraction to uncertainty: One may also lie in negotiations to test the limits of the other party and see how far one can get away with a lie.
 - Enjoying the powerlessness of the other: Lies are usually used to enhance one’s position. One tends to lie in negotiations to give an impression that one is more powerful than the party one is negotiating with. This may be an ego booster for some.
 - “To avoid hurting the other side’s feelings or to save face.
 - To defend yourself when you sense that your opponent is being deceptive.
 - To restore equality and justice when you feel wronged.
 - To make a profit or avoid a loss.”

Menkel-Meadow (2007) suggests that disclosure in negotiations is usually a good idea when:

- “Information is required by law
- Information is in the public domain”
- One has “...information that could inspire reciprocation.”, and
- The information of one party includes “...potentially damaging facts and needs.”

Menkel-Meadow (2007) suggests that disclosure is usually not a good idea in negotiations when:

- One has sensitive or privileged information that may hurt oneself or the other party.
- When one has information that is not one’s to share, e.g. hearsay
- When the information can diminish one’s power in the negotiation event, and
- When one has information that can potentially fluctuate, e.g. stock prices

To be on the safe side, and to have a clear conscience, it is always a good idea to share as much information as possible and as required by the law especially in collaborative negotiations, and to share only the minimal information required in competitive negotiations.

- *Deception*

Deception in communication is effected through "... the ways in which people send messages designed to foster beliefs contrary to what the actor believes is the true state of affairs... and is manifested through impression management or self-presentation..." (Buller & Burgoon, 1994 and Paulo et al., 2000, in Richmond & McCroskey, 2002).

The non-verbal behaviors through which deceptive communication may be detected are (Zuckerman, DePaulo & Rosenthal, 1981, in Richmond & McCroskey, 2002):

- Physiological arousal due to apprehension that one's deceptive behavior may be detected
 - Heightened emotional reactions arising from guilt or fear of detection
 - Cognitive load: The extra cognitive effort required to formulate deceptive messages
 - Behavioral control including efforts to suppress telltale signs and to create a credible demeanor.
- Unethical practices in written communication.

5. Plagiarism (Sutherland-Smith, 2009): The word plagiarism comes from the Latin word *plagiarus* derived from the word *plagium*, which means kidnapping. "Plagiarism is the kidnapping of another person's words." (Sutherland-Smith, 2009). Plagiarism is the act of "... tak[ing] (borrow[ing], st[ealing], misappropriat[ing], pass[ing] off) an 'object' (language [/ style of expression], work, computer images, choreography, graphics) from a source (books, journals, Web [published or unpublished document]) by an agent (student, person, academic) without acknowledgement **with or without the intention to deceive.**" (Sutherland-Smith, 2009)

Some reasons why people may resort to unethical practices in written communication may be:

- Lack of proficiency in a language
- Perception that big words and complicated flowery language will leave a good impression about the author of the written document
- Lack of expertise in the subject being written about
- Lack of awareness that it is inappropriate to copy other's words or ideas without adequate acknowledgement

- Laziness
- Fear of failure
- Peer pressure
- Egotism and the drive for self enhancement to be perceived as a good and voluminous writer/ author
- Pressure to perform
