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Submission Date: 17/ 12/2023

Organisations should have an understanding of group development and dynamics to have a proper understanding of how their workers function and to cultivate the optimal way that they should operate. The theory of Group development was popularised by Bruce Tuckman’s 1965 proposed team-development model; this model includes the forming, storming, norming and performing stages of groups performing at their total capacity. An organisation should be aware of what stage their group is in to navigate any issue appropriately. Group dynamics focus on interactions within a strategic decision-making team, with aspects such as trust or conflict at the forefront. Group dynamics is the internal and external forces affecting both processes and results; it encompasses: communication processes and interaction patterns, interpersonal attraction and cohesion, social integration and influence, power and control, and culture. A conceptual framework of group dynamics is an important heuristic device for workers seeking to assess and understand how any group works (Horák et al., 2022). Organisations that lack cohesiveness in their function will experience issues with their staff. A cohesive work group is one that “sticks together” is bonded into a whole, and the members experience feelings of solidarity, harmony and commitment. Group cohesiveness can be observed in groups that interact regularly and perceive each other to be highly competent at solving problems creatively [(Mutonyi et al., 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?cgZM1p). One of the significant issues this author’s workplace, the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), experiences is a disconnect between upper management and the officers that go out into the field and do the various community engagements.

Despite upper management once being field officers themselves, they seemed to have forgotten the complexities involved in community work; we are constantly given unrealistic timelines to get work done. There also appears to be some distrust as information that should be general to the entire staff is sometimes withheld. This perceived mistrust between management and staff has also caused the team to not always perform to the best of their ability, as some disenfranchisement occurs. A lack of group cohesiveness hampers individual work performance as it is a vital precondition for individual innovative behaviour as it allows for a psychologically safe environment in which team members are free to challenge the status quo and explore new ways of doing things [(Mutonyi et al., 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?2aIGcl). A lack of group cohesion can also influence group members to feel inadequate in problem-solving, sharing knowledge or exchanging advice; I have noticed a sense of competitiveness between coworkers to gain favour from management.

The lack of cohesiveness in the workplace can also be a symptom of destructive leadership traits that occur with those in supervisory positions. Destructive leadership traits are not only a lack of helpful qualities but a set of actions and appearances of particular destructive behaviours that can be direct or indirect, verbal or non-verbal, and have consequences for workplace approaches and productivity. Work-related goals, knowledge, assistance, resistance, organisational goals, and manager exhaustion are helped when employees experience positive interactions and relationships at work [(Nadeem et al., 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?Q1Vwr3).

The precursor for what can be known as organisational toxicity are toxic events and or emotions; these can include to varying degrees, overworking, injustice, mobbing, infidelity, insensitivity, intrusiveness, lack of empathy and emotional intelligence and bullying [(Tekin et al., 2023)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?0lOGZR). Toxic events occurring in a workplace that are ignored can damage an employee’s ties to the organisation as they experience anxiety, stress, depression and burnout. I have seen some of these things occur in my job, perpetuated mainly by those in authoritative positions; the behaviour is sometimes explained as a joke. An employee’s physical and psychological well-being can be affected, affecting productivity and the production of innovative ideas [(Tekin et al., 2023)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?9tobRu).

Although an organisation’s policies may state how the company or group should optimally function, the true reflection of a company’s culture would be expressed by the employees who work there. Organisational climate refers to organisational characteristics reflected in the employee’s description of the policies, practices, and conditions in the work environment[(Rahmat et al., 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?2dvEjh). The boss or supervisor of the organisation or department generally sets the tone for the climate or culture of a workplace; unfortunately, at MYDNS, the environment supervisors establish is one of disjunction between staff and between departments, a lack of cohesiveness. Cohesion encourages strong group interactions, which tend to make greater subordinate involvement, less absenteeism, and increases the energy group members can devote to task-related activities, increasing organisational performance [(Rahmat et al., 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?AJ3MI8).

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences. Job satisfaction creates a feeling that supports the employee, which is related to his work or his condition [(Arif et al., 2019)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?9p2Dof). Unfortunately, everyone is not always able to report having a high level of satisfaction in their jobs. It is primarily the organisation’s responsibility to ensure that employers have a pleasant job experience, as this is directly related to the output given in their work. The MYDNS, whose culture can be described as toxic by some and disjointed by others, has to change the organisation’s culture by encouraging and motivating its staff. Highly motivated and engaged employees reproduce the organisation’s core values and make the organisation successful [(Abdelwahed & Al Doghan, 2023)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?nXnUvE). The MYDNS’s primary mandate is the empowerment of young people of the nation. If the employers themselves don’t feel empowered to do their jobs to the best of their ability, it is less likely that the young people’s lives will be impacted.

MYDNS programmes are generally good ideas before implementation. Still, there is little structure guidance or follow-through during implementation, where people decide to do what they think is best. Unfortunately, poor implementation also occurs when all information is not shared with the relevant stakeholders but kept tight by a select few. The MYDNS regularly has strategic planning (SP) sessions that are supposed to guide the mandates of the ministry; however, in committee meetings for programmes that the ministry facilitates, there are still uncertainties about programs that have previously been developed. SP has long been the preferred approach to strategy formulation in public organisations at all levels of government. Although public administration research considers SP as a fixed routine, and typical measurements of SP only focus on whether a set of steps were conducted, in practice, it is not a fixed routine but has variations based on practitioners, people, processes and plans involved there will be variations which affect influence successful implementation [(George, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?VwFjwr). SPs are not a one-size-fits-all solution to strategy formulation, but rather, practitioners have to consider the optimal combination of processes to increase the likelihood of successful strategic plan implementation. SPs are not a replacement for a lack of formality, comprehensiveness, and stakeholder management and a lack of organisational support and resources [(George, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?xLLaK8).

Failure to pay careful attention to group dynamic by organisations can lead to unproductive meetings and dissatisfied members [(Toseland et al., 2004)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?pIfaFO). “A conceptual framework of group dynamics is an important heuristic device for workers seeking to assess and understand how any group works (Toseland et al., 2004, p.14)”. It enables workers to identify and understand group dynamics as they emerge during interactions; communication processes and interaction patterns are crucial for proper organisational function. These components of social interactions influence the behaviour and attitudes of group members; therefore, exploring this essential element of group dynamics is vital to enhance changes in organisations, including applying behavioural insights that foster strategic decision-making [(Horák et al., 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?hxHVTG).

Organisations such as the MYDNS need to address the problems and organisational issues they have thoroughly, there needs to be an investigative approach beyond the surface level that seeks to determine and address the source of the problems rather than address symptoms. Organisational leads should be invested in validating or invalidating the legitimacy of the issues described [(Levi & Askay, 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?SAiXkT) in a non-biased manner. The investigative team should include team members from various departments and both lower and higher-level employees so as to address ministry-wide issues appropriately; a third party mediator or observer would also be beneficial as the overall lead on such investigative endeavours to ensure that lower-level employees feel comfortable to address any misgivings they may have about the organisations.

Teamwork enables a more productive, creative, satisfying, and empowering way of working; it can help provide emotional support, satisfy belonging needs, and facilitate skill transfer. A well-functioning team is also beneficial for organisations as it improves decision-making, reduces dependency on particular individuals, and can increase commitment (King & Lawley, 2022). The MYDNS needs to see itself as a team no matter how many people are involved and the various departments that make up a whole; if the strategic plans do not include addressing cohesiveness, group dynamics, leadership skills and training, the ministry will not thrive and our youth will be at a disadvantage.

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