Chapter 11
Role of Team Climate in Improving Team Functioning and Team Empowerment

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ABSTRACT
The changing work force dynamics have great impact on organisation effectiveness as it requires proper and deep understanding of organisation structure and working patterns. The organisations are changing their workgroups into teams and that requires deep understanding of how teams are functioning and how they work within the organisation. The social climate plays a significant role in the improvement of the team climate, which provides shared belief amongst the team member of organisations and leads to the development of positive team climate. This chapter refers to the theory of team climate and provides a different perspective that reflects the difference between team climate and organisational climate. The changing work force diversity and pattern of organisation structure really needs understanding of team climate and how it can contribute to developing conducive team climate for learning within the organisation. Further, the chapter emphasises role of team climate in terms of team functioning and team empowerment.


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INTRODUCTION

Concept of Social Climate

The climate represents a team’s “Shared perceptions of organisational policies, procedures and practices, both formal and informal” (Schneider, 1990:22). The Encyclopaedia of Psychology and behavioural science states that Social climate (represents both psychological climate and social context) is typically defined as the perception of a social environment that tends to be shared by a group of people. (pp.1551). Therefore, Climate refers to “the set of norms, attitudes, and expectations that individuals perceive to operate in a specific social context” (Pirola-Merlo, Hartel, Mann, & Hirst, 2002: 564)

Concept of Organisational Climate

During 1930’s an attempt was made by Lewin, Lippitt and White to study how climate had impact on behaviour through induced atmospheres created by the leaders. They found significant relevance in studying the influence of change in behaviour pattern of group members. This lead a stepping stone in understanding climate and its power in influencing the group behaviour. According to Bowen and Ostroff (2004) reflected the understanding of organisational climate is referred as shared perception of what the organization is in terms of practices, policies, procedures, routines and rewards (e.g., Schneider, 2000; James & Jones, 1974; James & Jones, 1979). With the “human relations movement pioneered by Hawthorne, researchers turned their attention from the “hard” physical environment to the “soft” psychological environment; thus the concept of organizational climate was born.” Through the analyses of various contributions of several researches carried out on Understanding behaviour in organisations, yet few of the questions are still unanswered. They are: Why internal climates matter for organisations to be concerned about? What dimensions that focuses on psychological climate are important for understanding behaviour? Thus let us understand the concept of Team climate how it evolved from social climate.

Concept of Team Climate

The Team climate emerges from the “social interactions” among team members (Schneider & Reichers, 1983). Numerous studies observed that “social interactions”, team member’s communication and discuss several characteristics of their environment, and they helped to understand and develop a shared interpretation about “team environment”. This interpretation can be designed according to climate facets
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