A Study of Literature Review on Individual Accountability

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Abstract

Individual accountability behaviour plays a key role in enhancing organizational performance. Hence, study of Individual accountability has numerous practical justifications. To mention a few, focusing on individual accountability develops an important skill that will help organizational team members to identify the appropriate action to take, avoid blaming others, eliminate victim thinking, and stop procrastinating. The key theme of understanding individual accountability is to make employees self aware and take actions to improve situations. Organizational culture lacking accountability is made up of employees who waste valuable time and effort avoiding responsibility, uttering excuses, and "passing the buck." A lack of individual accountability is a common cause of low employee morale which leads to reduced productivity, poor organizational performance, and increased employee turnover. Organizations that are not supportive enough to harness employees personal accountability, make top performing team members confused, frustrated and lead them to seek employment in organizations where accountability is a core cultural value. There is a direct relationship between personal accountability and organizational performance. Quite simply – employees with a high degree of personal accountability perform at a higher level than those who lack individual accountability. Organizational cultures that embrace and promote employee accountability outperform those that lack individual accountability.

This limited review based accountability writings largely demonstrates the mechanistic form of management at work, justifying the stance of the knowing leader as the one who must know and who is there to hold the members accountable for doing what is expected. Most of the literature available on individual accountability talks about making one responsible after the event has occurred. Discussing accountability in connection with self enhancement and power. What needs to be done by organizational leaders to support and enhance accountability, by role clarity, providing open communication systems, empowered decision making. Although a major and significant part in individual accountability behaviour research is to find out what makes an individual accountable to one's own actions and reactions? Simply arriving at a theory and defining what individual accountability is does not take us very far unless issues related with are empirically studied and a measure developed to assess the relevant features of any equation.

Turning to a new form of Individual accountability behaviour, that is part of individuals' values, beliefs and supported by personality traits is the focus of this study.

Introduction

'While pointing a finger to blame someone or something else, remember that there are three fingers pointing right back at oneself.'– Old saying in many cultures, taught to children in schools and by people around; may appear forgotten with time while, observing behaviours of adult in organizations. Lessons taught to us in childhood might not sound relevant at that point in time, but the same might be an important issue for organizations. It's easy to point the finger at others, but far too often one fails to recognize that one may be partially (or even wholly) responsible for the circumstances. This can be a bitter pill to swallow, but as an individual one is almost always accountable in some way or other for one's situation in life and the results (or lack thereof) that one achieves. Individual accountability has become a key issue in today's organizations.

Why is accountability important?

The truth is that accountability is unavoidable. In the workplace everyone is accountable to someone. In a traditional organization employees are individually accountable to their superiors. In a high performance organization team members are individually accountable to each other and mutually accountable to their stake holders. Several employees attempt to avoid accountability sensing that it may be used against them as blame or punishment. But rather than negative fall outs, research indicates that holding employees accountable for their results has positive effects like:

- Greater accuracy of work
- Better response to role obligations
- More vigilant problem solving
- Better decision making
- More cooperation with co-workers and employees
- Higher team satisfaction
- Higher overall performance
- Highly motivated employees
- Role clarity
- High level of satisfaction

When there is no accountability, ***non performers thrive, communication breaks down, territorialism increases and individual fall victim to blaming each other for not achieving goals/results.***

To achieve effectiveness and efficiency at work, organizations are devoting more time in creating empowered work teams in an effort to boost productivity, enhance quality and bolster employee morale. More and more organizations are closer to full empowerment; however, they seem to face an obstacle that is becoming a challenging issue in self-direction. Surely, one can hand over management responsibilities and empower teams with the authority to act, but aren't managers supposed to be accountable? How can one hold a whole team accountable when something goes wrong? This may lead to a situation of pointing fingers at one another. Creating an environment where accountability is clear and fully accepted is a complex task in itself.

Most leaders in organizations across the world have jumped blindly on the "empowerment" bandwagon, working hard to give their employees the power to direct their own workflow.

Theoretically and ideally this sounds great. The philosophy is based on an assumption that as, human beings each one of us would want to be self-directing and acting of our will. At the same time, one also needs to understand that those being empowered are also highly personally accountable. When in fact, empowerment without accountability may lead to chaos! Empowerment and accountability must go hand in hand. When we are funding one without insisting on the other, resources get wasted and dysfunction ailing may occur. (Ref)

Issues like employee engagement and happiness come from the level of personal accountability people exhibit in their own lives. Therefore it has become especially important to spend time and energy explaining and teaching employees how to succeed in spite of their circumstances. In this direction, it may be helpful to "bullet-proof" the employees to face the worst of the external and / or internal circumstances in their organizational life instead of creating "comfort zones". Personally accountable employees are immune to the random "shocks" that come their way.

The key lesson is that accountability means taking responsibility for one's actions, including mistakes. When mistakes are made, the focus should be on learning from the experience.

Leaders or employees who take individual accountability for the situation and focus on what they can do about it manage much better on performance and overall work than those who blame others, procrastinate solutions, and play victim to their circumstances.

A major outbreak of food born illness (listeriosis) in Canada was particularly tragic as it led to 12 confirmed deaths and made many others seriously ill. The outbreak was linked to the Toronto based Maple Leaf Foods Company which was headed by Michael McCain.

With such a tragic crisis, nobody wants to be held responsible, least of all the leader of an organization with so much to lose personally and financially. Given the reality of personal accountability in organizational life, Mr. McCain and Maple Leaf Foods case teaches important lesson on individual accountability.

As mentioned in (write the name of the article), McCain as the head of the organization, publicly took full personal responsibility for the situation and has been incredibly transparent and forthright about the tragedy. McCain provided very clear and concise details about his organizations operations, where the outbreak originated from, and what is being done to control the deadly outbreak as quickly as possible.

In light of the tragic circumstances for which Maple Leaf Foods Company was responsible, McCain made the following statement at a press conference:

"Certainly knowing that there is a desire to assign blame, I want to reiterate that the buck stops right here… our best efforts failed, not the regulators or the Canadian food safety system… I emphasize: this is our accountability and it's ours to fix, which we are taking on fully." Such candid words or personal responsibility for such a tragic event are almost hard to believe in the culture of our times.

McCain could have blamed others for the situation - the Canadian food safety system for not having strict enough safety guidelines, his distributors for not handling the food products properly, his managers and employees for not following internal food safety procedures, or

even the suppliers of the cleaning products his organization uses to disinfect work surfaces - in an effort to save face and not appear responsible for such a tragic nightmare come to life.

He did not. By choosing to take full responsibility and resisting the urge to blame others, McCain stands as a great example of the importance of personal accountability in times of organizational crisis. Because of his candor, honesty, and willingness to accept personal accountability for the events that took place, many expected Maple Leaf Foods to weather this storm and regain their customer's trust.

The belief McCain has is, 'As employees every one of us has the ability to assume leadership and make a difference in the organization in which we work. It all starts with individual accountability.'

John Miller in his landmark book – Question By Question notes that, 'We are all resistant to change to some degree or another. How we react to change, however, is an indication of our own level of personal accountability. Those with a high degree of personal accountability react and adapt to change far better than those with a low degree of personal accountability by asking themselves how they can best adapt to the ever changing world around them.'

Looking at the case of Maple Leaf Foods Company, what differentiates Mr. McCain from others? What is it that makes him personally more accountable in situation of crises? What is it that doesn't allow him to pass the buck and saying that the buck stops here. Is it possible to identify individuals or employees who are individually more accountable than others? Are there Personality factors that motivate or encourage individual accountability behaviours? With these questions as backdrop the present thesis aims to

1. Design an instrument to measure individual accountability behaviour.
2. To study the relationship between personality traits that enhances or minimizes accountability behaviour.
3. Understand the role of counselling technique in modifying non-accountable behaviour.
4. To suggest mechanisms to modify individual accountability in organizations.

Individual Accountability:

The construct of accountability has attracted keen interest in the field of psychology and related disciplines. For example, research has examined the role of accountability in social perception, attitudes, judgment accuracy, organizational behaviour, negotiations, and educational curricula. One reason for this remarkable degree of empirical attention is the potential of accountability to serve as a rule for enforcing vital societal norms (Semin & Manstead, 1983).

Brooks (1995), in a popular press book, provides the following definition of traditional accountability within Western organizations: 'Accountability is a mechanism to ensure that individuals can be called to account for their actions, and that sanctions are incurred if the account is unsatisfactory' (p. 12, italics in text). Brooks emphasizes the following words in his definition: mechanism as a procedural activity; individuals because the activity focuses on individuals while also noting the collective aspect of the term as reasonable and essential; sanctions being seen as essential to performance. Unsatisfactory, as an element of accountability, brings in the personal element of holding offenders to account. He explains

that 'the purpose of sanctions is not to act as a threat to you but as a guarantee to me. Brooks also mentions that since values evolve over time, there is a vagueness and constant flux and impreciseness within the mechanism of accountability in organizations. This flux makes it difficult to say precisely what an unsatisfactory account is, other than within the understanding of the person holding someone to account.

An account, according to Webster's Dictionary, is a verbal or written description of a particular transaction or event; a narrative; an explanatory statement of conduct, as to a superior; a statement of reasons, causes, etc., explaining an event; a reason, basis, consideration. This makes accountability into a coercive mode practiced after-the-event. As noted by Shotter (1984), our ways of accounting for things have a coercive quality to them; only if we make sense of things in certain approved ways can we be accounted by others in our society as competent, responsible members of it. Scott and Lyman (1968), discuss that, the quoted dictionary account, clearly place accountability as an evaluative process after something has gone wrong.

As Lerner and Tetlock (1999) have asserted, accountability is a variable that bridges the individual and the institutional or social structural level of analysis. Stated alternatively, a social structure or social situation can influence individual behaviour through accountability pressures (Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991).

Cummings and Anton defined accountability as 'a calling to give accounts (excuses or justification) to another (or others) for deviation between the event for which one is responsible and organizational expectations or norms.'

Lawrence and Maitlis (2005), after researching the writings, of Garfinkel (1967), Fairclough (1992), Mills (1940), Antaki (1994), and others, agree with Woodilla (1988) that 'accounts are constructed through practices of talking and writing'. In their study of accounts as a segment of sensemaking, they mention, 'Perhaps the most defining characteristic of accounts is that they provide an explanation of an event that has disrupted the flow of everyday life'. Goffman's (1974) work on accounts focuses on the frames of accounts. Frames, according to Goffman, can be understood as a particular form of accounts - an account of the context in which some action occurs, which provides the foundation for making an action sensible and meaningful (noted in Lawrence & Maitlis, 2005). This suggests that an account (frame) can be a motivation /justification for action, making it part of how people make sense of everyday life. As noted by Aram (1990) regarding the American perspective of accountability and individual performance, accountability is individualized; cooperation and collaboration have not been essential to its achievement. Thus, accountability has been localized in the individual.

As noted by Aram (1990), historically, cooperation and collaboration have played only a supporting role in the value structure of many cultures. Individual struggles against nature and the life-threatening frontier (fight or flight) are dominant images. Human relationships are primarily utilitarian. People join together for instrumental reasons, such as their common defense. An unwritten motto in the United States is 'live and let live' (Aram, 1990). After-the-fault or end accountability, as currently practiced, includes account-demanding, account-giving and account-selection activities. Account-demanding is the act of a person in authority calling someone to account to explain something that has been said or done. The person being called to account participates by Account-giving, the giving of excuses and justifications to a superior in response to the account demand- if an opportunity to do so occurs.

After account-giving <u>Account-selection</u> by the person in authority includes acknowledgement/ acceptance/non-acceptance of the given account. (Unfortunately, the person demanding the account may already have assumed a stance that is not adjustable, making it unlikely that authentic account-selection will occur.) The account authority (demander) selects what will be initiated as punishment for the accountable act or behaviour. Because these accountings are usually held when it is too late for adjustment or redemption of the alleged misdemeanor, the event may be experienced as a 'beating of the soul,' as even unfair, cruel and abusive. If not directly abusive, the accounting may include a judgmental "gaze" -a look that suggests a lack of feeling and presence on the part of the demander. Relationships, if they existed in the first place, dissolve through the receiver's assumption of what 'the gaze' means. Levels of mistrust become part of a continuing, unspoken phenomenon in future exchanges.

Within daily work practices there is a tolerance for some degree of ineffectiveness. When there is finally a failure, however, the demander sets in motion after-the-fault accountability 'without,' according to Aram, 'anyone being particularly caring' (1990,). Within this scenario, tolerance of ineffectiveness allows misunderstandings to go unexplained and little mistakes to go unaddressed until the resulting big mistake occurs. Then there are assumptions that specific 'bodies of reason' (Gergen, 1991,) exist that justify the traditional process of calling people on the carpet. This call to account is an effort to punish for doing something seen as 'wrong.' At that moment the person(s) experiencing the demand for an account is seen as 'out' - instead of being 'us,' he or she is a 'them.'

Unfortunately, calling someone to account in Western culture is all too often done in demeaning ways, both publicly and privately. Public, abusive accountability is particularly damaging because of the significance of the humiliation and exploitation experienced by the target. Credibility, relationships, availability of resources and, as noted above, levels of trust diminish. Even when calling to account is not meant to be demeaning, the results are often so because of the sense of it being unsafe to give information to the person in authority. This may occur even though the information might clarify, justify, excuse or explain a misunderstanding. 'I'm being punished; this is unfair' is a likely internal response. The current prominent leadership orientation, I believe, maintains traditional accountability as appropriate. This leadership orientation includes:

- Treating the workers as children
- Limiting opportunities to perform and be involved in organizational outcomes and performance
- Putting specific frames with rigid boundaries around roles and responsibilities.
- Seeing accountability as a method of control, reward and punishment
- Planting and nourishing the seeds of conflict and divisiveness
- Using the 'preferred few' to get things done
- Seeing employee choices as necessarily orchestrated by those in authority
- Limiting the opportunity for others to choose responsibility
- Seeing activities going beyond the leader's desire for 'order' as disobedience, and Malpractice.

As a result of these leadership outlooks and practices, it is routine for organizational members to point the finger of blame elsewhere. Scott (2002) defines this as the accountability shuffle, activities attempting to push accountability upward, downward or sidewise (p. 3). The shuffler has 'given them what they want,' that is, aligned his or her actions around what is perceived as acceptable, but things went wrong anyway. Thus, in his or her mind, blame must

be shuffled to someone else in order to remain credible. Often, the shuffler spends time recruiting others into a mass of employees who blame and shame 'those others.' Shuffling is also an attempt to maintain the status quo in terms of what is expected and safe. Scott's accountability shuffle may also occur when there are strong peer group standards that allow little forgiveness when doing things differently. Giving the excuse of 'they made me do it' is a shuffle of accountability to avoid chastisement from peers-and to cull sympathy for being forced by 'those above' to step out of line.

As noted, under this long accepted scenario, accountability occurs after the fault and is based in the assumption of one-person being fully responsible and accountable for particular actions and/or outcomes. Much effort is expended in locating this one person. If a group is identified as responsible for the fault, the group turns inward to locate the one at fault. Some one person must pay. In writing about 'the logical and appreciative dimensions of accountability,' Cummings and Anton (1999) defined accountability as 'a calling to give accounts (excuses or justifications) to another (or others) for deviation between the event for which one is responsible and organizational expectations or norms' (ref). Even in discussing the appreciative dimensions of accountability, the focus remains on one person causing the problem. Holding one person to account suggests that this one person is fully responsible for the action.

Gergen (1991) suggests, 'As the self as a serious reality is laid to rest and the self is constructed and reconstructed in multiple contexts, one enters finally the stage of the relational self. One's sense of individual autonomy gives way to a reality of immersed interdependence, in which it is relationship that constructs the self. This is not to suggest that the collective person does not make decisions and choices that bring occurrences about - sometimes positively, sometimes catastrophically. Yet, as McNamee and Gergen (1999) state, 'One cannot constitute meaning alone nor engage in a rational choice among competing goods without having absorbed the intelligibilities of a community'.

It is in the conscious 'heedfulness' (Langer, 1997) of others that we can envision the mutuality or interdependence of relational responsibility (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). People together design actions through relational processes of conversation. Although appearing to act singularly, diverse thoughts and actions are coordinated in ways that produce outcomes that cannot possibly be created or claimed alone. Even the traditional practice of individual accountability is co-constructed. It is in Shotter's (1984, p. x) 'joint action' that the emerging flow of interaction produces accountability. 'Joint action produces the conversational resources that enable people to account for their actions' states Lannamann (1999, p. 87-88). As noted by Johann Roux, PhD, a professor, therapist, and consultant from Vanderbijlpark, South Africa, millions and millions of relational interactions create the same amount of possible interpretations. Then in turn, those interpretations drive people's actions in relationship and in the co-creation of accountability inside their relational interactions' (personal communication).

Toward Individual Accountability Behaviour:

Redding (2004) on the need to hold oneself accountable, states, 'It seems that holding ourselves accountable appears to be a key step to helping others do the same'. He suggests that it is 'shifting from holding someone accountable to helping people hold themselves accountable, which includes holding ourselves accountable'. He notes that holding people accountable includes each of us responding to what we are told to do, finding problems and mistakes, following up with interrogations, punishing non-performance and rewarding

performance. This places accountability firmly in a command and control orientation. In a more encouraging stance, Redding goes on to say that holding ourselves accountable is responding to what we see needs to be done; it is to inform people about what is going on and where we are struggling; it is to offer tangible help to resolve issues and achieve objectives and to ask for help as well; and it is to appreciate each other's skills and contributions. Although suggesting the relational aspects of accountability, he focuses on the individualized, internal aspects of accountability.

Therefore, organizations and individuals may not neglect the importance of individual accountability and the present thesis attempts to focus on accountability as an individualized and internal aspect of an individual behaviour.

As noted by Boyatzis, Stubbs and Taylor (2002), 'beyond knowledge and competencies, the additional ingredient necessary to outstanding performance appears to be the desire to use one's talent' (ref). In this research, 'the desire to use one's talent' expands when individuals are clear about themselves and being accountable to themselves and not bothered about the punitive outcomes of accountability as traditionally defined. Knowledge, competency and the willingness to use personal strengths in the organizational context are positively driven.

For organizations, changing from a culture of blame to one of honest, trusting and problem solving usually boils down to the way in which individuals'/ employees are self aware and the way in which they feel accountable for actions initiated by them. This in turn will facilitate the ability to handle their interpersonal relations. Personally accountable people tend to have behavioural pattern like:

- Earn the trust of co-workers, subordinates and leaders. This means preaching what you practice all the time.
- Have the ability to own up one's mistakes publicly and accept the natural consequences for them.
- When mistakes or problems occur, focusing on the future. To correct the problem and prevent it from happening again, steer the discussion to what needs to be done next and away from what was done.
- Intent is not the same as performance. Understanding one's commitment by regularly checking in on progress.
- Being open and transparent. Ability to talk about accountability and expectations. Be aware of potential consequences or implications of one's actions etc.
- Ability to be empathetic

As mentioned in the case of McCain, the focus of present research is on the individual behaviour and understanding why some individuals are able to have a personal choice to rise above circumstances and demonstrate the ownership necessary to achieve desired results by being accountable to oneself without being more concerned about the external audiences and be responsible for their actions even when the outcomes might not be positive.

Thus the concept of Individual accountability is an important issue in today's organizations. In-depth study of the subject is of a great relevance to examine organizational performance.

With this as background, the researcher ventured into studying Individual Accountability behaviour and Personality profile by conducting surveys of employees.

Review of Literature

Individual accountability is defined as a state in which an individual feels a sense of obligation to a situation or event (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Dose & Klimoski, 1995). Behaviours performed due to individual accountability are performed for internal as opposed to external reasons. Such behaviours are considered self-directed in the behaviour management literature (Watson & Tharp, 1993).

For example, considering two hypothetical employees, Employee A and Employee B. Both employees have perfect attendance at their respective organizations. However, their reasons for perfect attendance are different. Employee A reports to work every day because she/he knows perfect attendance is rewarded at the end of each year with a substantial monetary bonus. In contrast, while no such reward is available at Employee B's organization, this individual feels that consistent work attendance is simply the right thing to do. In the scenario just described, Employee A is being influenced by the external contingencies put into place by management. In contrast, Employee B is attending regularly because of feelings of individual accountability.

Individual accountability behaviours are self-directed and not driven by an external accountability system (Geller, 1998a). Self directed behaviours are proposed to be more reliable (Cummings & Anton, 1990). In other words, it is expected that employees who feel individual accountability for organizational processes will perform behaviours to facilitate the process in the absence of external motivators or directives. In addition, research indicates employees who feel personal accountability for organizational processes are also more concerned about output quality (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Redding (2004) writes about the need to hold oneself accountable. Although suggesting the relational aspects of accountability, he focuses on the individualized, internal aspects of accountability. Lebow and Spitzer (2002) define accountability as 'taking personal responsibility for one's own choices and for the results of those choices to oneself and to others. Their emphasis, as with Koestenbaum and Block (2001), is on freedom and responsibility.

Given the definition of individual accountability and its accompanying benefits, the identification of variables that can potentially facilitate such feelings is a meaningful endeavor (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Dose & Klimoski, 1995).

All complex organizations incorporate some sort of control system for the purpose of providing guidelines for employees as well as for managing performance (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kerr & Slocum, 1981; Lawler, 1976; Tannenbaum, 1962). More recently, self-management and other programs that encourage internal, personal control are being promoted to allow organizations to react more favorably to an increasingly dynamic environment and to provide employees with the greater discretion they desire. Even when organizations encourage employees to utilize self management techniques, however, fiduciary, legal, and practical concerns dictate that external control remains a major feature of organizational life. Thus, while in many ways internal and external forces are at odds, both are important for effective organizational outcomes (Lawler, 1976; Manz & Sims, 1980). The question remains as to what organizational practices will allow both internal control and external control to fruitfully coexist. The research is based on an understanding that accountable individual can strengthen organizational outputs. External accountability systems may facilitate and reinforce organizational culture by enhancing individual's feeling of responsibility.

Empirical investigation of the individual accountability construct, however, has not been extensive. Thus, many questions remain regarding the determinants of individual

accountability. For example, research has not addressed the role of individual characteristics in the development of individual accountability. It may be that some employees, due to a personality characteristic, are more likely to feel individual accountability for their work processes and become self-directed in their work assignments. ***The identification of individual factors related to individual accountability could lead to a better understanding of underlying psychological mechanisms. In addition, increased understanding of personality factors contributing to personal accountability could suggest ways to develop, increase, or support this desirable state.*** The identification of environmental variables related to feelings of individual accountability could also be useful. For example, given that some form of accountability or control system must be present in any complex organization, what steps can be taken to maximize employees' feelings of personal responsibility? Many accountability systems do not increase individual accountability for completing a work process. Instead, they focus employee attention on external reasons for task performance. In these situations behaviours are performed essentially to gain a reward or avoid a penalty, not because of internal feelings of personal obligation or responsibility.

Different Parameters of Individual Accountability

1. Non-Mandated Work Processes

The need to facilitate feelings of individual accountability to participate in organizational processes may be even more critical when one considers behaviours *not* mandated by the organization, or work processes comprised of voluntary behaviours. Such behaviours have been studied in organizational settings under a variety of labels. For example, Organ (1988) called this class of behaviours organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) referred to such activities as contextual performance. Other names used to identify this type of behaviour include organizational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), pro-social organizational behaviour (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), discretionary organizational behaviours (Katz & Kahn, 1978), and actively caring (Geller, 1996). Each conceptual label generally denotes behaviour that goes beyond specified role requirements. These are typically behaviours employees are not formally required to perform, nor do they necessarily expect to receive tangible rewards for engaging in them.

Specific examples of this type of behaviour could include volunteering to do extra-work assignments, helping coworkers with personal problems, suggesting procedural or administrative improvements, completing a "near miss" incident report, following rules and procedures even when inconvenient and unsupervised, and openly espousing and defending an organization's objectives. Often performance of these behaviours is hypothesized to be integral to effective organizational functioning (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Katz, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Support for the separation of this class of behaviours from task performance can be found in the research literature (e.g., Borman, White, & Dorsey, 1995; Conway, 1999; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). In a study performed by Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994), supervisors at an U.S. Air Force base were asked to rate 421 mechanics on their task performance, contextual performance, and overall performance. The findings obtained from this investigation indicated that task performance and contextual performance contributed independently to overall performance. Moreover experience was more correlated with task

than contextual performance, and personality variables were more highly correlated with contextual than task performance. These results were interpreted by the authors as support for a distinction between task performance and contextual performance.

A meta-analysis across 14 studies conducted by Conway (1999) also supports the notion that contextual performance contributes uniquely to performance ratings. Unlike the Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) investigation this study focused on the impact of contextual performance on job evaluations for individuals in managerial jobs. It was found that job dedication (a facet of contextual performance) contributed uniquely to evaluations of overall performance. Also, the job dedication - performance evaluation was stronger when peers were doing the performance ratings. Supervisors paid more attention to task performance.

2. Need for Organizational Control:

Modern work organizations are human creations--social systems "anchored in behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, habits, and expectations of human beings" (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Fashioned by human design, organizations are subject not only to the innovation and creativity inherent in individuals, but also to human imperfection, variability, and the resulting synchronization loss. In response, organizations must be proactive, dealing not only with internal change as individual members enter and exit in the organizational system, but also with members' creative solutions to organizational tasks and challenges. Also, it can be argued that an optimum level of variability in human behaviour exists for any organization. Too little variability, and only the most mundane solutions will be brought to bear on organizational problems; too much, and the organization risks disharmony and disintegration. Thus, variability must be encouraged at a manageable level. To achieve optimal variability, organizations coordinate group effort by assigning different functions to different individuals and by specifying rules and sanctions in cases where the functions performed are not directly related to the needs of organizational members (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Organizations also inculcate shared values and expectations (through careful selection and socialization) where common goals and a common understanding of the process to achieve those goals will reduce variability and increase cooperation (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

On another level, the existence of multiple stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Griesinger, 1990; Marcus & Goodman, 1991) dictates the need for organizational control as well. Owners, managers, investors, suppliers, and customers each may have a vested interest in the performance of the organization. However, these interests often do not coincide with what may be preferred by employees. These constituencies tend to focus on different outcomes of structured organizational activity.

For example, intrinsic satisfaction for interesting work performed might be the goal and the focus of employees, while an extrinsic outcome such as return on investment would be the focus of a stockholder group. The existence of internal and external constituencies necessitates control systems to ensure that all parties are following a coordinated agenda. Need for control is also embedded in social, legal, and fiduciary responsibilities and requirements (Folger & Bies, 1989; Osigweh, 1991). Organizations need to defend their business practices to outside parties; therefore, they need predictability.

This requirement usually results in internal regulation. Employees, with their diversity of values and subtasks, may not consistently meet such responsibilities without induced control. For example, mandated programs such as affirmative action require hiring and promotion plans that abide by certain rules. Environmental issues are yet another example. If behaviour

is not managed by the organization, sanctions may be imposed by the external legal system (Steiber, 1989; Werhane, 1985).

These considerations reinforce the need for organizational control. In addition, the current business environment has exacerbated calls for external control. If we look at the recent examples in India, the recent increase in business failures, scandals and in public agencies ---- Satyam, Security Scams of 1992 and 2000 in India (Harshad Mehta and Ketan Parekh), Bhopal Gas Leakage, etc are just tip of the iceberg. Society has an expectation that organizations will be bound by certain social obligations and the legal system has the power to enforce adherence to the rules which society has deemed important (Osigweh, 1991). These considerations reinforce the need for organizational control.

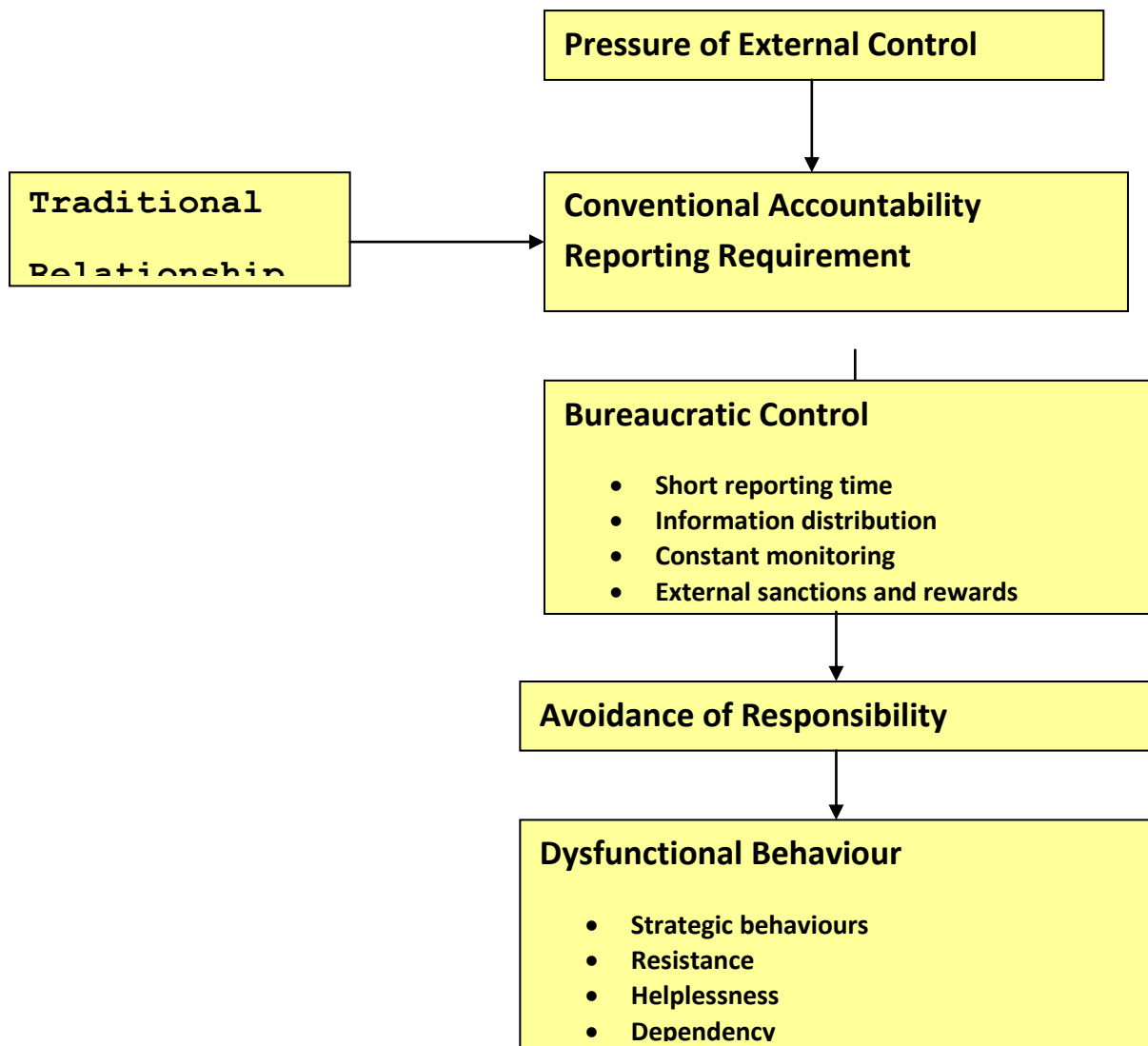## 3. Dysfunctions of External Control Systems

Having established the need for control in order to reduce inconsistency; while dealing with multiple stakeholders; and to respond to social, legal, and fiduciary requirements, how can this best be accomplished? Traditional views of organizational control have stressed mechanisms such as rules, hierarchy, and sanctions, making use of what has been called (employees) behaviour process control and output control strategies (Bacharach & Aiken, 1976; Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976; Ouchi, 1977; Ouchi & Maguire, 1975; Weber, 1947; Williamson, 1979). In a traditional bureaucratic organization, each organizational activity is delineated in terms of the appropriate procedures to follow, permitting only modest deviation; special cases must be approved by a higher-level employee (Lawler, 1976).

Administration of the system falls largely on the supervisor (Cammann & Nadler, 1976). This traditional practice often produces dysfunctional effects. Argyris (1973), for example, made the observation that the more the organization engages in bureaucratic control, the more it inculcates "infant like" dimensions in its employees. A bureaucratic organization expects employees to exhibit childlike dependency--- reliance on the organization and its control systems for appropriate guidance.

In actuality, however, if an employee needs and abilities are unrecognized and underutilized she/he might have a tendency to display frustration and conflict. Lack of control over outcomes results in a state of learned helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Seligman, 1975).

Lawler (1976) has noted the dysfunctional effects of control systems as well. Individuals may use "strategic" behaviours which enable them to be evaluated favorably in terms of control system requirements, but which do not promote the welfare of the organization. If employees feel that standards are set unreasonably high, they may engage in false reporting. Control systems may evoke resistance in employees, especially when these systems reduce autonomy, power, and satisfaction. Compliance (Kelman, 1958), a rather superficial form of conformity, is often a consequence of the operation of traditional organizational control systems. Compliant behaviour tends to produce defensive strategies and motivation to avoid punishment. Individuals do not perform the desired behaviour because they agree with organizational priorities, but rather because their behaviour is being monitored. Confortuity also leads to rationalization and "saving face" in light of poor results or performance (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

Figure 1: Conventional Accountability

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                                    │  Pressure of External Control│
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│  Traditional         │ ───────▶ │  Conventional Accountability │
│  Relationship        │          │  Reporting Requirement       │
└──────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
                                                  │
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                                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                    │  Bureaucratic Control        │
                                    │                              │
                                    │   • Short reporting time     │
                                    │   • Information distribution │
                                    │   • Constant monitoring      │
                                    │   • External sanctions and   │
                                    │     rewards                  │
                                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                                  │
                                                  ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                    │  Avoidance of Responsibility │
                                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                                  │
                                                  ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                    │  Dysfunctional Behaviour     │
                                    │                              │
                                    │   • Strategic behaviours     │
                                    │   • Resistance               │
                                    │   • Helplessness             │
                                    │   • Dependency               │
                                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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The conventional or traditional view of accountability has been to treat it as a form of external control (as mentioned in Fig. i). Accountability, as it has been traditionally conceived, implies having to make an account (Cummings and Anton, 1990), usually in the form of a reporting requirement. In this research, the researcher's point of view is that, this view of accountability will only produce the same dysfunctions of traditional external control. Brooks (1995), in a popular press book, provides the following definition of traditional accountability: 'Accountability is a mechanism to ensure that individuals can be called to account for their actions, and that sanctions are incurred if the account is unsatisfactory' Brooks emphasizes the following words in his definition: mechanism as a procedural activity; individuals because the activity focuses on individuals while also noting the collective aspect of the term as reasonable and essential; sanctions being seen as essential to performance. Unsatisfactory, as an element of accountability, brings in the personal element of holding offenders to account.

In effect, employees are closely supervised, with short time intervals between reporting. Information on performance (compliance) is distributed only to the supervisor. Additionally, (often hidden) monitoring systems which produce constant vigilance for the purpose of control over production yield the resistance behaviours discussed earlier (e.g., Chalykoff &

Kochan, 1989; Grant, Higgins, & Irving, 1988). Moreover, if accountability is used for monitoring purposes, and if individuals know the views of the one to whom they are accountable, they will typically accept those views without engaging in complex information processing (Tetlock, 1983), producing blind conformity (compliance) at best. Finally, with such external control, employees come to be motivated by external sanctions and rewards rather than by the task itself. Thus, their behaviour is aimed at gaining rewards and avoiding sanctions to the detriment of work involvement and acceptance of responsibility. This leads to the first proposition.

Therefore Conventional accountability (merely implementing a reporting requirement) will ***produce reduced levels of felt responsibility and therefore lower level of individual accountability***.

It is hardly surprising that current societal, organizational, and market forces have had the effect of calling even more attention to the dysfunctions of conventional control approaches. ***In fact, many authors see the need for a degree of flexibility not easily found under bureaucratic control (Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992; Walton, 1985).*** To illustrate, corporate downsizing requires that employees operate under decreased managerial supervision. Similarly, job descriptions are being written to greater levels of generality; employees are expected to take on new duties on an ad hoc basis, exhibiting flexibility in response to changing market conditions. Likewise, ***an increased emphasis on service and customer satisfaction and retention means that employees must have expanded discretion in order to meet the diverse and demanding needs of customers.*** Control systems that emphasize "following procedures" are not appropriate when customers are more interested in the final result than in the procedures that led to it. The objective of customer satisfaction calls for requisite variety and differential responses (Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider *et al.,* 1992).

Thus, current societal and market forces, as well as a recognition of the potential dysfunctions of external control, have resulted in a change in thinking regarding the balance of employee rights and responsibilities. That is to say, organizations must give employees more ***discretion and autonomy in order to succeed.*** At the same time, prevailing trends require more accountability and responsibility of employees as they seek to meet the needs of a diverse customer pool. This issue raises the question of whether employee rights and **increased autonomy** can result in desired organizational outcomes, or if external control must still be applied.

Individual Accountability, as per this research, can and will work toward promoting this balance. As will be discussed in detail below, successful accountability dynamics depend on the relationship between the two parties and the extent to which the task or behaviour is made personally relevant. This requires the need to discuss the nature of Individual accountability.

4. Responsibility and Internal Control

The increasing volatility of external business conditions and diversity of the work force, coupled with the continuing need for organizational control, have stimulated writers' interest in how individual accountability can be fostered in individual employees (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992; Manz & Sims, 1980; Osigweh, 1989). Personal, or felt, responsibility means that an individual perceives or accepts an obligation for a particular situation or event (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1980). Cummings and Anton (1990) have made an important distinction between objective responsibility (based on one's role, group membership, or causal influence) for an event and one's perceptions or "felt" responsibility.

As Cummings and Anton have argued, felt responsibility is the key for understanding and predicting behaviour. Responsibility does not always create felt responsibility: such things as the significance, uniqueness, and irreversibility of the act, individuals' maturity and integrity, as well as the clarity of expectations and individuals' resistance to them will all make a difference (Cummings &Anton, 1990). Further, social psychologists have cited behavioural involvement, identifiability of a contribution, and the making of a unique contribution as factors influencing personal, felt responsibility (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Williams, Harkins, & Latane, 1981).

Undoubtedly, there are many circumstances that affect whether or not individuals will perceive or accept the full responsibility that they have been given. The limited literature available on individual accountability however, discusses that the majority of circumstances fall into three main areas: proper structuring of expectations, fostering personal control, and establishing the significance of action.

Structuring of Expectations

There is an optimal degree of structuring for work roles and individuals (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Pearce, 1981). **Ambiguity and lack of structure can result in low job satisfaction and high tension (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).** On the other hand, while some degree of structuring and feedback is desirable, excessive specification is constricting, often producing dysfunctions such as invalid reporting, resistance, or rigid bureaucratic behaviour (Lawler, 1976). Thus, control systems built around highly structured role obligations are often regarded with ambivalence by many employees.

Motivation theory is relevant here as well (Kanfer, 1993). An excess of formalization is not appropriate for individuals with high intrinsic motivation for their jobs. The latter prefer fewer explicit expectations, relying instead on their own conceptions of the role and commitment to objectives. Adequate clarity of structure, from whatever source, allows appropriate linkages between expectancies and outcomes. Thus, the nature of expectations and their clarity set the stage for felt responsibility.

Additionally, optimal structuring varies for each employee. Individuals may desire and expect more or less structure depending on their task experience, tenure with the organization, maturity, motivation, and the ambiguity of the situation. Thus, a contingency approach (Fiedler, 1965; Yukl, 1989) is most appropriate, in which each employee is provided with the level of structure that they expect. Such a strategy will enable employees to demonstrate the highest levels of felt responsibility.

Personal Control

Even if expectations are appropriately structured, individuals must feel that they have enough control over the situation to achieve the specific end result in order to assume individual accountability. Acting out of a sense of personal control (de Charms, 1968; Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Fisher, 1978) is likely to create internal motivation. Thus, when employees have the freedom to choose what behaviours to carry out, this self-determination provides feelings of competence (Fisher, 1978).

Any behaviour undertaken in accordance with job requirements comes to be attributed to valued qualities of the job itself and the employees' interests in the job rather than to external rewards or threat of sanctions. All this promotes ownership and a sense of responsibility. On

the other hand, excess external control can undermine intrinsic motivation. More operationally, individuals must feel a sense of self-efficacy or personal competence regarding the task (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977; Brief & Aldag, 1981). That is, employees are constrained by the limits of their perceived *capacity* to perform (Bandura, 1977). Schlenker and Weigold (1989) have also noted that perceived talents and personal traits influence these outcome expectancies.

Those individuals with low outcome expectancies will expend less effort or fail to continue a difficult activity. Thus, if individuals' perceived competence for an activity is low, they will be unwilling to accept responsibility, especially for challenging work.

Employees must also perceive that they have control in other ways. Specifically, they must sense control over enough resources, including information about their performance, and feel they have the discretion to make choices in the execution of their responsibilities (Ashforth, 1989; Deci et al., 1989; Fisher, 1978; Tiffany & Tiffany, 1973). Even if individuals feel they have the personal capacity to perform, these aspects of the situation decrease position outcome expectancies, and hence, motivation.

Thus, if individuals perceive that autonomy or freedom of action is limited, a natural response is to deny accountability and engage in the behaviour of passing the buck. If challenged or pressed by their supervisor, making this denial unwise, they would tend to reevaluate their options and to choose expedient, and nominally less appropriate, paths of action. Further, reactance (Brehm, 1966), a motivation to restore freedom (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Manz & Angle, 1987; Mitchell & Ferris, 1992), may produce behaviour at odds with responsible action. In sum, if personal control and efficacy do not exist, individuals are not likely to accept responsibility.

5. **Significance**

Individuals who perceive their actions as **having significance** (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992) are more likely to perceive felt responsibility. Significance may be induced for a variety of reasons falling primarily into two categories: meaningfulness and hedonic relevance. Meaningful and hedonically relevant actions have the potential to provide positively value adding outcomes and enhance internal motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Turning first to meaningfulness, the degree to which a situation entails a moral obligation or a decision has ethical implications (Gatewood & Carroll, 1991; Jones, 1991) is a cue that an action or decision has consequence.

Seeing how one's behaviour fits into the "big picture" is another---whether one's input adds value to the product or service. Decisions with major ramifications (McAUister, Mitchell, & Beach, 1979) are considered to be significant as well. Finally, if employees have a genuine interest in task outcomes, they will also feel accountable for task performance.

Similarly, activities that have **hedonic relevance,** providing pleasure, generate a feeling of significance for the actor (Sivacek & Crano, 1982). Task that are intrinsically pleasurable or motivating will be typically completed in the absence of external demands. If the task and the guidelines for performance are consistent with employees' values, there will be little resistance (Trevino, 1986).

Individuals also will consider their actions be significant to the extent that these actions are relevant to the self or their ***own identity*** (Schlenker & Weigold,1989). All these reasons imply that actions that are internally motivated assume greater significance in the eyes of

individuals. Individuals are more willing to undertake tasks or activities and persist at them under such conditions. Thus, promoting the perceived significance of a task or activity will also create individual accountability.

6. Functional Behaviour

In contrast to the organizational and personal dysfunctions brought about by conventional accountability and bureaucratic external control, individual accountability as felt responsibility (as a form of internal control) encourages behaviours that usually benefit both the organization and individual employees. Rather than engaging in strategic behaviours in order to bias an external control system, responsible employee behaviour is authentic and therefore reliable (Cummings &Anton, 1990). Constant, possibly hidden monitoring can be replaced by self-monitoring (Mills, 1983). Rather than helplessness and dependence on the organization, employees display initiative (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Instead of merely complying With organizational directives, employees internalize them as standards (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

7. Self-Management

Paralleling the recent theoretical work on accountability, certain practices have been promoted as an alternative to the use of external control systems. The phrase that is often used here is self-management. Self-management is a practice in which responsibility for setting, accomplishing, and rewarding the accomplishment of personally or organizationally set goals are placed in the hands of the individual rather than a supervisor (Manz & Sims, 1980; Mills, 1983; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). For example, an individual may be expected to determine what changes in activities (nature or amount) are needed to provide better customer service. Self-managed or self-regulated behaviour may involve such things as diagnosing organizational needs, generating personal goals, developing a plan toward achieving goals, self-evaluation of progress, and self-administered consequences based on progress toward goal attainment (Manz, 1986; Manz & Sims, 1980; Mills, 1983).

According to the perspective of self-management writers, each individual has the potential for self-control. Also implicit in this approach is the idea that individuals do not perform all behaviours for their intrinsic properties, but perform some only due to necessity or for a particular external reward (Manz, 1986). Thus, the concept allows for forms of self-control to achieve externally set and rewarded outcomes.

Although self-management practices are relevant at both the individual and group levels, it should be noted that the focus of present research is on individual accountability and self-management at the individual level. Individual involved in behaviours such as Prioritizing work and being proactive, goal setting and following on it, brainstorming potential solutions, being open and feedback seeking, self-evaluation, and the self-administration of incentives are appropriate for a variety of organizational titles and types of behaviours. Though self-management efforts are thought

to have their greatest effects when employees are high in feelings of self-efficacy (Gist, 1987), the increased personal control and intrinsic interest in the job are felt to have beneficial consequences for most employees (Fisher, 1978; Freedman & Phillips, 1985). It is interesting to note that these are the conditions that are implemented in promoting individual accountability behaviour.

8. **Accountability**

As noted, traditional view on accountability presumes an external perspective (Cummings & Anton, 1990, Dose, 1992). Individuals are answerable to external parties for behaving in accordance with a particular rule or performance standard (Mitchell & Ferris, 1992). Often this is operationalized as a reporting requirement in which individuals must justify their views to another party (Klimoski, 1972; Tetlock, 1983). A party or principal can be any type of social entity, such as a co-worker, work group, supervisor, or customer.

Thus, accountability is a motivational state in which there is an increased sense of self-relevance for a certain situation (Klimoski, 1992). This means that individuals come to see their actions or behaviours as salient, important, or consequential. Accountability increases self-awareness relative to a task, role, or a decision to be made.

Individuals who are accountable, then, are more likely to act in a considered and motivated manner. More recently, accountability has been described in terms of identity dynamics (Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

Lessons from Identity Theory

Identity theory can help us reframe our notions of accountability. Most simply, identity theory can be considered "a theory of self that is formed and maintained through actual or imagined interpersonal agreement about what the self is like" (Schlenker, 1986, p. 23). Identity theory discusses three elements. These are: events, identity, and prescriptions. These elements have been combined to provide an explanation for the impact of accountability on the individual (Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

The first element is the event, which can include the individual's behaviour, performance, or resulting outcomes. Accountability dynamics exist in relationship to an event. The second element is identity, which refers to a component of one's self-concept. Accountability is presumed to have potency as it pertains to more central or important facets of the individual's self-concept. The third element, prescriptions, involves the standards for behaviour associated with an event. Prescriptions represent a set of rules for how things should occur. They are also criteria for performance that are used to guide and evaluate behaviour. At times, these standards for behaviour become elevated as "principles."

The linkages between the three elements, events, identity, and prescriptions, appear to be the key to predicting accountability effects. The stronger the linkages, the greater the impact for the individual, thus determining the potency of accountability forces. The "identity-event" linkage refers to the extent to which the individual is seen as having responsibility for the event. To the extent an event is tied to or concerns a fundamental aspect of identity (e.g. an aspect of the self-concept), accountability will be enhanced. The "prescription-event" linkage denotes the extent to which there are clear rules or standards for conduct in the situation. This is analogous to the structuring of expectations, as outlined earlier. The "prescriptionidentity" linkage dictates the extent to which individuals are (or can be) bound or committed to the rules or standards associated with the event. This would be affected by the extent to which the individual is socialized to hold the same rules as the organization. Taken together, these linkages determine the strength of accountability forces. Thus, high levels of potential accountability exist when an individual feels identified with an event and when there are clear standards for good or poor performance (Klimoski, 1992).

But there are dynamic processes involved. Over time, experiences of being accountable and the resulting judgments have implications for one's self-concept or identity (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). An important point to note is that the concept of identity includes both public and private aspects of the self. Therefore, accountability has implications for internal motivation (private self) and for external motivation via the potential judgments of the accountability agent (public self). According to Schlenker and Weigold (1989, p. 22), "Accountability makes self-regulation possible." Individuals look (retrospectively) at their actions in light of relevant prescriptions for identity.

As focused in this research, individual accountability, then, as it affects one's identity, has implications for responsible behaviour. It enhances self-relevance and internal motivation by linking appropriate behaviour to identity. External control thus, somewhat paradoxically, strengthens internal control.

The current study proposes that individual's ability to trust will also play a critical role in facilitating individual accountability for participation in a organizational processes. The concept of trust refers to the extent that a person ascribes good intentions to others and has confidence in their competence (Cook & Wall, 1980). Little research has examined the direct impact of interpersonal trust on performance (McAllister, 1995). However, researchers have long recognized trust as a hallmark of favourable or high-quality relationships (Hart, 1988; Zand, 1972). And a positive influence of trust on coordination and personal control has been show at the institutional (Shapiro, 1987) and interpersonal (Granovetter, 1985) levels of an organization. In fact, trust between individuals and groups within an organization is a critical ingredient in the long-term stability of an organization and the well being of its members (Cook & Wall, 1980). In other words, it is generally agreed that high levels of interpersonal trust are beneficial for effective organizational functioning.

There seems to be a casual relationship between trust and individual accountability. For example, Dose and Klimoski (1995) assert that if an interpersonal relationship does not include trust, or if an employee perceives management or a coworker acting only for personal gain, no external accountability system is likely to produce personal responsibility for participating in the process. In other words, it is more likely an individual will feel personally responsible to participate in organizational processes if a trusting relationship exists among the individuals involved (Dose & Klimoski, 1995).

Yamagishi and Cook (1993) performed two studies to investigate the impact of interpersonal trust on individual participation in exchange relationships. In both experiments, support was found for the notion that interpersonal trust elevates an individual's level of participation in a group situation. In fact, several studies point to the beneficial impact of interpersonal trust on frequency and quality of group member interaction as well as participation in decision-making events (Samuelson, Messick, Rutte, & Henk, 1984; Sato, 1988).

9. Self-Construal

Self-construal is conceptualized as a constellation of thoughts, feeling, and actions concerning one's relationship to others and the self as distinct from others (Singelis, 1994). Researchers in cross-cultural psychology have long maintained that one's view of the self in relation to others is critical to understanding individual perceptions, evaluations, and behaviours (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1989). Specifically, how we perceive ourselves in relation to others can have a tremendous impact on how we interact with colleagues or coworkers (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Plus, the extent to which people value individual versus collective goals in human life

has important consequences for their lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being (Hui & Villareal, 1989).

Traditionally, cross-cultural research has focused efforts on examining differences between societies with an interdependent (e.g., Japan and other far-eastern countries) versus independent (e.g., United Kingdom, United States) culture. Recently however, evidence supports the assertion that there is a coexistence of independent and interdependent selves within a cultural group (Singeles & Brown, 1995; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991).

An interdependent self-construal is defined as a self that emphasizes relationships, belonging and fitting in, as well as occupying one's proper place in a group. In other words, fitting in and connecting with others are primary motivating factors for people with an interdependent self-construal. Harmonious interpersonal relationships and the ability to adjust to various situations are sources of self-esteem (Singelis, 1994). Contrary to the independent self, the interdependent self depends on relations with others and contextual factors to regulate behaviour (Singelis & Brown, 1995).

In contrast, individuals who possess a more independent self-construal place a greater emphasis on their own internal thoughts and abilities, promoting their personal goals, being unique and expressing themselves (Singelis & Brown, 1995). When thinking about the self, individuals with an independent self-construal are more likely to use their own skills, abilities, and goals as a referent than they are to take into account the thoughts feelings and actions of others (Singelis, 1994).
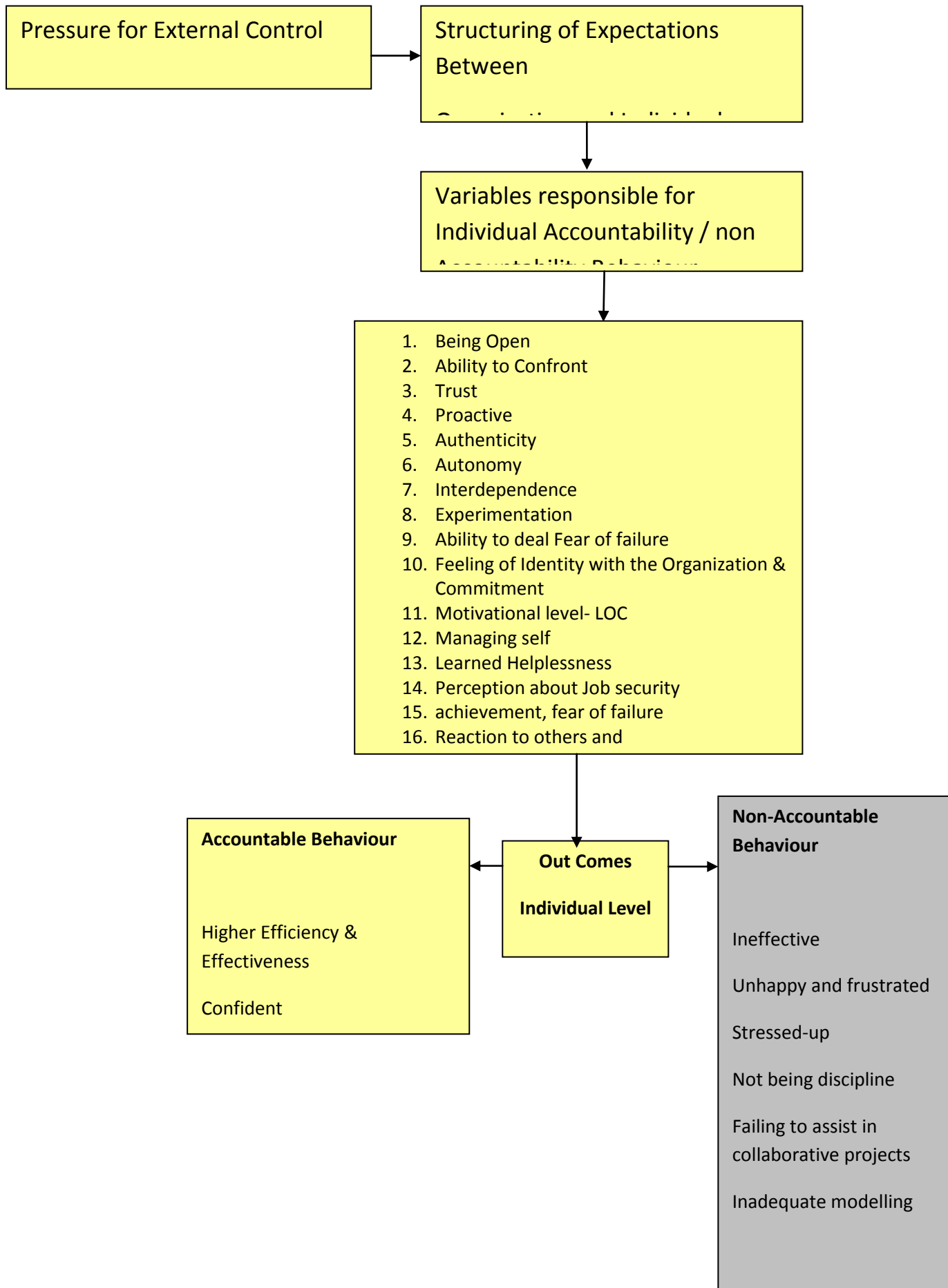

Individual accountability Behaviour:

Knowing the fact that there is a need for external control mechanism to moderate employee accountability in organization, the research is based on an argument that in spite of external controls and organizational systems, processes and procedures be available there is no guaranty of individuals being accountable for their actions. Individual accountability behaviour is an outcome of various internal (self related) factors that are responsible self regulating behaviour.

As noted by Frink and Ferris (1998), the knowledge base regarding accountability is remarkably scant. Therefore based on the literature available and discussion with experts (details mentioned in Chapter-3 Titled research methodology- Pre Pilot Syudy, page 97) in this experimental research, the researcher has tried to connect concepts that seems to correlate with individual accountability behaviour. With few assumptions based on discussion with various subject experts the research is based on the earlier argument that- ability to be open, internally motivated, to confront, trust in self and others, being authentic, proactive, interdependent and experimenting, ability to deal with fear of failure, feeling of identity with the Organisation, and ability to manage self are

variables that have been linked positively to individual accountability behaviour. The theory proposed here is that these variables may be incorporated in the process of scale construction and items may be designed on them for experts' opinion as part of the scale development process. Majority of variables and items were selected from studies on psychometric scales available for these variables, where conceptual clarity, validity and reliability of these were already being established.

Figure 2: Components of Individual Accountability Behaviour:

Pressure for External Control	→	Structuring of Expectations Between Organisation and Individual

↓

Variables responsible for Individual Accountability / non Accountability Behaviour

↓

1. Being Open
2. Ability to Confront
3. Trust
4. Proactive
5. Authenticity
6. Autonomy
7. Interdependence
8. Experimentation
9. Ability to deal Fear of failure
10. Feeling of Identity with the Organization & Commitment
11. Motivational level- LOC
12. Managing self
13. Learned Helplessness
14. Perception about Job security
15. achievement, fear of failure
16. Reaction to others and

↓

Out Comes

Individual Level

← **Accountable Behaviour**

Higher Efficiency & Effectiveness

Confident

→ **Non-Accountable Behaviour**

Ineffective

Unhappy and frustrated

Stressed-up

Not being discipline

Failing to assist in collaborative projects

Inadequate modelling

Structure of expectations, Feeling of responsibility and Individual accountability behaviour.

The nature of the relationship between the principal and the agent who allows accountability demands to influence felt responsibility in a positive manner (Cvetkovich, 1978; Dose, 1992).

Structuring of Expectations

The structuring of expectations (as mentioned in Fig. 2), are based on pressures from external environment. The organization or principal/ manager or supervisor as representative of the organization and an agent- employee whose is expected to deliver a task and perform within the boundary of expected role structures the expectations. These expectations interactions provide a means for establishing behaviour requirements and work rules.

In fact, these standards may be established in several ways. Expectations may be communicated directly by the principal, negotiated, or derived in a consultative manner. Use of a directive management style creates problems due to lack of personal control, as discussed in the next session. Employees may feel that their input is not valued or welcome. Therefore, negotiated or consultative techniques are preferable.

Use of a negotiated method of structuring expectations, such as Management by Objectives, allows the two parties to have regular discussions and to each contribute to the standards that are established. Opportunities to report task progress or decisions can be situations where the agent receives reinforcement that he or she is fulfilling expectations (Mills, 1983). Evaluation of work requirements (e.g. performance appraisal and feedback [Kavanaugh, 1982, 1989]) are positively influenced by participative development. Feedback is beneficial, particularly when it is used for problem solving (Nadler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1976).

A consultative management style is of the most benefit in structuring expectations so as to induce accountability. If information is ambiguous and the task conditions are uncertain, a consultative management style helps clarify expectations (Mills, 1983). Similarly, setting task or role boundaries within which discretion is given to self-managed employees (Slocum & Sims, 1980), nominally exerting accountability pressures, is also functional for self-control.

No matter what method of structuring expectations is used, theorists concerned with enhancing felt responsibility (Manz & Angle, 1987) cite the coordination and efficiency advantages of accountability: regular (although not necessarily frequent) meetings with supervisors and co-workers provide opportunities to discuss work issues and the expectations that affect them. Moreover, once developed, the nature and clarity of these expectations, perhaps in the form of general principles, provide the conditions for taking felt responsibility.

After the expectations are set, it is based upon the various variables that will moderate individual accountability behaviour. The individual outcomes in form of accountable or non accountable behaviour therefore will also be responsible for organizational outcomes.

10. New Workplace Realities

Current economic and market conditions are not without their potential impact on accountability dynamics. Corporate downsizing means that there are fewer layers of management and that employees receive less direct supervision. The impetus toward self-management and individual accountability thus is accelerated as employees would be expected to manifest greater involvement and self-control. A streamlined organizational structure may also allow individuals a clearer view of where they fit into the big picture, thus

enhancing the opportunity to see the significance of their actions. Finally, the extent to which the employee and the manager have an extended working relationship (all the more likely because those who are left after reorganization will have been there for some time) can also promote responsibility. This would be consistent with theorized principal-agent dynamics noted earlier.

Increased technology is another workplace reality that can serve to potentially increase personal responsibility. Technological advances in information collection and distribution allow for prompt, direct performance feedback to the individual.

This can both promote and demand increased responsibility. Availability of data and ease of retrieval also allow for greater personal control over the resources needed to accomplish job duties (Lawler & Rhode, 1976). Thus, the availability of timely data facilitates feedback seeking, self-monitoring, and, ultimately, self-management.

Cases such as those of IBM and General Motors demonstrate how current workplace trends can serve to enhance personal responsibility, even in face of employee layoffs and shutdowns. Downsizing has resulted in reengineering initiatives and streamlining of organizational structure (Bennet, 1994; "I.B.M", 1994). At IBM's benefits service center, for example, benefits administration staff has been trimmed from 270 to less than 100, yet employee satisfaction is high ("I.B.M.",1994). In part, this is because technology has enabled development and implementation of a national database to be used by these individuals to better answer employees' most common questions. Moreover, these benefits administrators have received more extensive training; thus, each becomes a subject matter expert. Similarly, at General Motors, turbulent economic conditions have motivated changes in the organizational culture in order to improve productivity (Bennet, 1994). Workers have begun to make more production decisions such as efficient placement of machines and inventory. These conditions promote both self-efficacy *and* felt responsibility.

Conclusion

Research recognizes that accountability processes determined by organization will not always produce individual accountability behaviour. For example, organizational rules, systems, policies and procedures designed as means to control will not enhance individual accountability. Further, it is most likely that the individual must feel some initial level of responsibility in order for accountability requirements to have an impact (Dose, 1992; Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). In this case, the organization must rely on selection procedures to assemble a work force with the potential to assume responsibility.

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