

# Integrating Theory A and Six Thinking Hats Technique for Improved Organizational Performance

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## Integrating Theory A and Six Thinking Hats Technique for Improved Organizational Performance

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### ABSTRACT

Various models are used in developing strategies to improve people's performance in organizations. Such for example, are theory X, theory Y, and theory A. All these in common are based on presumptions about the human behaviour at work. Theory X and Y are opposing each other in predicting human nature. Theory A (Theory of Accountability) focuses on innate human potential, inherent urge for creativity, self-expression, and contribution to the organization as motivators. This is a winning strategy by collectively setting in motion a process of shared goals, divided responsibility, mutual inspiration and shared output. So much so managers have to transform average employee to real performers using role models and self-exploration. Accountability is assumed by both individuals and teams to ensure success in given task. The functional elements of Accountability Theory are Planning, Target setting, Motivation, Work Strategies, Responsibility, Role model, Monitoring & Guiding, and Accountability. This is indicative of a series of processes starting from Institutional assessment to problem identification and joint policy formulation; shared understanding through communication and action planning; Adoption of the idea and increased performance; Empowerment, support and teamwork; Commitment, consistency, and target fulfilment; Acknowledging example and willingness to improve; Joint review, self-appraisal, and confirmation of accomplishment; and Contribution through commitment and creativity. In all these stages lateral thinking through Six thinking hats opens up possibilities for objective and quantitative thinking, emotional thinking, negative pessimistic thinking, cautious optimistic thinking, creative innovative thinking and managerial thinking. In this paper, we have discussed how Theory A can be integrated with different types of thinking styles in any organization to improve its performance using six thinking hats model of lateral thinking.

**Keywords:** Theory A, Six Thinking Hats Technique, Organizational Performance.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Maintaining sustainable profit is a common objective all business organizations. One of the methods to achieve it is by improving the organizational performance through enhancing employee productivity. Many studies were conducted on organizational performance and employee efficiency, through various models which include Organizational creativity theory [1], Organizational culture Model [2], Performance management model [3], and TQM & organisational performance model [4]. ASTD Models for Human Performance Improvement [5], Emotional intelligence models [6-10], Spiritual intelligence models [11-12], Competency Mapping models [13-15], HRD Model [16], Self-efficacy and Learning Orientation model [17], Social Skills model [18], Innovation model [19], Employee engagement model [20], IPS-EQ model [21], Theory X and Theory Y [22] Theory Z [23]. The latest among this is Theory of Accountability (Theory A) [24-29] which focuses on innate human potential, inherent urge for creativity, self-expression, and contribution to the organization as motivators.

## **2. THEORY OF ACCOUNTABILITY:**

The recently developed Organizational Performance Theory for 21<sup>st</sup> Century called Theory of Accountability (Theory A) focus on urge for creativity as the cornerstone of all performance. Fostering the inherent urge for creativity will bring out the best in the form of sustained accountability [24-29]. According to Theory A or Theory of Accountability, the whole organization prepares for a collective endeavour, joint identification of need, joint policy formulation, ensuring responsibility, developing strategy and displaying creativity in achieving it. Accountability should be fixed to both individuals and teams in order to ensure success in given task. The functional elements of Accountability Theory (Theory A) are : (1) Planning (2) Target setting (3) Motivation (4) Work Strategies (5) Responsibility (6) Role model (7) Monitoring & Guiding and (8) Accountability. The sub functions under these are a series of processes starting from (1) Institutional assessment to problem identification and joint policy formulation, (2) Shared understanding through communication and action planning, (3) Adoption of the idea and increased performance, (4) Empowerment, support and teamwork, (5) Commitment, consistency, and target fulfilment, (6) Acknowledging example and willingness to improve, (7) Joint review, self-appraisal, and confirmation of accomplishment, and (8) Contribution through commitment and creativity, under each of the steps mentioned above.

## **3. SIX THINKING HATS TECHNIQUE AS LATERAL THINKING TOOL:**

Six thinking hats supports lateral thinking possibilities during problem-solving sessions. Out of the various lateral thinking techniques used in analysing a situation, Six Thinking Hats technique finds importance due to its ability to identify the attributes of a situation from six different perspectives. In six thinking hats technique, Dr. Edward de Bono outlines different thinking styles required by an individual while analysing a given problem in a systematic way. The technique represents the different thinking styles used in an effective problem-solving procedure with six different colour hats [30]. This approach guides the individual to use a particular thinking style represented by particular colour hat. Accordingly, the WHITE hat represents neutral judgements based on facts and figures, the RED hat represents humanistic thinking filled with emotions and feelings, the YELLOW hat represents positive aspects of the situation, the BLACK hat represents pessimistic or negative thinking based on comments, criticism, caution & carefulness, while GREEN hat use innovative and creative thinking, and the BLUE hat represents managerial thinking based on planning, organizing and controlling [31-36]. The following is the discussion on integrating the six different types of thinking in the eight stages of Theory of Accountability.

## **4. VARIOUS STAGES OF THEORY A:**

### **(1) Planning:**

The vision, mission, and objectives of an organization should be clear on the organizational contribution towards development. Being the first element of the theory of Accountability, planning finds a very important role in transforming a mediocre organization into a brisk activity centre through an optimized contribution from employees. By jointly setting the objectives of the organization, an organization can encourage its employees to think innovatively. Through planning organizational and team objectives the organization can recruit and train its members to be innovative with a passion for creativity. The organization can develop its planning strategy as the blue ocean to become a monopoly in its business. Among the various steps to be followed in planning include individually or jointly analysing the institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, identifying the problems in transforming the organization into a highly productive organization in contribution, utilizing right resources in all positions to fuel the objectives and developing a clear policy. Planning should also involve allocation of financial resources to promote various task centres, task groups, task projects, and financial support for various activities related to enhancing organizational output.

### **(2) Target Setting:**

Target setting includes setting the volume of the result to be achieved in a time bound manner for the organization, for its various divisions, groups, and individuals. Target can be set for the entire number

of employees individually in the organization, namely activity target or result to be created jointly namely output target. Based on the broad institutional policy, the targets could be fixed for quarterly, half yearly, annually and so on. Such target should be communicated to everyone in the organization. This stimulates a process of mutual consultation and dialogue. As a result, the members realize their challenge and learn to redefine their individual and group goal. The target setting for individuals and groups makes everybody prepare and devote their effort towards better performance.

**(3) Motivation:**

The basic intention of motivation in Theory A is to help members to discover their own potential through self-exploration. Once the target for the optimum result is set, the organizational leaders/managers should develop and implement various policies to support to meet the targets. Motivation may include support to identify weaknesses, encouragement to come at par with others, appreciation of fair performance, encouragement for collaborative approaches, developing task-based strategies, opportunity for advancement of better performers etc.

**(4) Work Strategies:**

Strategy is important for success. First and foremost, it is important that the members of the organization set their individual goals in consonance with the organizational goal. This comes in the form of a desire. A time-frame plan is essential for individuals and groups to accomplish their target. Teamwork through collaborating with other people, and working on more than one sub-activities simultaneously is another strategy. Redefining the target based on successive fulfilment and getting organizational support to fulfil the target is an enabling strategy.

**(5) Responsibility:**

This is the major component of both individual and organizational success. When the members show their responsibility towards fulfilling the organizational objective which is enhancing the productivity through increased contribution, no other influencing factors are required for maintaining consistency. But based on personality type, only a few people take responsibility by themselves in any organization. For others, an external stimulus is required to point out their responsibilities. Such stimuli may be helping to set the target, motivation, continuous follow-up, showcasing role model or providing encouragement.

**(6) Role Model:**

Role models can be anyone in the organization who outperform and contribute highest to the organization. Irrespective of age, gender, position and any kind of administrative responsibilities, role models can inspire all members of the organization and demonstrate that higher productivity is possible despite constraints. By appreciating and showcasing output of role models, organizations can work on improved targets. Super performers can be the inspiration for everyone in the organization.

**(7) Monitoring & Guiding:**

Once the process is set in motion, continuous monitoring of the process and accelerating productivity is essential in the organization. This will automatically create responsibility and avoid redundancy. Monitoring includes both self-monitoring and monitoring by superiors. This will ensure coping with difficulties and getting on well. Increased confidence will keep the team together. Sharing of result will improve self-esteem. Overall there will be a new work culture of freedom to suggest, delegate, and dependence.

**(8) Accountability:**

Accountability should be fixed to everybody including the heads of the departments and director of the organization so that satisfaction can be maintained throughout the organization. The ultimate outcome of this model of organizational operational strategy visualized through different perspectives of six thinking styles. Consistency in performance is the individual ultimate while organizational leaders get preoccupied with managing change. Depending on organizational policy, the accountability may bring positive or negative for achievers or losers respectively.

**5. INTEGRATING THEORY A AND SIX THINKING HATS:**

The different approaches in the lateral thinking process using six thinking hats can be integrated into the various stages of theory A. This results in distinguishing different perspectives from both

individual and organizational point of view.

**5.1: Theory A using White Thinking Hat :**

White hat stands for quantitative and neutral judgement. Characteristic of this planning is based on facts and figures. Emphasis is on measurable efforts and measurable performance. Institutional need assessment and problem identification arises from perception of self favouring information flow. Adoption of the idea which is the key motivator is visible through enhanced interest and inspiration for result. Role models are judged on acceptable standards of output. Cross checking and verification are employed for monitoring. Accountability is measured through contribution for target realization. The results are depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1 : Perspective of White Thinking hat**

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Realization of facts	Perception of Self
2	Target Setting	Conception of task	Information flow
3	Developing Motivation	Inspiration for Results	Enhanced Interest
4	Devising Work strategies	Measurable of effort	Value for contribution
5	Creating Responsibility	Measurable performance	Action orientation
6	Providing Role Model	Acceptable standards	Output orientation
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Cross checking	Verification
8	Developing Accountability	Target realization	Personal satisfaction

**5.2 Theory A using Red Thinking Hat:**

The red hat perspective reflects concern for each other with integration as a cause binding them. A humanitarian view is a key consideration in target setting both for results and consequences. The teamwork together with a feeling of involvement helps devising strategy acceptable to everybody. Responsibility intensifies the feeling of integration and role model provides discovery of inner drive. Results are mutually appreciated thereby contributing to attachment to objectives for continued performance. The results are depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2 : Perspective of Red Thinking hat**

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/ Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Integration of cause	Expression of concerns
2	Target Setting	Consideration of consequences	Concern for result
3	Developing Motivation	Working together	Feeling of involvement
4	Devising Work strategies	Solutions suiting everybody	Responding to needs
5	Creating Responsibility	Feeling of integration	Shared results
6	Providing Role Model	Discovering inner drive	Imitation
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Mutual Appreciation	Personal Satisfaction
8	Developing Accountability	Continued performance	Attachment to objectives

**5.3 Theory A using Yellow Thinking Hat :**

The perspective of the yellow hat is positive and optimistic. Institutional assessment and the problem identification takes care of the strengths thereby a sense of team spirit prevail in joint policy formulation. Shared understanding of common cause brings to focus better alternatives depending on individual perception of consequences. Motivation is vested in maximising returns and appropriate strategy is adopted for empowerment and support. Accountability brings personal rejoice with a feeling of honouring promises. The results are depicted in Table 3.

**Table 3 :** Perspective of Yellow Thinking hat

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Team spirit	Awareness of strength
2	Target Setting	Better alternatives	Search for consequences
3	Developing Motivation	Maximizing returns	Optimum returns
4	Devising Work strategies	Selection of choices	Awareness of choices
5	Creating Responsibility	Keeping together	Self confidence
6	Providing Role Model	Projecting role model	Following role model
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Success achieved	Sigh of relief
8	Developing Accountability	Promises honoured	Personal rejoice

**5.4 Theory A using Black Thinking Hat :**

The black hat thinking in planning anticipates difficulties arising out of a pessimistic feeling of consciousness of weakness. Though sceptical, target setting is attempted giving a try and idea is adopted based on minimum loss and balancing of benefits. Role model is accepted finding it suitable and responsibility is reflected in coping with difficulties and getting along well. In devising work strategy minimum conditions are fulfilled by means of self imposed rules by members of the team. Eventually, accountability is reflected in output as best of self. The results are depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4 :** Perspective of Black Thinking hat

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Anticipating difficulties	Conscious of weakness
2	Target Setting	Giving a try	Scepticism
3	Developing Motivation	Balancing benefits	Minimizing loss
4	Devising Work strategies	Minimizing conditions	Self-imposed rules
5	Creating Responsibility	Getting along well	Coping with difficulties
6	Providing Role Model	Suitability of role model	Acceptability of role model
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Agreement kept	Distress free
8	Developing Accountability	Expected output	Best of self

**5.5 Theory A using Green Thinking Hat :**

Innovative thinking is characterized by the quest for expression and desire for action. It goes out of the box with fascinating views, incorporating new and taking challenge. Responsibility is marked by commitment and consistency through innovative ideas in the form of suggestions. Adoption of the idea gives motivation for accepting challenges. Challenge taking is reckoned as inspiration for task fulfilment. Role model is accepted as alternative ways of performing better. Acknowledging example gives a sense of achievement to the team and serves the monitoring function. Accountability is manifested through faster returns and new insights. The results are depicted in Table 5.

**Table 5 :** Perspective of Green Thinking hat

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Desire for action	Quest for expression
2	Target Setting	Incorporating new	Fascinating views

3	Developing Motivation	Challenge taking	Inspiration
4	Devising Work strategies	Increased benefits	Better networking
5	Creating Responsibility	Suggestions accepted	Freedom to suggest
6	Providing Role Model	Discovery of alternative	Search for alternative
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Sense of achievement	Contribution welcome
8	Developing Accountability	Faster returns	Newer insights

**5.6. Theory A using Blue Thinking Hats :**

Managerial thinking relies on forecasting in problem identification and institutional assessment and is forward-looking in policy formulation. This hat is characterised by an inclination to systems and logic in target setting. Motivation requires little persuasion and minimum of supervision. A work culture of delegation and dependence characterize the organization. Every team member is bent on creating a difference. Review and appraisal of accomplishment involve initiating change. Team contributes with a high degree of consistency and the function of accountability involves managing change in a big way. The results are depicted in Table 6.

**Table 6 :** Perspective of Blue Thinking hat

S. No.	Stages of Theory A	Organizational/Team Point of view	Individual Point of view
1	Planning	Forecasting	Forward-looking
2	Target Setting	Based on systems	Inclination to logic
3	Developing Motivation	Minimum supervision	Little persuasion
4	Devising Work strategies	Greater leadership	Increased clarity
5	Creating Responsibility	Fostering work culture	Delegation and dependence
6	Providing Role Model	Realization of goal	Modelling high performer
7	Monitoring and Guiding	Initiating change	Creating difference
8	Developing Accountability	Managing change	Maintaining consistency

**6. CONCLUSION:**

Theory A focuses on innate human urge for creativity as the basis for individual and organizational performance. This when integrated into the six hats thinking technique in decision making brings out multiple perspectives. These perspectives reveal the characteristic feature of each thinking. The sequence of process of theory A are well established as it emerges from the analysis. This analysis serves as a framework for adopting in application to different problems. Thus, Theory A (Theory of Accountability) though developed as organizational performance theory to fill the gap between 20<sup>th</sup> century theories and emerging requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> century we found that it can be a useful framework [37-72] to discuss various perspectives under six thinking hats model of lateral thinking in application to organizations and individuals such as objective and quantitative thinking, emotional and humanistic thinking, negative pessimistic thinking, cautious optimistic thinking, creative innovative thinking and managerial thinking.

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