Understanding Human Behaviour and Creating Positive Environment

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Abstract: In today’s world, it is very important to be aware of as well as have clear understanding of human behavior because the subsistence of any organization depends upon the individuals who are a functional part of it. Without having any perception of human behavior, it becomes very complicated to work in any organizational setup because they are interdependent (between organization and personnel) and identifies the perception of human being that has transformation from time to time.

All organizations are composed of individuals, with different personality, attitudes, values, perception, motives, aspirations and abilities. The main reason to understand behaviour is that individuals are different. As Darwin stated that “No two individuals are identical”. In the early studies, theories of organization and management treated people as though they were the same; scientific management was based on the similarities among workers, not the differences. In contrast, modern theories of human behaviour are based upon the differences among people and how those differences can affect the organization. Individual differences are many for example some employees are motivated to work and some are not.

Keywords: Human Behaviour, interpersonal relations, learning theories, psycho-analytic theory, socio-cultural issues

Introduction

The term ‘behaviour’ means the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. Behaviour can be defined as a response/s which is observed directly/indirectly. Direct observation is possible by studying the responses of people to a work environment. Indirect observations are decision making processes and attitudes, in terms of results or how people describe them verbally.

Human behaviour is very much unpredictable. In behaviour we cannot assume one set pattern of behaviour. Lavitt classified behaviour as:

(i) Caused behaviour
(ii) Motivated behaviour
(iii) Goal oriented behaviour.

From these observations it can be understood that behaviour is a dependent factor.

By understanding behaviour one can predict, direct, change and control behaviour of individuals or group. There are generally four basic assumptions regarding nature of people: individual differences, a whole person, caused behaviour (motivation) and value of the person (human dignity).

We as human beings have to understand that there are-going to be individual differences among ourselves, as no individual is similar to other. Each individual is unique by themselves. Then one has to understand that each individual has to be taken care of as a whole person by taking care of his/her needs as well as training and making him up to date in terms of work. Ultimately human beings have to be treated with respect only then you can expect effective performance. With the following descriptions we will be able to understand the concept better.

The conscious and the subconscious, the voluntary and the involuntary: When it comes to Homo sapiens, these processes aren’t either-or propositions. They’re thoroughly intertwined, influencing and echoing one another. In short, human beings (breaking news) are complicated systems, and the study of human behavior a complex task. Parsing out behavioral and emotional nuances requires zoomed-in looks at the tempos and intensities of all kinds of physical and psychological networks – and a holistic, big-picture perspective of how those networks interact.

Physiology and Human Behavior

Researchers interested in how humans respond to stimuli, therefore – whether it’s an Internet ad or an interpersonal encounter – can enhance their
investigations by employing biometric sensors that document psycho-physiological patterns. Self-assessment/self-reporting remains a powerful and useful tool for understanding the how and the why of human behavior, but has some major limitations.

People aren’t always entirely honest when describing how something makes them feel – not necessarily because they’re trying to be duplicitous or crafty, but because they may feel pressured by the formal self-critical exercise to give what they think is the “right” answer (or the least embarrassing one). Furthermore, it’s often exceedingly difficult to explain in coherent sentences our response to a piece of information, or our mood at a given moment. We may not know exactly why we favor one product over another, or why we’re feeling generally joyful or generally depressed.

Dan’s analyses the nature of people in terms of four assumptions.

**1. Individual Differences**

Behaviour is the result of interaction between individual characteristics and the characteristics of the environment in which the behaviour occurs. Each person has a unique combination of characteristics. Some of these characteristics are present from birth; others develop over time. These can be called as inherited and learned characteristics. Although, inherited characteristics, are very few, and not so significant. Learned characteristics are very important. Individual differences can be because of environment, personal and psychological factors. It is also due to physical and social factors. Learned characteristics are acquired as people grow, develop and interact with their environments. This is depicted by Table 1.

‘Environmental factors' are characteristics such as economic, social and cultural norms and political factors that can affect the individual’s behaviour. Personal factors include physical and personal attributes e.g., age, sex, race, education and abilities, psychological factors are less observable. They are mental characteristics and attributes such as values, attitudes, personality and aptitudes that affect behaviour through complex psychological processes.

The social environment of an individual includes relationships with family, friends, co-workers, supervisors and subordinates and membership in groups such as unions. The behaviour of others is also part of an individual's social environment. Any norms, rules, laws or reward systems that originate with other individuals or groups help to form an individual’s social environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Relationship found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for conflict</td>
<td>Perceived role conflict</td>
<td>Less role conflict with greater tolerance for conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative importance of</td>
<td>Expessed job satisfaction</td>
<td>&quot;Extrinsic Managers&quot; expressed less job satisfaction intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value or work ethic</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Stronger work ethic associated with greater attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of interests</td>
<td>Salary based measure</td>
<td>High general interest of performance diversity associated with better performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>Experienced job stress</td>
<td>More stress with emphasis on external locus of control</td>
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Table 1: Learned Characteristics and its Effect on Behaviour
2. A Whole Person

When a person works in an organization, the organization takes care of that person by making him effective as a worker and more as a person.

3. Caused Behaviour (Motivation)

People's behaviour is need based. By fulfilling these needs he is motivated positively and there occurs effective performance. So, the management in the organisation has to take care of these needs in order to have an effective performance. The management can show them how certain actions will increase their need fulfilment and if not; how it decreases their need fulfilment.

4. Value of the Person (Human Dignity)

People have to be treated with respect and as individuals and they can not be treated like machines as how scientific management use to treat them. By recognising them and treating them with uniqueness the value of the person gets increased. By this we can understand how the concept of treating human beings from machines to human capitals has evolved. It was felt that the human beings acquire three levels of expertise. Firstly, they have to understand the past and current behaviour, so that they are able to predict behaviour and then they learn to direct change, and control behaviour.

Various Models of Human Behaviour

Psychoanalytic Model: Freudian approach depends on conflict model of humans. By using clinical techniques of free association and psychotherapy, Freud felt that behaviour is not always consciously explained. "Unconscious" is the major factor which guides the individual's behaviour. Freud felt that the individual's behaviour depends on three factors: (i) id, (ii) Ego and (iii) Super ego.

Id: By Id it means pleasure. To certain degree of having Id in an individual is constructive but may also lead to destructive tendencies like being aggressive, dominating, fighting and generally destroy. But once individuals develop and mature they learn to control the id. But it is always unconscious. Throughout life the 'id' becomes important source of thinking and behaving.

Ego: Ego represents 'conscious' stage in one's behaviour. Though Id comes in conflict with ego, the ego depends on the super ego.

Superego: It represents "conscience". An individual is not aware of the superego's functioning. The conscience is dependent on two factors that are cultural values and moral of a society. Superego's development depends mostly on parent's influence. Once the child grows up the child will unconsciously identifies with parents value and morals.

There is always tussle between id, ego and superego. The degree of each of them varies from person to person. So, the variations in individual's behaviour can be better understood with the help of this model.

Existential Model: This model is not scientifically based. Its base is literature and philosophy. The existentialists believe that the de-personalizing affects of this environment forces individuals to make their own destiny. So, the individuals shape their own identity and make their "existence" meaningful and worthwhile to themselves. This is more true and happening in today's urbanization. Because people have become so materialistic and busy, they do not have time for traditional values and norms and it becomes impractical sometimes to follow them.

Internal vs. External Determinants of Behaviour

Environment plays a major role in shaping behaviour and genetic endowment and personality development is influenced by our historical heritage.

Personality vs the Environment

Both personality and situational variables must be taken into account in order to explain an individual's behaviour but a focus on the environment is as important as or perhaps slightly more important than focusing on personality traits.

Cognition vs the Environment

To understand one's behaviour all we have to know is the individual's past responses to similar (stimulus) situations and the rewards or punishments that followed that response.

There are two models which come out of these approaches:

Behaviouristic Model: In this model the behaviour is dependent on two factors i.e., stimulus and response. Learning occurs with this kind of model. Pavlov and Watson with their research felt that behaviour can be best understood by stimulus and response.

Behaviourist model is represented as: S - R (Stimulus-Response)

Cognitive Model: S-OR-R. This model emphasises the positive and free-will factors of human beings and uses concepts such as expectancy, demand and incentive.
Tolman with his experiments found that the basis of learning as of ‘expectancy’ which is understood as one particular event leading to a particular consequence i.e., goal. Human behaviour is based on these goals.

From these different approaches it can be said that:

**Behaviour** is caused by instincts, genetic background and personality traits that are formed at an early age. Change is very difficult for the individual and that one's capacity is severely limited.

**Implications for the Organization**

Behaviour of individuals is caused and follows a pattern, because it is unpredictable. It is doubtful whether the person can perform his tasks satisfactorily without developing a fair degree of understanding of the people around him or not. Managers spend considerable time making judgments and could be predicted that there is an overwhelming consensus that the, environment has a much greater effect than it is believed. Organizational design, training and development can have a profound impact on the behaviour of the members of an organization.

**Personality**

Gordon Allport defines Personality as the dynamic organization within the individual of those Psycho-Physical Systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. Personality can be described more specifically as "how a person affects others, how he understands and views himself and his pattern of inner and outer measurable traits."

The other definitions are "Personality is a vehicle to integrate perception, learning, values and attitudes and thus to understand the total person." "Personality is an individual's total sense of self; it is an organizing force for the persons particular pattern of exhibited traits and behaviours." "Personality is the culmination of experiences and genetic influences, and is influenced by the personal life and where he is working.

**Determinants of Personality**

Personality is the result of both heredity and environment and also the situation.

**Heredity**

Heredity refers to those factors that were determined at conception. Physical appearance, temperament, energy level and biological rhythms are the characteristics which are generally influenced by one's Parents’ i.e., One's Biological, Physiological and Inherent Psychological Makeup. The Heredity approach feels that personality of an individual is the Molecular Structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes.

**Environment**

Culture plays an important role in the formation of personality, i.e., early conditioning, the norms among the family, friends and social groups. With the socialization process in the group, personalities are altered over time.

**Situation**

Though an individual personality is constant, it does change depending on the situation. Different demands in different situations call forth different aspect of one's personality. The relationship of these three factors affects the formation and development of Personality. Psychological inheritance is entirely an internal contribution. Group and culture are the early environmental factors; family and society are the early stages of education which influence the initial formation of personality. Whatever the child learns here lasts for life time. Later in life, it is the Peer groups or Primary affiliations at work, social activities which shape the Personality.

**Type and Trait Approaches to Personality**

The traditional viewed individuals as Shy, Lazy, Melancholy, Ambitious and Aggressive. These were called Traits. Groups of these traits were then aggregated to Personality types.

**Trait Approach**

Cattel (1973) identified 16 source traits/Primary Traits. These traits were found to be generally steady and constant sources of behaviour. But there was found to be no scientific relevance. **Figure 1: Sixteen Source Traits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less intelligent</td>
<td>More intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected by feelings</td>
<td>Emotionally stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Happy go Lucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedient</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Timid       Venturesome
Tough minded       Sensitive
Trusting       Suspicious
Practical       Imaginative
Forthright       Shrewd
Self-Assured       Apprehensive
Conservative       Experimenting
Group-dependent       Self-sufficient
Uncontrolled       Controlled
Relaxed       Tense

Locus of control: People are assumed to be of two types: ‘Internals’ and ‘Externals’. Internals are people who believe that much of what happens to them is controlled by their destiny. Externals believe that much of what happens to them is controlled by outside forces.

THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

Carl Jung identified three basic assumptions in theory, 1) Personalities are developmental in that they are influenced by past and hopes for the future. 2) All people have the potential for growth and change. 3) Personality is the totality of a person's interacting sub-systems.

Emotional Orientations

Jung feels that the two basic Orientations of People are extroversion and introversion. Introverts are primarily oriented to the subjective world. They look inward at themselves, avoid ‘social contacts and initiating interaction with others, withdrawn, quiet and enjoy solitude. Extroverts are friendly, enjoy interaction with people, are generally aggressive and express their feelings and ideas openly.

Managers should gain an understanding of themselves and learn how understanding others can make them better managers.

Problem-solving Styles

The two basic steps in problem solving are collecting information and making decision. Collecting data occurs in a continuum from sensing to intuition. In terms of decision-making, it ranges from ‘thinking’ to ‘feeling’ types.
Sensing-type: The person approaches the problem in a step by step organized way. The person works steadily and patiently with details.

Intuitive type: One who does not show a lot of emotion, who can put things in a logical order and who can be firm and fair. The feeling type is very aware of other people, dislikes telling people unpleasant things and prefers harmony among people.

The interaction of these two aspects of problem solving results in four problem-solving types.

1. The sensing-feeling person likes to collect data in an orderly way and make decisions that take into account the needs of people. This person is very concerned with high-quality decisions that people will accept and implement.
2. The intuitive-feeling person is equally concerned with the people side of decisions but the focus is on new ideas which are often broad in scope and lacking in details.
3. Sensing-thinkers emphasise details and quality of a decision. They are not as concerned with the people aspect of an organisation as with a technically sound decision.
4. Intuitive-thinking likes to tackle new and innovative problems, but make decisions primarily on technical terms. They tend to be good planners, but not so good at implementing.

General attitudes: The last personality sub-system Jung identified was general attitude work, namely judging and perceptive. Judging types like to follow a plan.

Importance of Personality
Understanding of personality is very important because by determining what characteristics will make for effective job performance, it can aid in personnel selections; by increasing understanding of how personality and job characteristics interact it can result in better hiring, transfer and promotion decisions.

There are certain procedures by which personalities can be predicted:

- 'Rating Scales' from peers or friends help in predicting the behaviour.
- 'Experimental procedures' which help in the assessment of some characteristics of person.
- With the help of ‘Questionnaire’ one can assess behaviour of the other, provided the answers are genuine.

Attitudes
Attitudes are a way of responding either favourably or unfavourably to objects, persons, concepts etc. They are evaluative statements. They reflect how one feels about something. Attitudes are related to behaviour. It is an unidimensional variable, i.e., positive or negative. They are hypothetical constructs. It is something inside a person. It may be observed but the attitude itself cannot.

Attitudes in a person could be observed in three ways:

1) Direct experience with the person or situation.
2) Association with other similar persons or situations.
3) Learning from others their association with the person or situation.

Attitudes and Organization
Attitudes are important because they affect the professional behaviour. These attitudes are top positive or negative evaluations that employees hold about aspects of their work environment. There are three primary attitudes; job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment.

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's general attitude towards his or her job, which is either positive or negative, i.e., satisfied or dissatisfied.

Organizational commitment is an orientation in terms of loyalty, identity and involvement in the organization. These attitudes are measured so that behaviours like productivity, absenteeism and turnover can be predicted.

Human beings need not be interested only in understanding the attitudes of the people, but also in changing them. Since attitudes are learned they can be changed. Persuasive communications are used to change attitudes. But attitudes are slow to change. Because they are based on deep-seated beliefs and values.

Values
Values are encompassing concepts that values are at the core of personality, and that they are powerful, though silent force affecting behaviour. They are so embedded that it can be inferred from people's behavior and their expressed attitudes. But values are a strong force in people. Rokeach (1973) "values represent basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is
personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence."

Rokeach divided values into two broad categories: “Terminal values” relate to ends to be achieved e.g. comfortable life, family security, self-respect and sense of accomplishment. ‘Instrumental values’ relate to means for achieving desired ends, e.g. ambition, courage, honesty and imagination. Terminal values reflect what a person is ultimately striving to achieve, whereas instrumental values reflect how the person get there.

Values are so embedded that it can be inferred from people's behaviour and their perception, personality and motivation. They generally influence behaviour. They are relatively stable and enduring. This is because, the way in which they are originally learned.

Allport (1951) identified six types of values.

- **Theoretical** - Places high importance on the discovery of truth through critical and rational approach.
- **Economic** - Emphasises to be useful and practical.
- **Aesthetic** - Places the highest value on form and harmony.
- **Social** - The highest value is given to the love of people.
- **Political** - Places emphasis on acquisition of power and influence.
- **Religious** - Concerned with the unity of experience and understanding of the cosmos as a whole.

**Creating a Positive Environment**

When human beings feel respected, valued, and able to contribute, they want to cooperate and do their best. We have already discussed the importance of listening carefully and respectfully to human beings and this is perhaps the most important way to boost self-esteem and create a positive environment.

**Summary**

Understanding human behaviour is essential for effective organizational goals. The reasons for individual differences and approaches of understanding human behaviour are explained.

It was understood that attitudes are opinions about things. Values represent deep-seated standards by which people evaluate their world. The past plays an important role in the development of attitudes and values. Personality is the result of person's experiences and genetic influences. Approaches, theories and determinants of personality were explained. Finally, the process of socialisation in an organization that alters one's personality, values and attitudes was discussed.

**FURTHER READINGS**

3. Randolph, Black Bown, 1989; Managing Organizational Behaviour, Richard Irwin, Inc.
7. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, Cal., 1962) is a very popular instrument for Jungian types. Please Understand Me by David Keirsey (Prometheus Nemesis Book, Del, Mar, Cal, USA, 1978) is a good simple introduction to Jungian types based on Keirsey Temperament Sortex (70 item pair comparison questionnaire).
8. Usha Haley and S. A. Stumpf in "Cognitive trails in Strategic Decision Making" (Journal of Management Studies, 1989, 26, 477-497) have discussed what Heuristics the four Jungian types use to gather data, and to generate and evaluate alternatives. Also the four types use different cognitive trails, and can consequently fall prey to biases that lurk in these trails.