Bachelor of Commerce Programme

Organizational Behaviour

Other Discipline’s contribution to Organisational Behaviour
LESSON – 4

CONTRIBUTING DISCIPLINES TO ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Contents
4.0 Aims and Objectives
4.1 Introductions
4.2 Contributing disciplines to organisational behaviour
   4.2.1 Psychology
   4.2.2 Sociology:
   4.2.3 Social psychology
   4.2.4 Anthropology
   4.2.5 Political sciences
   4.2.6 Economics
4.3 let us sum up
4.4 lesson-end activities
4.5 References

4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After studying the contributions of various fields of behavioral sciences towards organizational behavior, the students may be able to:

i) Appreciate the role of Psychology, Social Psychology in understanding the individual behavior and its impact on enhancing individual and organizational effectiveness

ii) Understand the application of sociological concepts to study the group dynamics and group functioning and its effect on organizational effectiveness

iii) Learn the Organizational culture from anthropological perspectives and apply its methodology to understand the formation of organizational culture and its development.

iv) Understand the contributions of political science to study the dynamics of power bases, formation of conflicts and conflict resolutions strategies etc

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The core disciplines of the behavioral sciences are psychology, sociology and anthropology. Although each of these disciplines is concerned with human behavior and nature, there are little commonly accepted theories among them. In fact, there is widespread disagreement about the problems that need to be analyzed within the organizations and society. As different disciplines will focus the individual problems from its own point of view with different perspectives, there will not be a common
understanding among them. The behavioral science emphasis and approach follows closely the following fundamental steps of scientific inquiry: theory leads to research, which leads to application (theory → research → Application).

The behavioral scientists are working diligently at improving the predictability of behavior. Because people and environments do change, their work focuses on attempting to predict how most people are likely to behave in a given set of circumstances and conditions. Each discipline applies its own methodology to the prediction problem, and each provides managers with insight into such important areas as individual differences, cultural influences, motivation and organizational design.

4.2 CONTRIBUTING DISCIPLINES TO ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

4.2.1 Psychology:

Psychology has perhaps the most influence on the field of organizational behavior because it is a science of behavior. Almost all aspects of behavior are studied by psychologist. Psychology deals with studying human behavior that seeks to measure, explain and sometimes change the behavior of humans and other animals. Psychologists primarily interested to predict the behavior of individuals to great extent by observing the dynamics of personal factors, environmental and situational factors. Those who have contributed and continue to add to the knowledge of OB are learning theorists, personality theorists, counseling psychologists and most important, industrial and organizational psychologist.

Some of the numerous areas of interest within the disciplines of psychology are:
General Psychology
Experimental Psychology
Clinical Psychology
Consumer Psychology
Personality and Social Psychology
Industrial Psychology
Counseling Psychology
Educational Psychology
Consulting Psychology

Understanding Psychological principles and its models help significantly in gaining the knowledge of determinants of individual behavior such as learning process, motivation techniques, personality determinants and personality development, perceptual process and its implications, training process, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, individual decision making, performance appraisal, attitude measurement, employee selection, job design and work stress.
Learning is important in understanding organizational behavior because of the concepts and generalizations that have developed from it. Managers are more interested to seek solutions to the following key aspects:

- What are the causes of behavior?
- What are the goals and purposes of particular behavior?
- What are the roles of genetic and environmental factors on the formation of particular behavior?
- What are the common values, attitudes, and characteristics that are binding people together, though individuals differ from one another in personal values, personalities, and attitudes?
- To what extent identification or belongingness with others will help shape his or her behavior?
- To what extent social learning is associated to motivational level of individual?

All these generalizations are associated with learning, which occurs throughout a person’s life. One of the most important attributes of psychology is the emphasis on the scientific study of behavior. Psychologists attempt to understand behavior on the basis of rational, demonstrable cause-effect relationships. Although learning and motivation are the main focus of psychology, the immediate applications to the field of organizational behavior are widespread. Basic knowledge of human behavior is important in work design, leadership, organizational design, communication, decision making, performance appraisal systems, and reward programs. These issues are falling within the domain of organizational behavior.

4.2.2 Sociology:

The major focus of sociologists is on studying the social systems in which individuals fill their roles. The focus of attention is centered on group dynamics. They have made their greatest contribution to OB through their study of group behavior in organization, particularly formal and complex organizations. Sociological concepts, theories, models, and techniques help significantly to understand better the group dynamics, organizational culture, formal organization theory and structure, organizational technology, bureaucracy, communications, power, conflict, and inter-group behavior. Psychologists are primarily interested to focus their attention on the individual behavior.

Key concepts of Sociology:

Most sociologists today identify the discipline by using one of the three statements: i) Sociology deals with human interaction and this interaction is the key influencing factor among people in social settings. ii) Sociology is a study of plural behavior. Two or more interacting persons constitute a plurality pattern of behavior. iii) Sociology is the systematic study of social systems. A social system is an operational social unit that is structured to serve a purpose. It consists of two or more persons of different status with different roles playing a part in a pattern that is sustained by a physical and cultural base.

When analyzing organizing as a social system, the following elements exist:
There fore, organizations are viewed by sociologies as consists of a variety of people with different roles, status and degree of authority. The organization attempts to achieve certain generalized and specific objectives. To attain some of the abstract ends such as the development of company loyalty, the organization’s leaders appeal to the shared cultural base.

The discipline of sociology has been associated with the following characteristics of a science.

i) It is empirical: it is based on observation and reasoning, not on supernatural revelation, and its results are not speculative

ii) It is theoretical; it attempts to summaries complex observations in abstract, logically related propositions that purport to explain causal relationships in the subject matter.

iii) It is cumulative; theories build upon one another, new theories correcting, extending and refining the older ones.

iv) It is no ethical; the scientists do not ask whether particular social actions are good or bad; they seek merely to explain them.

4.2.3 Social Psychology

It has been defined as the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presents of others. What makes social psychology social is that it deals with how people are affected by other people who are actually physically present or who are imagined to be present or even whose presence is implied.

In general sociology focuses on how groups, organizations, social categories and societies are organized, how they function, how they change. The unit of analysis is the group as a whole rather than the individuals who compose the group. Social Psychology deals with many of the same phenomenal but seeks to explain whole individual human interaction and human cognition influences culture and is influenced by culture. The unit of analysis is the individual within the group. In reality, some forms of sociology are closely related to social psychology.

Social Psychologists study an enormous range of topics including conformity, persuasion, power, influence, obedience, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, sexism and racism, small groups, social categories, inter-group behavior, crowd behavior, social conflict,
social change, decision making etc. Among them the most important topics relevant to organizational behavior field are behavioral change, attitude change, communication, group process and group decision making. Social psychologists making significant contributions in measuring, understanding and changing attitudes, communication patterns; they ways in which groups can satisfy individual needs and group decision-making process.

4.2.4 Anthropology

The main aim of anthropology is to acquire a better understanding of the relationship between the human being and the environment. Adaptations to surroundings constitute culture. The manner in which people view their environment is a part of culture. Culture includes those ideas shared by groups of individuals and languages by which these ideas are communicated. In essence, culture is a system of learned behavior.

Their work on culture and environment has helped us to understand differences in fundamental values, attitudes and behavior among people in different countries and within different organizations. Much of our current understandings of organizational culture, organization environments and differences between national cultures are the results of the work of anthropologists or those using their methodologies.

The world is the laboratory of anthropologists, and human beings must be studied in the natural habitat. Understanding the importance of studying man in natural settings over time enables one to grasp the range of anthropology. Familiarity within same of the cultural differences of employees can lead to a greater managerial objectivity and depth in the interpretation of behavior and performance. Anthropologists contribute to study the following aspects in organizational settings – comparative values, comparative attitudes, cross-cultural analysis between or among the employees.

4.2.5 Political Sciences:

Contributions of political scientist are significant to the understanding of behavior in organizations. Political scientists study the behavior of individuals and groups within a political environment. They contribute to understand the dynamics of power centers, structuring of conflict and conflict resolutions tactics, allocation of power and how people manipulate power for individual self interest.

In a business field, organizations wanted to attain supremacy in their own field and indulge in politicking activities to gain maximum advantages by following certain tacks like Machiavellianism, coalition formation, malpractices etc.

The knowledge of political science can be utilized to the study the behavior of employees, executives at micro as well as macro level.

4.2.6 Economics
Economics contributes organizational behavior to great extent in designing the organizational structure. Transaction cost economics influence the organization and its structure. Transaction costs economics implies costs components to make an exchange on the market. This transaction cost economics examines the extent to which the organization structure and size of an organisation varies in response to attempts to avoid market failures through minimising production and transaction costs within the constraints of human and environmental factors. Costs of transactions include both costs of market transactions and internal co-ordination. A transaction occurs when a good or service is transferred across a ‘technologically separable barrier’

Transaction costs arise for three main reasons: They are as follows.

i) **Uncertainty/Complexity**: Due to incomplete information, limited skills, time, the transaction is highly complex and uncertain. Signing a meaningful market contract minimizes such uncertainty which increases transactions costs. Both sides have to spend time and money on agreeing ex ante conditions of the contract. Suitable organisation structural relationships will facilitate to meet this objective.

ii) **Opportunism (seeking self-interest or exploiting situation-cheating others)**: If there are large number of sellers, the chances of being exploited is relatively diminished – market mechanism controls transaction costs. If small number of players exist in the market, opportunism becomes more difficult to control due to dependency on seller. Creating legal contract or developing liaison with buyers can help minimise this problem – a cost is paid to minimise exploitations. When faced with opportunism, there are three possible organisational design: they are as follows: a) Market co-ordination b) Hierarchies-Organisation co-ordination and c) Hybrid –Network Structure

iii) **Asset Specificity (Creating special assets to provide a special good or service)**: Developing specific human or physical assets to provide special good or service which cannot be redeployed for other purposes. The higher the degree of asset specificity, the higher the potential transaction costs because of post contractual opportunism. Designing suitable organisational structure – Inter-firm networks or hierarchies will help to control this type of transaction cost

Economic Pressures determine the suitable structure either through markets, hybrid network structures or hierarchy to organise transactions effectively. Failure to organise in the appropriate way will lead to the firm being deselected by the market. As environment is so dynamic, organization must respond to change its structure. Shifts from large firm hierarchies to networks or to market relations are in terms of changing conditions of the economising function.

**Conclusion:**

The behavioral sciences have had a significant impact on the field of organizational behavior. They have provided a reference that encourages the use of the scientific method.
Some of the more generally agreed upon influences of behavioral science on organizational behavior are:

i) the systematic use of theories and theory building to explain behavior
ii) An empirical base to study individuals, group, and organization.
iii) The increased use of rigorous research methods
iv) Less use of arm chair speculation in reaching managerial decisions
v) Efforts to communicate theories, research and ideas to practicing managers as well as members of the field.

4.3 Let us Sum Up

In this chapter we have learnt about the various disciplines contributing towards organizational behaviour. These disciplines are Psychology, Sociology, Social Psychology, Anthropology, Political Science and Economics.

4.4 Lesson-End Activities

1. Explain the contributions of Psychology in understanding individual behavior.
2. Describe the role of Sociology and Social Psychology in studying the group dynamics and group structure.
3. Outline the contributions of Political Science in understanding dynamics of power and its impact in organizational behavior.
4. Explain the extent to which knowledge of Anthropology will help understand the organizational culture.
5. Describe the influence of economics (Transaction Cost Economics) in designing suitable organization Structure.
6. Discuss the applications of social psychological principles in attitudinal change and mass communication.

4.5 References
UNIT II
FOUNDATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

LESSON - 5
PERCEPTION: PERSON PERCEPTION.

Contents
5.0 Aims and Objectives  
5.1 Introduction  
5.2 Perception  
5.2.1 Factors influencing Perception  
5.2.2 Characteristics of Target  
5.2.3 Characteristics of Situation  
5.2.4 Perception: Making Judgment about Others  
5.3 Let us Sum Up  
5.4 Lesson-End Activities  
5.5 References

5.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The lesson 1 on the person perception deals with perceptual process and the factors influencing the perceptual process. After going through the content of this lesson, the students are able to
i) Understand the dynamic of perceptual process
ii) Describe vividly the possible influence of various environmental, personal, target characteristics on the perceptual process
iii) Understand various causes for a given behavior for making judgment of others
iv) Explain the possible errors in attribution and the methods to overcome such errors.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Perception can be defined as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. Perception is not just what one sees with eyes. It is a much more complex process by which an individual selectively absorbs or assimilates the stimuli in the environment, cognitively organizes the perceived information in a specific fashion and then interprets the information to make an assessment about what people select, organize, and interpret or attach meaning to events happening in the environment. Since perception is subjective process, different people may perceive the same environment differently based on what particular aspects of the situation they choose. For example, some employees may perceive the work place as great if it has favorable working conditions, good pay. Others may perceive it as great if it has challenging assignments and opportunity to grow. Managers should sharpen their
perceptual skills so that they are as close to perceiving people, events, and objects as they truly are. When “misperception” occurs due to perceptual errors and distortion, managers are bound to make poor or improper decision.

5.2 PERCEPTION

Perception is process through which short-run changes are made in behavior in response to inputs from work environment. The process itself consists of two major actions – i) attention to incoming stimuli and ii) translation of such stimuli into a message that leads to a meaningful behavioral response. Perception is form of behavior and, therefore, influenced by at least the following factors: i) characteristics of the object or source of incoming stimuli (such as a supervisor issuing work request); ii) the situation or conditions under which the stimuli occur (such as timing of a message) and iii) characteristics of the perceiving person. The last category is extremely important in determining the way incoming stimuli will be interpreted and subsequent response. An individual’s motives, previous learning and personality will influence perception. Managers must take such consideration into account in predicting the way their actions and order will be perceived by others.

Five Stages in Perceptual Process:

Stage I: Observation Phase – It depicts the environmental stimuli being observed by the five senses of the perceived.

Stage II: Selection of the Stimuli: This is governed both by factors external to the perceived, such as the characteristics of the stimulus, and internal to the individual, such as the personality disposition and motivations of the perceiver.

Stage III: Organizing Stage – In this stage, the perceiver is influenced by figure and ground, grouping, and several perceptual errors such as stereotyping halo effects, projection and perceptual defense.

Stage IV: Interpretation Stage: This stage is governed by the perceiver’s assumptions of people and events and attributions about causes of behavior and feelings.

Stage V: Behavior Response: In this stage the response of the perceiver takes on both covert and overt characteristics. Covert response will be reflected in the attitudes, motives, and feelings of the perceiver and overt responses will be reflected in the actions of the individual.

5.2.1 Factors Influencing Perception:
Several factors influence how we process the perceptual inputs and transform them into outputs. There are three broad categories: Characteristics of Perceiver, Characteristics of Target, and Characteristics of Situation.
5.2.1 Characteristics of Perceiver:
A person’s needs and motives, self-concept, past experience, emotional state, and personality aspects strongly influence the perceptual process.

Needs and Motives:
Unsatisfied needs or motives stimulate individuals and may exert a strong influence on their perception. For example, two groups of subjects – One group who is deprived of food for about 24 hours and the other group which had food enough were shown the blurred pictures and asked to explain the contents. The first group perceived the blurred image as food far more frequently than the other group. People needs and motives thus play a big part in the perceptual process.

Self Concept:
It refers how a person perceives himself/herself which in turn influence his or her perception of the world around them. If a person perceives himself as incompetent, then he perceives the world as threatening. On the other hand, if he feels himself as confident and capable, he will perceive everything around as friendly.

Attitudes:
The preferences and likingness affects ones perception. A lecturer, who likes bigger class, feels comfortable in a lecture session which has more than hundred students. Another lecturer, who likes small class with a lot of questions, may not be so comfortable in such big classes.

Interests:
Individual’s focus of attention is also influenced by the interests of people. A plastic surgeon will more likely to notice an imperfect nose than a plumber. Because of our individual interests differ considerably, what one person notices in a situation, can differ from what other person perceives.

Past experiences:
Individuals past experiences also influence in molding ones perception. For example if one has had problem responding to examination questions in the past, he or she will tend to perceive even simple, straightforward examination question as tricky. Likewise, if a person was betrayed by a couple of friends, he or she would never venture to cultivate new friendship in future.

Psychological or Emotional State:
If an individual is depressed, he or she is likely to perceive the same situation differently from the other person who is at the extreme level of excitement or happiness. If a person has been scared of seeing a snake in the garden, she is likely to perceive a rope under the bed as a snake. Thus, the emotional and psychological states of an individual also influence the perceptual process and the different types of interpretation of the situation.
Expectation:
Expectations can also distort the perceptual process. If a person expects police officers to be more authoritative and dictatorial, he or she may perceive them as if they are rough and tough regardless of the Police Officers actual traits.

New Experience:
If a person experiences something new, that is more likely to grab attention than the objects or events that has been experienced before. For example, a person is more likely to notice the operations along an assembly line if this is first time that person has seen an assembly line. In 1970’s women police officers are highly visible because traditionally Police Officers positions were predominantly held by males.

Personality Characteristics:
There is a strong relationship between personality factors and perception. For example, secure people tend to perceive others as warm supportive than those, who are more cold and indifferent. Similarly, self-accepting persons perceive others as lining and accepting them. Those who are not self-accepting tend to distrust others. Insecure, thoughtless or non self-accepting persons are less likely to perceive themselves and those around them accurately. In all probabilities, they are likely to distort, misinterpret or in other ways defensively perceive the situation.

Characteristics of Target:
The ways things are organized around us are greatly influencing the perceptual process. Some of the typical characteristics include bright color, noise; novel objects, bigger unusual size, moving objects, status, appearance, contrast, intensity, repetition etc. catch people attention. For example, an unusual noise raised by a person, a strong beam of light suddenly flashed, a very handsome, attractive person among a group of clumsy people, a red light against the black background, an unusually obese person amidst a group of slim people etc.

Organization of Target:
People tend to organize the various parts of elements in the environment as a meaningful whole. Such organizing activity is a cognitive process and those are based on Gestalt Principles. The following are the four Gestalt Principles – Figure and Ground, Proximity, Similarity, Closure, Continuation.

Figure and Ground:
What a person observes is dependent on how a central figure is being separated from its background. This implies that the perceived object or person or event stands out distinct from its background and occupies the cognitive space of the individual. In a dance programme, the spectators’ tend to perceive the dance performance against the background music, backdrop setup etc. The perceiver thus tends to organize only the information which stands out in the environment which seems to be significant to the individual.
Proximity:
People tend to perceive things, which are nearer to each other, as together as group rather than separately. If four or five members are standing together, we tend to assume that they are belonging to same group rather than as separately. As a result of physical proximity, we often put together objects or events or people as one group even though they are unrelated. Employees in a particular section are seen as group.

Similarity:
Persons, objects or events that are similar to each other also tend to be grouped together. This organizing mechanism helps us to deal with information in an efficiently way rather than getting bogged down and confused with too many details. For examples, if we happen to see a group of foreign nationals at an International seminar, Indians are grouped as one group, British as another, Americans as yet another based on the similarity of nationalities.

Closure:
In many situation, the information what we intend to get may be in bits and pieces and not fully complete in all respects. However, we tend to fill up the gaps in the missing parts and making it as meaningful whole. Such mental process of filling up the missing element is called as closure. For example, while giving promotions to the staff members, the managers will try to get full information to make an effective decision, in absence of getting complete information, managers try to make meaningful assumptions and based on that suitable decision will be made.

Characteristics of the Situation:
The context at which the incident is occurring can influence the perceptual process. The physical, social, organizational settings, time etc can influence how we interpret the stimuli. For example, late coming of subordinate at birthday party may be ignored but treated him as an important guests by the manager, but at same time, the same person’s late coming to an important official meeting will be viewed as seriously and manager may issue a memo seeking his explanation. Thus, the location of an event, the social context in which takes place, timing and the roles played by the actors play a significant part in how we interpret the situation.

5.2.2 Person Perception: Making judgment about others

Attribution Theory:
While observing people’s behavior such as getting an overseas assignment or promotion to top management position or failed miserably in university examination or fired from the employer etc, we attempt to determine whether it was internally caused or external caused. If those factors such as knowledge, skill, effort, talent, hard work, positive attitude are responsible for the occurrence of behavior, it is labeled as internally caused. Internally caused behaviors are those that are believed to be under the personal control of the individual. If those factors such as situational factors such as location advantage, non availability of material, contacts with influential others, etc are responsible for the
occurrence of behavior, it is labeled as externally caused. Externally caused behavior is seen as resulting from outside causes; that is, the person is seen as forced into the behavior by the situation.

If an employee is late for work, one can attribute his late coming due to laziness or lack of interest in the job of over sleeping. This would be internal interpretation. If an employee late coming is due to traffic jam or road accident or his wife sickness, then he is making external attribution.

There are three factors which are used to determine whether the behavior is caused by internal factors or due to external factors. They are: Distinctiveness, Consensus and Consistency.

**Distinctiveness:**
It refers to whether an individual displays different behaviors in different situations. If a person is coming late not only to office but also to picnic party or to birth day party or to attending meeting etc. If his late coming behavior is not unique, it will probably be judged as internal. (Low Distinctiveness) If his late coming behavior is unusual, that is, only to office work, his late coming behavior is due to external attribution. (High Distinctiveness)

**Consensus:**
It refers to whether all the people who are facing with a similar situation respond in the same way or not. If all the people are responding the same way, then there is high consensus. If consensus is high, then his late coming behavior is due to external factors. If only this worker is late and all others are punctual, then there is low consensus. If consensus is low, then his late coming is due to internal factor

**Consistency:**
It refers whether a person responds the same all the time, that is, whether his late coming is common in all the days or once in a blue moon. If his late coming is reported in all the days, then there is high consistency. If there is high consistency, his late coming behavior is due to internal factor. If his late coming is reported only one time, then there is low consistency. If there is low consistency, then his late coming is due to external factors. The more consistent the behavior, the more the observer is inclined to attribute it to internal factors.

**Errors in Attribution:**
While attributing the causes for the behavior of individuals, people tend to commit two types of errors.

**Fundamental Attribution Error:**
There is tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal factors when making judgment about the behavior of others particularly with reference to the victims of accidents or failures. This is called the
fundamental attribution errors. For example, a sales manager is likely to attribute the poor performance of his sales agents to laziness rather than to the new product line introduced by the competitor or current recession prevailing in the society etc.

**Self-Serving Bias:**
There is also a tendency for individuals to attribute their own success to internal factors such as ability or effort, while putting the blame for failure on external factors such as luck or fate. This is called the self-serving bias. While assessing the performance of subordinates, the managers are likely to provide feedback in a distorted manner depending on whether it is positive or negative.

5.3 Let us Sum Up
In this unit, we have learnt about perception which is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. We have also discussed the five stages in perceptual process and the factors influencing perception.

5.4 Lesson-End Activities
1. Why perception is a key factor in managerial effectiveness?
2. Perception is more a cognitive rather than a sensory process. Comment on this statement
3. Discuss the salient features of the perceptual process model.
4. What is the attribution theory? What factors do you think might create the fundamental attributions error?
5. How might perceptual factors be involved when an employee receives a poor performance appraisal?
6. How do the characteristics of the perceived affect the perceptual process?
7. Explain the effect of the characteristics of the target on perceptual process.

5.5 References