Individual Behaviour and Group Behaviour in Organizational Setting

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is for the better understanding of individual and group behaviour in an organization. Organizational behaviour has become a major focus area for theory building, research and application in psychology. Organizational behaviour is the study and application of knowledge about how people as individuals and as group act within organizations. It also strives to identify ways in which people act more effectively. Individual and group accountability behaviour plays a key role in enhancing organizational performance. Hence study of individual and group accountability has numerous practical justifications. This article includes individual behaviour and factors influencing it, shaping individual behaviour and its roles, group behaviour, types of group and group roles.

Keywords: Individual Behaviour, Group Behaviour, Organization.

INTRODUCTION

"Human behaviour is complex and every individual is different from another. The challenge of an effective organization is in successfully matching the task, the manager and the subordinate." (Practical Management, 2008).Organizational Behaviour is field of study that investigates the impact that individual, group and structure have on behaviour within organization. It is the study and application of knowledge about how people act within organizations. It applies broadly to the behaviour of people in all types of organizations, such as business, government, schools and services organizations. Organization as a purposeful system with several subsystems where individuals and activities are organized to achieve certain predetermined goals through division of labour and coordination of activities. Division of labour refers to how the work is divided among the employees and coordination refers to how all the various activities performed by the individuals are integrated or brought together to accomplish the goals of the organization. The term

organizing is used to denote one aspect of the managerial activities when he or she is preparing and scheduling the different tasks that need to be completed for the job to be done.

The key elements in organizational behaviour are people, structure, technology and the external elements in which the organization operates. When people join together in an organization to accomplish an objective, some kind of infrastructure is required. People also use technology to help get the job done, so there is an interaction of people, structure and technology. In addition, these elements are influenced by the external environment, and they influence it. Each of the four elements of organizational behaviour will be considered briefly.

The field of the organizational behaviour does not depend upon deductions based on gut feelings but attempts to gather information regarding an issue in a scientific manner under controlled conditions. It uses information and interprets the findings so that the behaviour of an individual and group can be canalized as desired. Large number of psychologists, social scientists and academicians has carried out research on various issues related to organization behaviour.

BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Behaviour as an individual or in a group is always analyzed by everyone in the organization. It is analyzed at three different levels − Individual level of analysis, Group level of analysis, Organizational level of analysis

Individual Level of Analysis: Organizational behaviour, at this level of analysis massively draws upon psychology, engineering, and medicine. At the individual level of analysis, organizational behaviour includes the study of learning, perception, creativity, motivation, and personality. In addition, it also includes the study of turnover, task performance and evaluation, coordinated behaviour, deviant work behaviour, ethics, and cognition.

Group Level of Analysis: Organizational behaviour, at this level of analysis, draws upon the sociological and socio-psychological discipline. At the group level of analysis, organizational behaviour includes the study of group gesture, intra-group and intergroup dispute and attachment. It is further extended to the study of leadership, power, norms,

interpersonal communication, networks, and roles.

Organizational Level of Analysis: Organizational behaviour, at this level of analysis draws upon sociology and political science. At this level of analysis, organizational behaviour includes the study of organizational culture, structure, cultural diversity, inter-organizational cooperation and coordination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1981Belbin's model is based on the premise that individuals will adopt a 'preferred role' in a group or team. The eight roles identified by Belbin: company worker; chairman; shaper; plant; resource-investigator; monitor evaluator; team worker and completer-finisher each have particular attributes that help them contribute the essential qualities for an effective team, and the preferred role can be discovered using a simple questionnaire. Belbin's team roles model is used in education and organisations as a tool for selecting teams, developing skills and identifying possible gaps in performance as well as to experiment with the theory and concepts.

A study conducted by Livingstone and Lynch (2000), comparing groups with a different approach to group work found that group members with roles were less likely to conflict with other members: "the implication is that the adoption of roles helps to moderate personality clashes, and makes the individual composition of the group and personal 'histories' less significant" (ibid p340). They went on to say that "where members' roles are not defined, groups may marginalise the contribution of members who are not expected to provide valuable input" (ibid p340).

Sundstrom, De Meuse, and Futrell (1990), presented an organizational systems perspective on teams that addressed both development and effectiveness; two issues rarely considered in concert. Hackman (1992) viewed groups as contexts for individual behaviour, an important perspective because teams in part enact their context. Guzzo and Shea (1992) and Guzzo and Dickson (1996) reviewed team research in organizations. Cohen and Bailey (1997) and Sundstrom, McIntyre, Halfhill, and Richards (2000) provided focused reviews of work team effectiveness based on field research during the periods of 1990- 1996 and 1980 to mid-1999, respectively. Finally, Gully (2000) presented an insightful assessment of team effectiveness research since 1985

that examines key boundary conditions. An examination of this body of work leads to the conclusion that there is an enormous wealth of information available on work teams in organizations.

Chen and Chiu suggest that employees with motivation and commitment to their organisation, are more likely to display higher job involvement (that is, the extent in which an employee is committed and involved with his/her job), and are more willing to put more effort to fulfil their duties and might as well, fulfil extra duties. Employees who demonstrate a sense of identity towards their organisation are more likely to perform well, considering their work as the centre of their self-concept.

Adair (quoted in Cole, 2002) emphasises the importance of carefully selecting team members within a group. According to him, team is more than just a group working toward a common goal. "It is a group in which the contributions of individuals are seen complementary. Collaboration, working together, is the keynote of a team activity." (Adair quoted in Cole, 2002, p.91)

Lizzio & Wilson studied the contribution of different team development activities to group formation and development by evaluating the effectiveness of self-managed student groups creating a group workshop/presentation for their peers. They concluded that early teambuilding activities "may aid future group functioning" (ibid: 701); that it was unreasonable to expect students to independently refer to supporting resources unless they were experiencing problems; and that teams that met more frequently displayed greater success (Lizzio & Wilson, 2006).

Goodman, Ravlin, and Schminke (1987) sent a signal marking the shift in locus and highlighted one of the key distinctions between the small group literature, which pays relatively little attention to the group task and its technology, and the organizational literature, which views what groups do and how they do it as a critical characteristics. Similarly, Bettenhausen (1991) documented the emphasis in organizational research on task driven processes in teams, relative to the small group focus on interpersonal attraction and interaction.

Work on political behaviour by individuals is limited although recent research on the filing of grievances (Dalton & Todor, 1979; Muchinsky & Maassarani, 1980) provides a good example. The relative neglect of individual political behaviour in

the current wave of interest in organizational research seems strange (Farrell & Peterson, 1982).

American values emphasis more on individualism and as a result heavy stress on individual behaviour is quite natural. Many studies on organizational politics (Burns, 1962; Mechanic, 1962; Strauss, 1963) considered political actions taken by individual members of organizations. It is also acknowledged that the neglect of individual political behaviour has three main bases: (1) failure to make a distinction between required job behaviour / attitude from political behaviour (2) unable to distinguish calculated from accidental political behaviour, and (3) failure to distinguish clearly between macro and micro levels of analysis (Farrell & Peterson, 1982).

Livingstone and Lynch (2000) point out that groups selected using names or student numbers may ultimately lead to the same groups being allocated every time, and they advocate the use of random selection to avoid this. However Lizzio and Wilson note that "the familiarity of group members, or their 'prior acquaintanceship' (i.e. whether they knew each other before working together), has been argued to provide an early baseline of relationship cohesion that might be of

benefit in the context of a time-limited group (Campion *et al.*, 1996; Wooten & Reed, 2000)" (ibid 693).

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANIZATION

Human behaviour is complex and every individual is different from another, the challenge of an effective organization is in successfully matching the task, the manager and the subordinate. Under ideal situation, a manager would first analyze the task, then determine the required skills and assemble a team that complement each other skills; thereby creating an enriching & conflict free team. In reality, a manager has to use the existing resources for a given task, and must have the ability to understand the differences in individual behaviours and use them appropriately to increase the synergy. People, through their individuality and uniqueness, bring unconsciously something (either positive or negative) to others. It can be values, emotions, but also skills, abilities, creativity, etc. When hiring a new employee, companies expect that this individual will add a value to the company through its characteristics. Therefore, the study of individual behaviour is essential within an organisation as these characteristics influence how a person will

behave at work and interact with others. Human behaviour is directly affected by individual difference. It will have an impact on how a person perceive things (e.g.: a directive at work) and respond. As a result, individual behaviours impact effectiveness of teams.

Impact of some factors how an individual behave

- Hereditary and diversity factors which combined "primary dimensions" which are unchangeable (e.g.: age/gender/physical attributes) and secondary dimensions which may change throughout the life (e.g.: educational background, religion, belief, health)

- Abilities and skills including mental abilities (e.g.: emotional intelligence, tacit knowledge) and physical abilities (e.g.: motor skills, body coordination)

- Perception is "the basic cognitive process that transforms sensory stimuli into meaningful information." (Practical Management, 2008, p.4) In others words, it is the way something is seen and feel by an individual. According to the attribution theory of Heider (quoted in Malle, 2011), perception can be influenced by two attributes: external (the result of a situation) or internal (the result by something within a person).

- Attitude can be defined as a mental state of readiness: "a state of being prepared for something" (Cambridge, 2015). It is closely link with the personality and the perception of the individual. For instance, job satisfaction results from the employee's perception regarding its job and may seriously influence its attitude at work.

- Personality defined as the way a person feels, behaves and thinks, results from the heredity, the cultural forces, the social class and the relationship of an individual. (Practical Management, 2008)

To use efficiently the human capital in an organisation, a manager should be able to analyse and understand individual behaviours as each individual possess different strengths and weaknesses. To do so, keen observation is necessary. As highlighted by Cole (2002, p.92), technical skills and qualifications are not enough if it is not accompanied with "the ability to work as a team members and the position of 'desirable personal attributes' such as willingness to listen, flexibility and the capacity to give". It is also relevant

regarding managers. For instance, according to its personality, the way a manager will behave with a woman or a young employee may be influenced. Tasks assigned to an employee can be determined by the manager's perception regarding the employee's abilities. In some particular cases, managers can also restructure a job regarding the individual behaviour of an employee in order to increase its productivity.

FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

Abilities

Abilities of a person are the natural or learnt traits. Abilities can be classified into mental and physical abilities and different task requires different level of the two. Mental abilities represent the intelligence, person's deductive reasoning, and memory, analytical and verbal comprehension. Physical abilities include muscular strength, stamina, body coordination and motor skills. An individual's self awareness of his own abilities determines how he feels about the task, while the manager's perception of his abilities determines the kind of task he assigns to the individual.

Gender

Although, research concludes that men and women are equal in their mental abilities and job performance, society does emphasize differences. However, absenteeism is one area where differences are found and can be attributed to being primary caregiver to children. However, this creates a difference in self perception of one's abilities, personal values and social behaviour. Similarly, a manager's personal values might influence how he considers gender as factor in his task assignment and evaluation.

Race

Race and culture exert significant influence when both workplace and society have considerable diversity. Stereotyping and attributing behaviour based on race and culture are common mistakes that influence individual behaviour. It is important for both management and the staff of diverse workforce to learn about different cultures, their values, common art facts and communication protocols. This would create a more comfortable corporate culture and would subdue behaviours that might be perceived as insensitive and offensive.

Perception

Perception is the basic cognitive process that transforms sensory stimuli into meaningful information. Most real life problems are multidimensional and the rational approach is often entwined with the gut feeling, resulting in individual perception. This quells the famous notion that reality is objective and thus everyone must perceive it the same way. Both managers and subordinates must recognize that perceptual differences exist and often are the reason for mutual dissatisfaction.

Stereotyping

It is categorization of individuals on basis of single attribute, it ends up creating a generalized and simplified belief that do not take into account other significant characteristics. Age, race and sex are the three most common basis of stereotyping; not only they are unethical but can cost missing resources. In general, stereotyping leads to decisions that are based on inaccurate data that can result in unfair performance evaluations, job design or promotion.

Selective Perception

It is the process of selecting only the information that supports our pre-existing belief system, thereby eliminating the discomforting information. Selective perception acts like a catalyst to stereotyping because people tend to notice things that fit their existing notion and not notice things that don't. Both stereotyping and selective perception can be beneficial only by chance since they are based on partial information. The specific situations in which they can be positively exploited cannot be used as reliable methods.

Attribution

Attribution is the process of observing behaviour and then determining its cause based on individual's personality or situation. Attribution based on personality is due to internal causes and is termed as dispositional attribution. It includes personality traits like shyness, arrogance, intelligence, etc. Attribution based on external influences and situations that are outside the control of individual are termed as situational attribution. The basic attribution framework uses three criteria mentioned below.

Consensus

It is the extent to which other people in the same situation might respond similarly. When behaviour is attributed to consensus, the individual is not rewarded or penalized due his personality.

FIVE WAYS OF SHAPING INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

- i. Positive reinforcement
- ii. Negative reinforcement
- iii. Punishment
- iv. Extinction
- v. Schedules of reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement

It occurs when a desirable event or stimulus is given as an outcome of a behaviour and the behaviour improves. A positive reinforce is a stimulus event for which an individual will work in order to achieve it.

Negative Reinforcement

It occurs when an aversive event or when a stimulus is removed or prevented from happening and the rate of behaviour improves. A negative reinforce is a stimulus event for which an individual will work in order to terminate, to escape from, to postpone its occurrence.

Punishment

The creation of some unpleasant conditions to remove an undesirable behaviour.

Extinction

The process of eliminating an undesirable behaviour by the removal of reinforcement.

Schedules of Reinforcement

The schedules of reinforcement can be of five types − continuous, fixed interval, variable interval, fixed ratio, and variable ratio.

Continuous

A schedule of reinforcement in which every occurrence of the desired outcome is followed by the one who reinforces. For example − Each time a child puts Rs. 1 in a candy machine and presses the buttons he receives a candy bar.

Fixed interval

Repeating reinforcement with intervals but sufficient enough to make the expected behaviour worth repeating. For example − Working of washing machine.

Variable interval

Conduct of reinforcement with an average of n amount of time. For eg − Checking e-mail or popping quizzes. Going fishing— we might catch a fish after 20 minutes

Fixed ratio

Reinforce the rewards at spaced time intervals. For example - Salary.

Variable ratio

Reinforce the rewards at spaced unpredictable time intervals. For example − Commission in sales.

INDIVIDUAL ROLES

Roles that classify a person according to the measure of individual effort put in the project aimed is known as individual roles. Five types of individuals fall into these roles − aggressor, blocker, dominator, cavalier, and avoidance.

Aggressor - one who devalues others, attacks ideas.

Blocker - one who disagrees and rebels beyond reason.

Dominator - one who insists superiority to manipulate?

Cavalier - one who takes part in a group non-productively?

Avoidance - one who shows special interest to avoid task.

These are the various roles a person plays in an organization.

GROUPS

Two or more individuals, interacting and Interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives Group Behaviour Group behaviour emanates from the causes that contribute to the group's effectiveness.

GROUP BEHAVIOUR

A group can be defined as two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve particular objectives. A group behaviour can be stated as a course of action a group takes as a family.

TYPES OF GROUPS

There are two types of groups individuals form. They are formal groups and informal groups. Let us know about these groups.

Formal Groups

These are the type of work groups created by the organization and have designated work assignments and rooted tasks. The behaviour of such groups is directed toward achieving organizational goals. Formal groups can be further classified into two sub-groups −

Command Group − It is a group consisting of individuals who report directly to the manager.

Interest Group − It is a group formed by individuals working together to achieve a specific objective.

Informal Groups

These groups are formed with friendships and common interests. These can be further classified into two sub-groups −

Task group − Working together to finish a job or task is known as a task group.

Friendship group – Those who brought together because of their shared interests or common characteristics is known as friendship group.

GROUP ROLES

The concept of roles is applicable to all employees within an organization as well as to their life outside the organization. A role is a set of expected behaviour patterns attributed to the one who occupies the position demanded by the social unit.

Individuals play multiple roles at the same time. Employees attempt to understand what kind of behaviour is expected from them. An individual when presented by divergent role expectations experiences role conflict.

GROUP ROLES

Task-oriented Roles

Roles allotted to individuals according to their work and eligibility is known as task-oriented roles. Task-oriented roles can broadly divide individuals into six categories initiator, informer, clarifier, summarizer, reality tester and information seekers or providers respectively.

Initiator - one who proposes, suggests, and defines.

Informer - one who offers facts, expresses feelings, and gives opinions.

Clarifier - one who interprets, defines, and clarifies everything.

Summarizer - the one who links, restates, concludes, and summarizes.

Reality Tester - one who provides critical analyse.

Information providers - one who give information.

Relationship-oriented Roles

Roles that individual's play according to their effort made to maintain healthy relationship in the group and achieve the goals are known as relationship-oriented roles. There are five categories of individuals in this category −

harmonizer, gate keeper, consensus tester, encourager, and compromiser.

Harmonizer - one who limits tension and reconciles disagreements.

Gate Keeper - one who ensures participation by all?

Consensus Tester - one who analyzes the decision-making process?

Encourager - one who is warm, responsive, active, shows acceptance?

Compromiser - one who admits error and limits conflict.

These roles depict the various roles an individual plays to maintain healthy self as well as group relationships.

CONCLUSION

The study of Organizational Behaviour deals with behaviours and attitudes of people within an organization with a systemic approach. Behaviours and interactions within an organization may be either functional or dysfunctional. Also conflict resolution between individual and group behaviour is critical for the survival of an organization. Different conflict resolution modes lead to different outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to identify the goals sought through conflict resolution. In organizational setting both individual and group develop their knowledge and interpersonal skills which in turn helps the organization to attain its goals.

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