

# Foundations of Individual Behavior

2

Continental's program of giving out cars to employees as a reward for not missing work encourages attendance. In this chapter, we'll discuss how rewards shape behaviors like attendance through learning. First, however, we'll look at how biographical characteristics (such as gender and age) and ability affect employee performance and satisfaction.

## BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

As discussed in Chapter 1, this textbook is essentially concerned with finding and analyzing the variables that have an impact on employee productivity, absence, turnover, and satisfaction. The list of those variables—as shown in Exhibit 1-7—is long and contains some complicated concepts. Many of the concepts—motivation, say, or power and politics or organizational culture—are hard to assess. It might be valuable, then, to begin by looking at factors that are easily definable and readily available; data that can be obtained, for the most part, simply from information available in an employee's personnel file. What factors would these be? Obvious characteristics would be an employee's age, gender, marital status, and length of service with an organization. Fortunately, there is a sizable amount of research that has specifically analyzed many of these **biographical characteristics**.

### Age

The relationship between age and job performance is likely to be an issue of increasing importance during the next decade. Why? There are at least three reasons. First, there is a widespread belief that job performance declines with increasing age. Regardless of whether it's true or not, a lot of people believe it and act on it.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

AFTER STUDYING THIS CHAPTER,  
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Define the key biographical characteristics.
2. Identify two types of ability.
3. Shape the behavior of others.
4. Distinguish between the four schedules of reinforcement.
5. Clarify the role of punishment in learning.
6. Practice self-management.

## biographical characteristics

Personal characteristics—such as age, gender, and marital status—that are objective and easily obtained from personnel records.

Second, as noted in Chapter 1, is the reality that the workforce is aging. Workers 55 and older are currently the fastest-growing sector of the labor force.<sup>2</sup> The third reason is U.S. legislation that, for all intents and purposes, outlaws mandatory retirement. Most U.S. workers today no longer have to retire at the age of 70.

What is the perception of older workers? Evidence indicates that employers hold mixed feelings.<sup>3</sup> They see a number of positive qualities that older workers bring to their jobs: specifically, experience, judgment, a strong work ethic, and commitment to quality. But older workers are also perceived as lacking flexibility and as being resistant to new technology. And in a time when organizations actively seek individuals who are adaptable and open to change, the negatives associated with age clearly hinder the initial hiring of older workers and increase the likelihood that they will be let go during cutbacks. Now let's take a look at the evidence. What effect does age actually have on turnover, absenteeism, productivity, and satisfaction?

The older you get, the less likely you are to quit your job. That conclusion is based on studies of the age-turnover relationship.<sup>4</sup> Of course, this shouldn't be too surprising. As workers get older, they have fewer alternative job opportunities. In addition, older workers are less likely to resign than are younger workers because their long tenure tends to provide them with higher wage rates, longer paid vacations, and more-attractive pension benefits.

It's tempting to assume that age is also inversely related to absenteeism. After all, if older workers are less likely to quit, won't they also demonstrate higher stability by coming to work more regularly? Not necessarily. Most studies do show an inverse relationship, but close examination finds that the age-absence relationship is partially a function of whether the absence is avoidable or unavoidable.<sup>5</sup> In general, older employees have lower rates of avoidable absence than do younger employees. However, they have higher rates of unavoidable absence, probably due to the poorer health associated with aging and the longer recovery period that older workers need when injured.

How does age affect productivity? There is a widespread belief that productivity declines with age. It is often assumed that an individual's skills—particularly speed, agility, strength, and coordination—decay over time and that prolonged job boredom and lack of intellectual stimulation all contribute to reduced productivity. The evidence, however, contradicts that belief and those assumptions. For instance, during a three-year period, a large hardware chain staffed one of its stores solely with employees over 50 and compared its results with those of five stores with younger employees. The store staffed by the over-50 employees was significantly more productive (measured in terms of sales generated against labor costs) than two of the other stores and held its own with the other three.<sup>6</sup> Other reviews of the research find that age and job performance are unrelated.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, this finding seems true for almost all types of jobs, professional and nonprofessional. The natural conclusion is that the demands of most jobs, even those with heavy manual labor requirements, are not extreme enough for any declines in physical skills attributable



McDonald's relies heavily on older workers to find and depend able employees.

to age to have an impact on productivity; or, if there is some decay due to age, it is offset by gains due to experience.<sup>8</sup>

Our final concern is the relationship between age and job satisfaction. On this issue, the evidence is mixed. Most studies indicate a positive association between age and satisfaction, at least up to age 60.<sup>9</sup> Other studies, however, have found a U-shaped relationship.<sup>10</sup> Several explanations could clear up these results, the most plausible being that these studies are intermixing professional and nonprofessional employees. When the two types are separated, satisfaction tends to continually increase among professionals as they age, whereas it falls among nonprofessionals during middle age and then rises again in the later years.

## Gender

Few issues initiate more debates, misconceptions, and unsupported opinions than whether women perform as well on jobs as men do. In this section, we review the research on that issue.

The evidence suggests that the best place to begin is with the recognition that there are few, if any, important differences between men and women that will affect their job performance. There are, for instance, no consistent male-female differences in problem-solving ability, analytical skills, competitive drive, motivation, sociability, or learning ability.<sup>11</sup> Psychological studies have found that women are more willing to conform to authority and that men are more aggressive and more likely than women to have expectations of success, but those differences are minor. Given the significant changes that have taken place in the past 30 years in terms of increasing female participation rates in the workforce and rethinking what constitutes male and female roles, you should operate on the assumption that there is no significant difference in job productivity between men and women. Similarly, there is no evidence indicating that an employee's gender affects job satisfaction.<sup>12</sup>

One issue that does seem to differ between genders, especially when the employee has preschool-age children, is preference for work schedules.<sup>13</sup> Working mothers are more likely to prefer part-time work, flexible work schedules, and telecommuting in order to accommodate their family responsibilities.

But what about absence and turnover rates? Are women less stable employees than men? First, on the question of turnover, the evidence indicates no significant differences.<sup>14</sup> Women's quit rates are similar to those for men. The research on absence, however, consistently indicates that women have higher rates of absenteeism than men do.<sup>15</sup> The most logical explanation for this finding is that the research was conducted in North America, and North American culture has historically placed home and family responsibilities on the woman. When a child is ill or someone needs to stay home to wait for the plumber, it has been the woman who has traditionally taken time off from work. However, this research is undoubtedly time-bound.<sup>16</sup> The historical role of the woman in caring for children and as secondary breadwinner has definitely changed in the past generation, and a large proportion of men nowadays are as interested in day care and the problems associated with child care in general as are women.

## Marital Status

There are not enough studies to draw any conclusions about the effect of marital status on productivity. But research consistently indicates that married employees have fewer absences, undergo less turnover, and are more satisfied with their jobs than are their unmarried coworkers.<sup>17</sup>

Marriage imposes increased responsibilities that may make a steady job more valuable and important. But the question of causation is not clear. It may very well

be that conscientious and satisfied employees are more likely to be married. Another offshoot of this issue is that research has not pursued statuses other than single or married. Does being divorced or widowed have an impact on an employee's performance and satisfaction? What about couples who live together without being married? These are questions in need of investigation.

### Tenure

The last biographical characteristic we'll look at is tenure. With the exception of the issue of male-female differences, probably no issue is more subject to misconceptions and speculations than the impact of seniority on job performance.

Extensive reviews of the seniority-productivity relationship have been conducted.<sup>18</sup> If we define seniority as time on a particular job, we can say that the most recent evidence demonstrates a positive relationship between seniority and job productivity. So tenure, expressed as work experience, appears to be a good predictor of employee productivity.

The research relating tenure to absence is quite straightforward. Studies consistently demonstrate seniority to be negatively related to absenteeism.<sup>19</sup> In fact, in terms of both frequency of absence and total days lost at work, tenure is the single most important explanatory variable.<sup>20</sup>

Tenure is also a potent variable in explaining turnover. The longer a person is in a job, the less likely he or she is to quit.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, consistent with research that suggests that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior,<sup>22</sup> evidence indicates that tenure on an employee's previous job is a powerful predictor of that employee's future turnover.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence indicates that tenure and satisfaction are positively related.<sup>24</sup> In fact, when age and tenure are treated separately, tenure appears to be a more consistent and stable predictor of job satisfaction than is chronological age.

## ABILITY

Contrary to what we were taught in grade school, we weren't all created equal. Most of us are to the left of the median on some normally distributed ability curve. Regardless of how motivated you are, it is unlikely that you can act as well as Meryl Streep, play golf as well as Tiger Woods, write horror stories as well as Stephen King, or sing as well as Whitney Houston. Of course, just because we aren't all equal in abilities does not imply that some individuals are inherently inferior to others. What we are acknowledging is that everyone has strengths and weaknesses in terms of ability that make him or her relatively superior or inferior to others in performing certain tasks or activities.<sup>25</sup> From management's standpoint, the issue is not whether people differ in terms of their abilities. They clearly do. The issue is knowing how people differ in abilities and using that knowledge to increase the likelihood that an employee will perform his or her job well.

What does ability mean? As we will see in the term, **ability** refers to an individual's capacity to perform tasks in a job. It is a current assessment of what one can do. Actual and physical abilities.

### Intellectual Abilities

**Intellectual abilities** are those needed to perform mental activities. Intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, for example, are designed to ascertain one's general intellectual abilities. So, too, are popular college admission tests such as the SAT and ACT and

#### ability

An individual's capacity to perform the various tasks in a job.

#### Intellectual abilities

The capacity to perform mental activities.

### Dimensions of Intellectual Ability

Dimension	Description	Job Example
Number aptitude	Ability to do speedy and accurate arithmetic	Accountant: Computing the sales tax on a set of items
Verbal comprehension	Ability to understand what is read or heard and the relationship of words to each other	Plant manager: Following corporate policies
Perceptual speed	Ability to identify visual similarities and differences quickly and accurately	Fire investigator: Identifying clues to support a charge of arson
Inductive reasoning	Ability to identify a logical sequence in a problem and then solve the problem	Market researcher: Forecasting demand for a product in the next time period
Deductive reasoning	Ability to use logic and assess the implications of an argument	Supervisor: Choosing between two different suggestions offered by employees
Spatial visualization	Ability to imagine how an object would look if its position in space were changed	Interior decorator: Redecorating an office
Memory	Ability to retain and recall past experiences	Salesperson: Remembering the names of customers

graduate admission tests in business (GMAT), law (LSAT), and medicine (MCAT). The seven most frequently cited dimensions making up intellectual abilities are number aptitude, verbal comprehension, perceptual speed, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, spatial visualization, and memory.<sup>26</sup> Exhibit 2-1 describes those dimensions.

Jobs differ in the demands they place on incumbents to use their intellectual abilities. Generally speaking, the more information-processing demands that exist in a job, the more general intelligence and verbal abilities will be necessary to perform the job successfully.<sup>27</sup> Of course, a high IQ is not a prerequisite for all jobs. In fact, for many jobs—in which employee behavior is highly routine and there are little or no opportunities to exercise discretion—a high IQ may be unrelated to performance. On the other hand, a careful review of the evidence demonstrates that tests that assess verbal, numerical, spatial, and perceptual abilities are valid predictors of job proficiency at all levels of jobs.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, tests that measure specific dimensions of intelligence have been found to be strong predictors of future job performance. This explains why a company like Microsoft emphasizes assessing candidates' intelligence as a key element in its interview process.

The major dilemma faced by employers who use mental ability tests for selection, promotion, training, and similar personnel decisions is that they may have a negative impact on racial and ethnic groups.<sup>29</sup> The evidence indicates that some minority groups score, on the average, as much as one standard deviation lower than whites on verbal, numerical, and spatial ability tests.

In the past decade, researchers have begun to expand the meaning of intelligence beyond mental abilities. The most recent evidence suggests that intelligence can be better understood by breaking it down into four subparts: cognitive, social,

## **multiple intelligences**

Intelligence contains four subparts: cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural.

## **physical ability**

The capacity to do tasks demanding stamina, dexterity, strength, and similar characteristics.

emotional, and cultural.<sup>30</sup> Cognitive intelligence encompasses the aptitudes that have long been tapped by traditional intelligence tests. Social intelligence is a person's ability to relate effectively to others. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, and manage emotions. And cultural intelligence is awareness of cross-cultural differences and the ability to function successfully in cross-cultural situations. Although this line of inquiry—toward **multiple intelligences**—is in its infancy, it does hold considerable promise. For instance, it may be able to help us explain why so-called smart people—those with high cognitive intelligence—don't necessarily adapt well to everyday life, work well with others, or succeed when placed in leadership roles.

## **Physical Abilities**

To the same degree that intellectual abilities play a larger role in complex jobs with demanding information-processing requirements, specific **physical abilities** gain importance for successfully doing less-skilled and more-standardized jobs. For example, jobs in which success demands stamina, manual dexterity, leg strength, or similar talents require management to identify an employee's physical capabilities.

Research on the requirements needed in hundreds of jobs has identified nine basic abilities involved in the performance of physical tasks.<sup>31</sup> These are described in Exhibit 2-2. Individuals differ in the extent to which they have each of these abilities. Not surprisingly, there is also little relationship between them: A high score on one is no assurance of a high score on others. High employee performance is likely to be achieved when management has ascertained the extent to which a job requires each of the nine abilities and then ensures that employees in that job have those abilities.

Nine Basic Physical Abilities	
<b>Strength Factors</b>	
1. Dynamic strength	Ability to exert muscular force repeatedly or continuously over time
2. Trunk strength	Ability to exert muscular strength using the trunk (particularly abdominal) muscles
3. Static strength	Ability to exert force against external objects
4. Explosive strength	Ability to expend a maximum of energy in one or a series of explosive acts
<b>Flexibility Factors</b>	
5. Extent flexibility	Ability to move the trunk and back muscles as far as possible
6. Dynamic flexibility	Ability to make rapid, repeated flexing movements
<b>Other Factors</b>	
7. Body coordination	Ability to coordinate the simultaneous actions of different parts of the body
8. Balance	Ability to maintain equilibrium despite forces pulling off balance
9. Stamina	Ability to continue maximum effort requiring prolonged effort over time

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## The Ability-Job Fit

Our concern is with explaining and predicting the behavior of people at work. In this section, we have demonstrated that jobs make differing demands on people and that people differ in the abilities they possess. Therefore, employee performance is enhanced when there is a high ability-job fit.

The specific intellectual or physical abilities required for adequate job performance depend on the ability requirements of the job. So, for example, airline pilots need strong spatial-visualization abilities; beach lifeguards need both strong spatial-visualization abilities and body coordination; senior executives need verbal abilities; high-rise construction workers need balance; and journalists with weak reasoning abilities would likely have difficulty meeting minimum job performance standards. Directing attention at only the employee's abilities or only the ability requirements of the job ignores the fact that employee performance depends on the interaction of the two.

What predictions can we make when the fit is poor? As alluded to previously, if employees lack the required abilities, they are likely to fail. If you are hired as a word processor and you cannot meet the job's basic keyboard typing requirements, your performance is going to be poor irrespective of your positive attitude or your high level of motivation. When the ability-job fit is out of sync because the employee has abilities that far exceed the requirements of the job, our predictions would be very different. Job performance is likely to be adequate, but there will be organizational inefficiencies and possible declines in employee satisfaction. Given that pay tends to reflect the highest skill level that employees possess, if an employee's abilities far exceed those necessary to do the job, management will be paying more than it needs to. Abilities significantly above those required can also reduce the employee's job satisfaction when the employee's desire to use his or her abilities is particularly strong and is frustrated by the limitations of the job.

## LEARNING

All complex behavior is learned. If we want to explain and predict behavior, we need to understand how people learn. In this section, we define learning, present three popular learning theories, and describe how managers can facilitate employee learning.

### A Definition of Learning

What is learning? A psychologist's definition is considerably broader than the layperson's view that "it's what we did when we went to school." In actuality, each of us is continuously "going to school." Learning occurs all the time. Therefore, a generally accepted definition of learning is *any relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience*.<sup>32</sup> Ironically, we can say that changes in behavior indicate that learning has taken place and that learning is a change in behavior.

Obviously, the foregoing definition suggests that we shall never see someone "learning." We can see changes taking place but not the learning itself. The concept is theoretical and, hence, not directly observable:

You have seen people in the process of learning, you have seen people who behave in a particular way as a result of learning and some of you (in fact, I guess the majority of you) have "learned" at some time in your life. In other words, we infer that learning has taken place if an individual behaves, reacts, responds as a result of experience in a manner different from the way he formerly behaved.<sup>33</sup>

### learning

Any relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience.



Learning occurs throughout life. Patrick Bernhardt is becoming a teacher after changing careers. He not only learns on the job but also attends evening classes three times a week. "This is the hardest thing I've ever done," he says, "but the sense of satisfaction is great."

### classical conditioning

A type of conditioning in which an individual responds to some stimulus that would not ordinarily produce such a response.

Our definition has several components that deserve clarification. First, learning involves change. Change may be good or bad from an organizational point of view. People can learn unfavorable behaviors—to hold prejudices or to restrict their output, for example—as well as favorable behaviors. Second, the change must be relatively permanent. Temporary changes may be only reflexive and may not represent learning. Therefore, the requirement that learning must be relatively permanent rules out behavioral changes caused by fatigue or temporary adaptations. Third, our definition is concerned with behavior. Learning takes place when there is a change in actions. A change in an individual's thought processes or attitudes, if not accompanied by a change in behavior, would not be learning. Finally, some form of experience is necessary for learning. Experience may be acquired directly through observation or practice, or it may be acquired indirectly, as through reading. The crucial test still remains: Does this experience result in a relatively permanent change in behavior? If the answer is Yes, we can say that learning has taken place.

### Theories of Learning

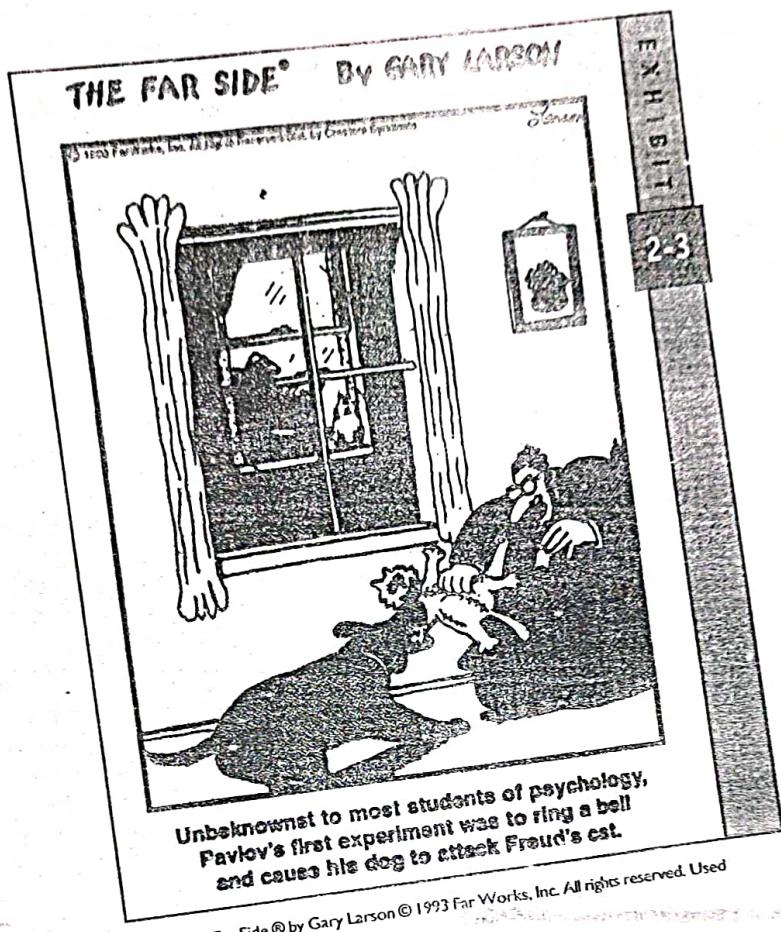
How do we learn? Three theories have been offered to explain the process by which we acquire patterns of behavior. These are classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and social learning.

**Classical Conditioning** Classical conditioning grew out of experiments to teach dogs to salivate in response to the ringing of a bell, conducted at the turn of the century by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov.<sup>34</sup> A simple surgical procedure allowed Pavlov to measure accurately the amount of saliva secreted by a dog. When Pavlov presented the dog with a piece of meat, the dog exhibited a noticeable increase in salivation. When Pavlov withheld the presentation of meat and merely rang a bell, the dog did not salivate. Then Pavlov proceeded to link the meat and the ringing of the bell. After repeatedly hearing the bell before getting the food, the dog began to salivate as soon as the bell rang. After a while, the dog would salivate merely at the sound of the bell, even if no food was offered. In effect, the dog had learned to respond—that is, to salivate—to the bell. Let's review this experiment to introduce the key concepts in classical conditioning.

The meat was an *unconditioned stimulus*; it invariably caused the dog to react in a specific way. The reaction that took place whenever the unconditioned stimulus occurred was called the *unconditioned response* (or the noticeable increase in salivation, in this case). The bell was an artificial stimulus, or what we call the *conditioned stimulus*. Although it was originally neutral, after the bell was paired with the meat (an unconditioned stimulus), it eventually produced a response when presented alone. The last key concept is the *conditioned response*. This describes the behavior of the dog; it salivated in reaction to the bell alone.

Using these concepts, we can summarize classical conditioning. Essentially, learning a conditioned response involves building up an association between a conditioned stimulus and an unconditioned stimulus. When the stimuli, one compelling and the other one neutral, are paired, the neutral one becomes a conditioned stimulus and, hence, takes on the properties of the unconditioned stimulus.

Classical conditioning can be used to explain why Christmas carols often bring back pleasant memories of childhood; the songs are associated with the festive Christmas spirit and evoke fond memories and feelings of euphoria. In an organizational setting, we can also see classical conditioning operating. For example, at one manufacturing plant, every time the top executives from the head office



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were scheduled to make a visit, the plant management would clean up the administrative offices and wash the windows. This went on for years. Eventually, employees would turn on their best behavior and look prim and proper whenever the windows were cleaned—even in those occasional instances when the cleaning was not paired with the visit from the top brass. People had learned to associate the cleaning of the windows with a visit from the head office.

Classical conditioning is passive. Something happens and we react in a specific way. It is elicited in response to a specific, identifiable event. As such, it can explain simple reflexive behaviors. But most behavior—particularly the complex behavior of individuals in organizations—is emitted rather than elicited. It is voluntary rather than reflexive. For example, employees choose to arrive at work on time, ask their boss for help with problems, or "goof off" when no one is watching. The learning of those behaviors is better understood by looking at operant conditioning.

**Operant Conditioning** Operant conditioning argues that behavior is a function of its consequences. People learn to behave to get something they want or to avoid something they don't want. Operant behavior means voluntary or learned behavior in contrast to reflexive or unlearned behavior. The tendency to repeat such behavior is influenced by the reinforcement or lack of reinforcement brought about by the consequences of the behavior. Therefore, reinforcement strengthens a behavior and increases the likelihood that it will be repeated.

**operant conditioning**  
A type of conditioning in which desired voluntary behavior leads to a reward or prevents a punishment

What Pavlov did for classical conditioning, the Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner did for operant conditioning.<sup>35</sup> Building on earlier work in the field, Skinner's research extensively expanded our knowledge of operant conditioning. Even his staunchest critics, who represent a sizable group, admit that his operant concepts work.

Behavior is assumed to be determined from without—that is, learned—rather than from within—reflexive, or unlearned. Skinner argued that creating pleasing consequences to follow specific forms of behavior would increase the frequency of that behavior. People will most likely engage in desired behaviors if they are positively reinforced for doing so. Rewards are most effective if they immediately follow the desired response. In addition, behavior that is not rewarded, or is punished, is less likely to be repeated.

You see illustrations of operant conditioning everywhere. For example, any situation in which it is either explicitly stated or implicitly suggested that reinforcements are contingent on some action on your part involves the use of operant learning. Your instructor says that if you want a high grade in the course you must supply correct answers on the test. A commissioned salesperson wanting to earn a sizable income finds that doing so is contingent on generating high sales in her territory. Of course, the linkage can also work to teach the individual to engage in behaviors that work against the best interests of the organization. Assume that your boss tells you that if you will work overtime during the next three-week busy season, you will be compensated for it at the next performance appraisal. However, when performance appraisal time comes, you find that you are given no positive reinforcement for your overtime work. The next time your boss asks you to work overtime, what will you do? You'll probably decline! Your behavior can be explained by operant conditioning: If a behavior fails to be positively reinforced, the probability that the behavior will be repeated declines.

**Social Learning** Individuals can also learn by observing what happens to other people and just by being told about something, as well as by direct experiences. So, for example, much of what we have learned comes from watching models—parents, teachers, peers, motion picture and television performers, bosses, and so forth. This view that we can learn through both observation and direct experience has been called **social-learning theory**.<sup>36</sup>

Although social-learning theory is an extension of operant conditioning—that is, it assumes that behavior is a function of consequences—it also acknowledges the existence of observational learning and the importance of perception in learning. People respond to how they perceive and define consequences, not to the objective consequences themselves.

The influence of models is central to the social-learning viewpoint. Four processes have been found to determine the influence that a model will have on an individual. As we will show later in this chapter, the inclusion of the following processes when management sets up employee-training programs will significantly improve the likelihood that the programs will be successful:

1. *Attentional processes.* People learn from a model only when they recognize and pay attention to its critical features. We tend to be most influenced by models that are attractive, repeatedly available, important to us, or similar to us in our estimation.
2. *Retention processes.* A model's influence will depend on how well the individual remembers the model's action after the model is no longer readily available.

### **social-learning theory**

People can learn through observation and direct experience.

OR

## SCIENCE ?

### "You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks!"

This statement is false. It reflects the widely held stereotype that older workers have difficulties in adapting to new methods and techniques. Studies consistently demonstrate that older employees are perceived as being relatively inflexible, resistant to change, and less trainable than their younger counterparts, particularly with respect to information technology skills.<sup>37</sup> But these perceptions are wrong.

The evidence indicates that older workers (typically defined as people aged 50 and over) want to learn and are just as capable of learning as any other employee group. Older workers do seem to be somewhat less efficient in acquiring complex or de-

manding skills. That is, they may take longer to train. But once trained, they perform at levels comparable to those of younger workers.<sup>38</sup>

The ability to acquire the skills, knowledge, or behavior necessary to perform a job at a given level—that is, trainability—has been the subject of much research. And the evidence indicates that there are differences between people in their trainability. A number of individual-difference factors (such as ability, motivational level, and personality) have been found to significantly influence learning and training outcomes.<sup>39</sup> However, age has not been found to influence these outcomes.

3. Motor reproduction processes. After a person has seen a new behavior by observing the model, the watching must be converted to doing. This process then demonstrates that the individual can perform the modeled activities.
4. Reinforcement processes. Individuals will be motivated to exhibit the modeled behavior if positive incentives or rewards are provided. Behaviors that are positively reinforced will be given more attention, learned better, and performed more often.

### Shaping: A Managerial Tool

Because learning takes place on the job as well as prior to it, managers will be concerned with how they can teach employees to behave in ways that most benefit the organization. When we attempt to mold individuals by guiding their learning in graduated steps, we are **shaping behavior**.

Consider the situation in which an employee's behavior is significantly different from that sought by management. If management rewarded the individual only when he or she showed desirable responses, there might be very little reinforcement taking place. In such a case, shaping offers a logical approach toward achieving the desired behavior.

We shape behavior by systematically reinforcing each successive step that moves the individual closer to the desired response. If an employee who has chronically been a half-hour late for work comes in only 20 minutes late, we can reinforce that improvement. Reinforcement would increase as responses more closely approximated the desired behavior.

**Methods of Shaping Behavior** There are four ways in which to shape behavior: through positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, and extinction.

Following a response with something pleasant is called *positive reinforcement*. This would describe, for instance, the boss who praises an employee for a job well done. Following a response by the termination or withdrawal of something unpleasant is called *negative reinforcement*. If your college instructor asks a question

#### shaping behavior

Systematically reinforcing each successive step that moves an individual closer to the desired response.

# Values, Attitudes, and Job Satisfaction

3

In this chapter, we look at values, how they've changed from generation to generation, and what these changes mean for managing people of different ages. We'll also review research on the topic of attitudes, demonstrate the link between attitudes and behavior, and look at factors that shape employees' satisfaction with their jobs.

## VALUES

Is capital punishment right or wrong? If a person likes power, is that good or bad? The answers to these questions are value-laden. Some might argue, for example, that capital punishment is right because it is an appropriate retribution for crimes like murder and treason. However, others might argue, just as strongly, that no government has the right to take anyone's life.

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."<sup>2</sup> They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable. Values have both content and intensity attributes. The content attribute says that a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is *important*. The intensity attribute specifies *how important* it is. When we rank an individual's values in terms of their intensity, we obtain that person's **value system**. All of us have a hierarchy of values that forms our value system. This system is identified by the relative importance we assign to values such as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience, and equality.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- AFTER STUDYING THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
1. Contrast terminal and instrumental values.
  2. List the dominant values in today's workforce.
  3. Identify Hofstede's five value dimensions of national culture.
  4. Contrast the three components of an attitude.
  5. Summarize the relationship between attitudes and behavior.
  6. Identify the role consistency plays in attitudes.
  7. State the relationship between job satisfaction and behavior.
  8. Identify four employee responses to dissatisfaction.

## values

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.

## value system

A hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity.

Are values fluid and flexible? Generally speaking, No. Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring.<sup>1</sup> A significant portion of the values we hold is established in our early years—from parents, teachers, friends, and others. As children, we are told that certain behaviors or outcomes are always desirable or always undesirable. There were few gray areas. You were told, for example, that you should be honest and responsible. You were never taught to be just a little bit honest or a little bit responsible. It is this absolute or “black-or-white” learning of values that more or less ensures their stability and endurance. The process of questioning our values, of course, may result in a change. We may decide that these underlying convictions are no longer acceptable. More often, our questioning merely acts to reinforce the values we hold.

## Importance of Values

Values are important to the study of organizational behavior because they lay the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation and because they influence our perceptions. Individuals enter an organization with preconceived notions of what “ought” and what “ought not” to be. Of course, these notions are not value free. On the contrary, they contain interpretations of right and wrong. Furthermore, they imply that certain behaviors or outcomes are preferred over others. As a result, values cloud objectivity and rationality.

Values generally influence attitudes and behavior.<sup>4</sup> Suppose that you enter an organization with the view that allocating pay on the basis of performance is right, while allocating pay on the basis of seniority is wrong or inferior. How are you going to react if you find that the organization you have just joined rewards seniority and not performance? You’re likely to be disappointed—and this can lead to job dissatisfaction and the decision not to exert a high level of effort since “it’s probably not going to lead to more money, anyway.” Would your attitudes and behavior be different if your values aligned with the organization’s pay policies? Most likely.

## Types of Values

Can we classify values? The answer is: Yes. In this section, we review two approaches to developing value typologies.

**Rokeach Value Survey** Milton Rokeach created the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS).<sup>5</sup> The RVS consists of two sets of values, with each set containing 18 individual value items. One set, called **terminal values**, refers to desirable end-states of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime. The other set, called **instrumental values**, refers to preferable modes of behavior, or means of achieving the terminal values. Exhibit 3-1 gives common examples for each of these sets.

Several studies confirm that the RVS values vary among groups.<sup>6</sup> People in the same occupations or categories (e.g., corporate managers, union members, parents, students) tend to hold similar values. For instance, one study compared corporate executives, members of the steelworkers’ union, and members of a community activist group. Although a good deal of overlap was found among the three groups,<sup>7</sup> there were also some very significant differences (see Exhibit 3-2). The activists had value preferences that were quite different from those of the other two groups. They ranked “equality” as their most important terminal value; executives and union

### terminal values

Desirable end-states of existence; the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime.

### instrumental values

Preferable modes of behavior or means of achieving one’s terminal values.

### Terminal and Instrumental Values in Rokeach Value Survey

Terminal Values	Instrumental Values
A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)
An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	Broad-minded (open-minded)
A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	Capable (competent, effective)
A world at peace (free of war and conflict)	Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)	Clean (neat; tidy)
Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
Family security (taking care of loved ones)	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
Freedom (independence, free choice)	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
Happiness (contentedness)	Honest (sincere, truthful)
Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	Imaginative (daring, creative)
Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
National security (protection from attack)	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	Logical (consistent, rational)
Salvation (saved, eternal life)	Loving (affectionate, tender)
Self-respect (self-esteem)	Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
Social recognition (respect, admiration)	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)
True friendship (close companionship)	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)

Source: M. Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

members ranked this value 12 and 13, respectively. Activists ranked "helpful" as their second-highest instrumental value. The other two groups both ranked it 14. These differences are important, because executives, union members, and activists all have a vested interest in what corporations do. "When corporations and critical stakeholder groups such as these [other] two come together in negotiations or contend with one another over economic and social policies, they are likely to begin with these built-in differences in personal value preferences. . . . Reaching agreement on any specific issue or policy where these personal values are importantly implicated might prove to be quite difficult."<sup>8</sup>

#### Mean Value Ranking of Executives, Union Members, and Activists (Top Five Only)

Executives		Union Members		Activists	
Terminal	Instrumental	Terminal	Instrumental	Terminal	Instrumental
1. Self-respect	1. Honest	1. Family security	1. Responsible	1. Equality	1. Honest
2. Family security	2. Responsible	2. Freedom	2. Honest	2. A world of peace	2. Helpful
3. Freedom	3. Capable	3. Happiness	3. Courageous	3. Family security	3. Courageous
4. A sense of accomplishment	4. Ambitious	4. Self-respect	4. Independent	4. Self-respect	4. Responsible
5. Happiness	5. Independent	5. Mature love	5. Capable	5. Freedom	5. Capable

Source: Based on W. C. Frederick and J. Weber, "The Values of Corporate Managers and Their Critics: An Empirical Description and Normative Implications," in W. C. Frederick and L. E. Preston (eds.), *Business Ethics: Research Issues and Empirical Studies* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1990), pp. 123-44.

### Dominant Work Values in Today's Workforce

Cohort	Entered the Workforce	Approximate Current Age	Dominant Work Values
Veterans	1950s or early 1960s	60+	Hard working, conservative, conforming; loyalty to the organization
Boomers	1965–1985	40–60	Success, achievement, ambition, dislike of authority; loyalty to career
Xers	1985–2000	25–40	Work/life balance, team-oriented, dislike of rules; loyalty to relationships
Nexters	2000 to present	Under 25	Confident, financial success, self-reliant but team-oriented; loyalty to both self and relationships

3-3

### After 9/11, Americans Rethink Priorities

Values are relatively static, but major shocks can influence them. Terrorists' attacks on the United States have significantly changed Americans' values.

The initial response to the attacks was one of anger and fear. In the days and weeks following the attacks, many Americans began to reevaluate their priorities. They started to question the trade-offs they were making between work and family, and between career success and personal fulfillment. They also began to reassess their values and priorities, and to consider how they could contribute to a better world.

Source: Based on S. Aronoff, "After 9/11, Americans Rethink Priorities," *USA Today*, September 12, 2001.

**Contemporary Work Cohorts** I have integrated several recent analyses of work values into four groups that attempt to capture the unique values of different cohorts or generations in the U.S. workforce.<sup>9</sup> (No assumption is made that this framework would apply universally across all cultures.<sup>10</sup>) Exhibit 3-3 proposes that employees can be segmented by the era in which they entered the workforce. Because most people start work between the ages of 18 and 23, the eras also correlate closely with the chronological age of employees.

Workers who grew up influenced by the Great Depression, World War II, the Andrews Sisters, and the Berlin blockade entered the workforce through the 1950s and early 1960s believing in hard work, the status quo, and authority figures. We call them *Veterans*. Once hired, Veterans tended to be loyal to their employer. In terms of the terminal values on the RVS, these employees are likely to place the greatest importance on a comfortable life and family security.

*Boomers* entered the workforce from the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s. This cohort were influenced heavily by the civil rights movement, women's lib, the Beatles, the Vietnam war, and baby-boom competition. They brought with them a large measure of the "hippie ethic" and distrust of authority. But they place a great deal of emphasis on achievement and material success. They're pragmatists who believe that ends can justify means. Boomers see the organizations that employ them merely as vehicles for their careers. Terminal values such as a sense of accomplishment and social recognition rank high with them.

*Xers* lives have been shaped by globalization, two-career parents, MTV, AIDS, and computers. They value flexibility, life options, and the achievement of job satisfaction. Family and relationships are very important to this cohort. They also enjoy team-oriented work. Money is important as an indicator of career performance, but Xers are willing to trade off salary increases, titles, security, and promotions for increased leisure time and expanded lifestyle options. In search of balance in their lives, Xers are less willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of their employer than previous generations were. On the RVS, they rate high on true friendship, happiness, and pleasure.

The most prosperous individuals are confident, outgoing, and are considered leaders. They are continually moving forward and are the most successful in their careers. This generation can buy anything they want and are the most successful in their careers. They also highly value family and a comfortable life.

An understanding of the values of the post-World War II generation is important for predicting behavior. These individuals place a higher value on authority than their 30s counterparts. They are more prone to work long hours and less prone to take leisure time.

**Values, Leadership, and Ethics** Has there been a decline in ethical behavior? People think that there has been a decline in ethical behavior. (See Exhibit 3-3.) Is it true that the actions of unscrupulous individuals in the middle and upper levels of the organization are contributing to an unethical climate?

## OB in the News

### After 9/11, American Workers Rethink Priorities

Values are relatively permanent. But dramatic shocks can realign them. And the terrorists' attacks on September 11 may have significantly reprioritized many Americans' values.

The initial response to the terrorists' attacks for many people was a reevaluation of choices related to jobs, family, and career success. In some cases, this led to a rethinking of career paths, cutting back on grueling schedules, and deciding to pursue work that might pay less but

seem more meaningful. For instance, in California, young workers who once talked of dot-com millions are now asking, "Is it worth it?" Some employees appear less concerned about putting in face time, making deadlines, and getting on the fast track. They seem more concerned about family and worry less about time at the office. CEOs say some of their employees are talking more earnestly about work/life balance, mortality, and other questions once considered taboo in the office. Said one consultant, "The event de-emphasized what most people value—the money and the luxuries. People are

questioning what's really important; they're questioning work. It's happening across the board."

It's now been more than a year since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. That provides a more meaningful perspective on whether this event has had long-term implications on workplace values. Or whether any reprioritizing was merely a knee-jerk reaction to a traumatic event, followed by a return to "business as usual." Do you think a significant portion of Americans have permanently reprioritized their values as a result of 9/11?

Source: Based on S. Armour, "American Workers Rethink Priorities," USA Today, October 4, 2001, p. 1B.

The most recent entrants to the workforce, the *Nexters*, grew up during prosperous times. They tend to have high expectations, believe in themselves, and are confident about their ability to succeed. They seem to be on a never-ending search for the ideal job, see nothing wrong with constant job hopping, and continually look for meaning in their work. Nexters are at ease with diversity and are the first generation to take technology for granted. They've lived most of their lives with CD players, VCRs, cellular phones, and the Internet. This generation is very money-oriented and desirous of the things that money can buy. They seek financial success. Like Xers, they enjoy teamwork but they're also highly self-reliant. They tend to emphasize terminal values such as freedom and a comfortable life.

An understanding that individuals' values differ but tend to reflect the societal values of the period in which they grew up can be a valuable aid in explaining and predicting behavior. Employees in their 60s, for instance, are more likely to accept authority than their coworkers who are 10 or 15 years younger. And workers in their 30s are more likely than their parents to balk at having to work weekends and more prone to leave a job in mid-career to pursue another that provides more leisure time.

### Values, Loyalty, and Ethical Behavior

Has there been a decline in business ethics? While the issue is debatable, a lot of people think ethical standards began to erode in the late 1970s.<sup>11</sup> If there has been a decline in ethical standards, perhaps we should look to our work cohorts model (see Exhibit 3-3) for a possible explanation. After all, managers consistently report that the action of their bosses is the most important factor influencing ethical and unethical behavior in their organizations.<sup>12</sup> Given this fact, the values of those in middle and upper management should have a significant bearing on the entire ethical climate within an organization.



**Never underestimate the importance of local knowledge.**

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Never underestimate the power of cultural differences. A behavior that may be perfectly acceptable in one culture may be rude in another.

#### power distance

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.

#### individualism

A national culture attribute describing the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups.

#### collectivism

A national culture attribute that describes a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are a part to look after them and protect them.

#### quantity of life

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which societal values are characterized by assertiveness and materialism.

Through the mid-1970s, the managerial ranks were dominated by Veterans, whose loyalties were to their employers. When faced with ethical dilemmas, their decisions were made in terms of what was best for their organization. Beginning in the mid-to-late 1970s, Boomers began to rise into the upper levels of management. By the early 1990s, a large portion of middle and top management positions in business organizations were held by Boomers.

The loyalty of Boomers is to their careers. Their focus is inward and their primary concern is with looking out for "Number One." Such self-centered values would be consistent with a decline in ethical standards. Could this help explain the alleged decline in business ethics beginning in the late 1970s?

The potential good news in this analysis is that Xers are now in the process of moving into middle-management slots and soon will be rising into top management. Since their loyalty is to relationships, they are more likely to consider the ethical implications of their actions on others around them. The result? We might look forward to an uplifting of ethical standards in business over the next decade or two merely as a result of changing values within the managerial ranks.

#### Values Across Cultures

In Chapter 1, we described the new global village and said "managers have to become capable of working with people from different cultures." Because values differ across cultures, an understanding of these differences should be helpful in explaining and predicting behavior of employees from different countries.

**Hofstede's Framework for Assessing Cultures** One of the most widely referenced approaches for analyzing variations among cultures has been done by Geert Hofstede.<sup>13</sup> He surveyed more than 116,000 IBM employees in 40 countries about their work-related values. He found that managers and employees vary on five value dimensions of national culture. They are listed and defined as follows:

- **Power distance.** The degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Ranges from relatively equal (low power distance) to extremely unequal (high power distance).
- **Individualism versus collectivism.** Individualism is the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups. Collectivism is the equivalent of low individualism.
- **Quantity of life versus quality of life.** Quantity of life is the degree to which values such as assertiveness, the acquisition of money and material goods, and competition prevail. Quality of life is the degree to which people value relationships, and show sensitivity and concern for the welfare of others.<sup>14</sup>

- **Uncertainty avoidance.** The degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations. In countries that score high on uncertainty avoidance, people have an increased level of anxiety, which manifests itself in greater nervousness, stress, and aggressiveness.
- **Long-term versus short-term orientation.** People in cultures with long-term orientations look to the future and value thrift and persistence. A short-term orientation values the past and present and emphasizes respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations.

What did Hofstede's research conclude? Here are a few highlights. China and West Africa scored high on power distance; the United States and the Netherlands scored low. Most Asian countries were more collectivist than individualistic; the United States ranked highest among all countries on individualism. Germany and Hong Kong rated high on quantity of life; Russia and the Netherlands rated low. On uncertainty avoidance, France and Russia were high; Hong Kong and the United States were low. And China and Hong Kong had a long-term orientation, whereas France and the United States had a short-term orientation.

**The GLOBE Framework for Assessing Cultures** Hofstede's cultural dimensions have become the basic framework for differentiating among national cultures. This is in spite of the fact that the data on which it's based comes from a single company and is nearly 30 years old. Since these data were originally gathered, a lot has happened on the world scene. Some of the most obvious include the fall of the Soviet Union, the merging of East and West Germany, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the rise of China as a global power. All this suggests the need for an updated assessment of cultural dimensions. The GLOBE study provides such an update.<sup>15</sup>

Begun in 1993, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program is an ongoing cross-cultural investigation of leadership and national culture. Using data from 825 organizations in 62 countries, the GLOBE team identified nine dimensions on which national cultures differ (see Exhibit 3-4 on page 70 for examples of country ratings on each of the dimensions).

- **Assertiveness.** The extent to which a society encourages people to be tough, confrontational, assertive, and competitive versus modest and tender. This is essentially equivalent to Hofstede's quantity-of-life dimension.
- **Future orientation.** The extent to which a society encourages and rewards future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification. This is essentially equivalent to Hofstede's long-term/short-term orientation.
- **Gender differentiation.** The extent to which a society maximizes gender role differences.
- **Uncertainty avoidance.** As identified by Hofstede, the GLOBE team defined this term as a society's reliance on social norms and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events.
- **Power distance.** As did Hofstede, the GLOBE team defined this as the degree to which members of a society expect power to be unequally shared.
- **Individualism/collectivism.** Again, this term was defined as was Hofstede's as the degree to which individuals are encouraged by societal institutions to be integrated into groups within organizations and society.
- **In-group collectivism.** In contrast to focusing on societal institutions, this dimension encompasses the extent to which members of a society take pride in membership in small groups, such as their family and circle of close friends, and the organizations in which they are employed.

#### quality of life

A national culture attribute that emphasizes relationships and concern for others.

#### uncertainty avoidance

A national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them.

#### long-term orientation

A national culture attribute that emphasizes the future, thrift, and persistence.

#### short-term orientation

A national culture attribute that emphasizes the past and present, respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligations.

# Foundations of Group Behavior

Learning Objectives

8

The creation of status differences is just one of a number of naturally occurring actions in groups. Along with concepts like roles and norms, an understanding of status can help you better explain and predict the behavior of people in groups. The objectives of this and the following chapter are to provide you with a foundation for understanding how groups work and to show you how to create effective teams. Let's begin by defining groups and explaining why people join them.

## ~~DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING GROUPS~~

A **group** is defined as two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives. Groups can be either formal or informal. By **formal groups**, we mean those defined by the organization's structure, with designated work assignments establishing tasks. In formal groups, the behaviors that one should engage in are stipulated by and directed toward organizational goals. The six members making up an airline flight crew are an example of a formal group. In contrast, **informal groups** are alliances that are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined. These groups are natural formations in the work environment that appear in response to the need for social contact. Three employees from different departments who regularly eat lunch together are an example of an informal group.

It's possible to further subclassify groups as command, task, interest, or friendship groups.<sup>2</sup> Command and task groups are dictated by the formal organization, while interest and friendship groups are informal alliances.

AFTER STUDYING THIS CHAPTER,  
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Differentiate between formal and informal groups
2. Compare two models of group development
3. Explain how group interaction can be analyzed
4. Identify the key factors in explaining group behavior
5. Explain how role requirements change in different situations
6. Describe how norms exert influence on an individual's behavior
7. Define social loafing and its effect on group performance
8. Identify the benefits and disadvantages of cohesive groups
9. List the strengths and weaknesses of group decision making
10. Contrast the effectiveness of interacting, brainstorming, nominal, and electronic meeting groups

**group**

Two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives.

**formal group**

A designated work group defined by the organization's structure.

**informal group**

A group that is neither formally structured nor organizationally determined; appears in response to the need for social contact.

**command group**

A group composed of the individuals who report directly to a given manager.

**task group**

Those working together to complete a job task.

**interest group**

Those working together to attain a specific objective with which each is concerned.

**friendship group**

Those brought together because they share one or more common characteristics.

**five-stage group-development model**

Groups go through five distinct stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

**forming stage**

The first stage in group development, characterized by much uncertainty.

**A command group** is determined by the organization chart. It is composed of the individuals who report directly to a given manager. An elementary school principal and her 18 teachers form a command group, as do the director of postal audits and his five inspectors.

**Task groups**, also organizationally determined, represent those working together to complete a job task. However, a task group's boundaries are not limited to its immediate hierarchical superior. It can cross command relationships. For instance, if a college student is accused of a campus crime, it may require communication and coordination among the dean of academic affairs, the dean of students, the registrar, the director of security, and the student's advisor. Such a formation would constitute a task group. It should be noted that all command groups are also task groups, but because task groups can cut across the organization, the reverse need not be true.

People who may or may not be aligned into common command or task groups may affiliate to attain a specific objective with which each is concerned. This is an **interest group**. Employees who band together to have their vacation schedules altered, to support a peer who has been fired, or to seek improved working conditions represent the formation of a united body to further their common interest.

Groups often develop because the individual members have one or more common characteristics. We call these formations **friendship groups**. Social alliances, which frequently extend outside the work situation, can be based on similar age or ethnic heritage, support for Notre Dame football, or the holding of similar political views, to name just a few such characteristics.

Informal groups provide a very important service by satisfying their members' social needs. Because of interactions that result from the close proximity of work stations or task interactions, we find workers often do things together—like play golf, commute to work, take lunch, and chat during coffee breaks. We must recognize that these types of interactions among individuals, even though informal, deeply affect their behavior and performance.

There is no single reason why individuals join groups. Because most people belong to a number of groups, it's obvious that different groups provide different benefits to their members. Exhibit 8-1 summarizes the most popular reasons people have for joining groups.

## STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Groups generally pass through a standardized sequence in their evolution. We call this sequence the five-stage model of group development. Recent studies, however, indicate that temporary groups with task-specific deadlines follow a very different pattern. In this section, we describe the five-stage general model and an alternative model for temporary groups with deadlines.

### The Five-Stage Model

As shown in Exhibit 8-2, the **five-stage group-development model** characterizes groups as proceeding through five distinct stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.<sup>3</sup>

The first stage, **forming**, is characterized by a great deal of uncertainty about the group's purpose, structure, and leadership. Members are "testing the waters" to determine what types of behavior are acceptable. This stage is complete when members have begun to think of themselves as part of a group.

## Why Do People Join Groups?

**Security.** By joining a group, individuals can reduce the insecurity of "standing alone." People feel stronger, have fewer self-doubts, and are more resistant to threats when they are part of a group.

**Status.** Inclusion in a group that is viewed as important by others provides recognition and status for its members.

**Self-esteem.** Groups can provide people with feelings of self-worth. That is, in addition to conveying status to those outside the group, membership can also give increased feelings of worth to the group members themselves.

**Affiliation.** Groups can fulfill social needs. People enjoy the regular interaction that comes with group membership. For many people, these on-the-job interactions are their primary source for fulfilling their needs for affiliation.

**Power.** What cannot be achieved individually often becomes possible through group action. There is power in numbers.

**Goal Achievement.** There are times when it takes more than one person to accomplish a particular task—there is a need to pool talents, knowledge, or power in order to complete a job. In such instances, management will rely on the use of a formal group.

8-1

The **storming stage** is one of intragroup conflict. Members accept the existence of the group, but there is resistance to the constraints that the group imposes on individuality. Furthermore, there is conflict over who will control the group. When this stage is complete, there will be a relatively clear hierarchy of leadership within the group.

The third stage is one in which close relationships develop and the group demonstrates cohesiveness. There is now a strong sense of group identity and camaraderie. This **norming stage** is complete when the group structure solidifies and the group has assimilated a common set of expectations of what defines correct member behavior.

The fourth stage is **performing**. The structure at this point is fully functional and accepted. Group energy has moved from getting to know and understand each other to performing the task at hand.

For permanent work groups, performing is the last stage in their development. However, for temporary committees, teams, task forces, and similar groups that

### storming stage

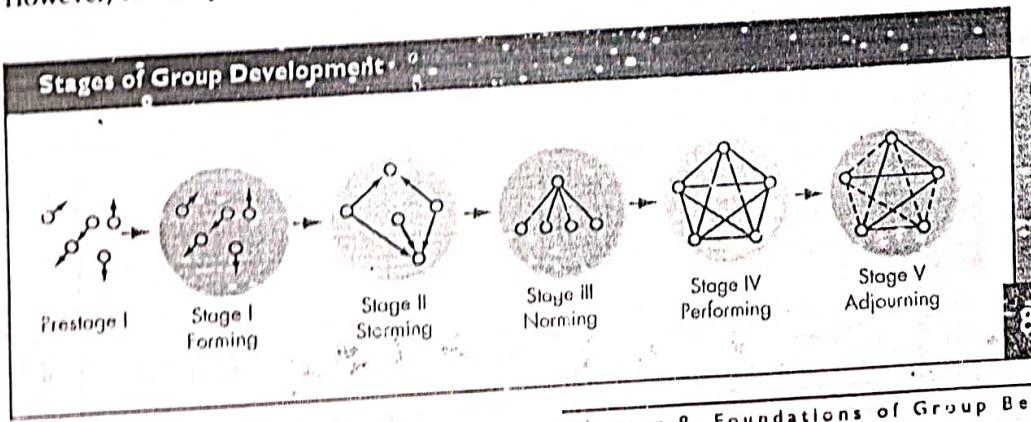
The second stage in group development, characterized by intragroup conflict.

### norming stage

The third stage in group development, characterized by close relationships and cohesiveness.

### performing stage

The fourth stage in group development, when the group is fully functional.



3-2

### **adjourning stage**

The final stage in group development for temporary groups, characterized by concern with wrapping up activities rather than task performance.

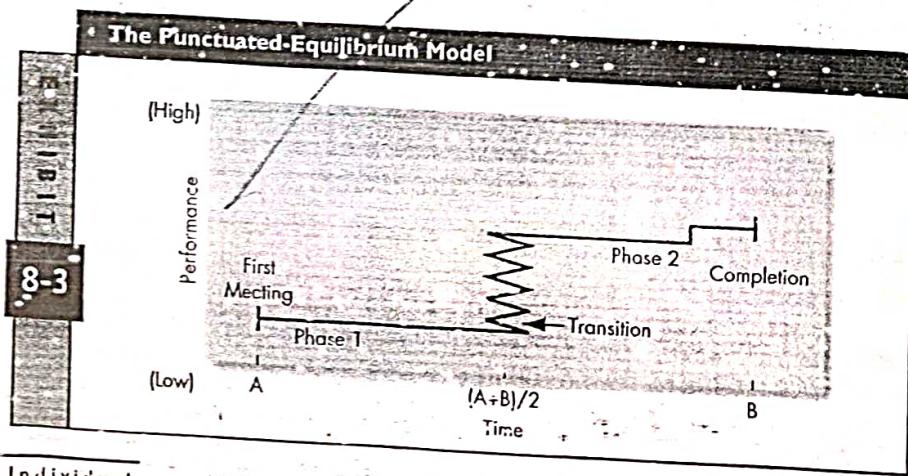
have a limited task to perform, there is an **adjourning stage**. In this stage, the group prepares for its disbandment. High task performance is no longer the group's top priority. Instead, attention is directed toward wrapping up activities. Responses of group members vary in this stage. Some are upbeat, basking in the group's accomplishments. Others may be depressed over the loss of camaraderie and friendships gained during the work group's life.

Many interpreters of the five-stage model have assumed that a group becomes more effective as it progresses through the first four stages. Although this assumption may be generally true, what makes a group effective is more complex than this model acknowledges. Under some conditions, high levels of conflict are conducive to high group performance. So we might expect to find situations in which groups in Stage II outperform those in Stage III or IV. Similarly, groups do not always proceed clearly from one stage to the next. Sometimes, in fact, several stages go on simultaneously, as when groups are storming and performing at the same time. Groups even occasionally regress to previous stages. Therefore, even the strongest proponents of this model do not assume that all groups follow its five-stage process precisely or that Stage IV is always the most preferable.

Another problem with the five-stage model, in terms of understanding work-related behavior, is that it ignores organizational context.<sup>4</sup> For instance, a study of a cockpit crew in an airliner found that, within ten minutes, three strangers assigned to fly together for the first time had become a high-performing group. What allowed for this speedy group development was the strong organizational context surrounding the tasks of the cockpit crew. This context provided the rules, task definitions, information, and resources needed for the group to perform. They didn't need to develop plans, assign roles, determine and allocate resources, resolve conflicts, and set norms the way the five-stage model predicts.

### **An Alternative Model: For Temporary Groups with Deadlines**

Temporary groups with deadlines don't seem to follow the previous model. Studies indicate that they have their own unique sequencing of actions (or inaction): (1) Their first meeting sets the group's direction; (2) this first phase of group activity is one of inertia; (3) a transition takes place at the end of this first phase, which occurs exactly when the group has used up half its allotted time; (4) a transition initiates major changes; (5) a second phase of inertia follows the transition; and (6) the group's last meeting is characterized by markedly accelerated activity.<sup>5</sup> This pattern is called the **punctuated-equilibrium model** and is shown in Exhibit 8-3.



For instance, members need to be able to recognize the type and source of conflict confronting the group and to implement an appropriate conflict-resolution strategy; to identify situations requiring participative group problem solving and to utilize the proper degree and type of participation; and to listen non evaluatively and to appropriately use active listening techniques.

### Personality Characteristics

There has been a great deal of research on the relationship between personality traits and group attitudes and behavior. The general conclusion is that attributes that tend to have a positive connotation in our culture tend to be positively related to group productivity, morale, and cohesiveness. These include traits such as sociability, initiative, openness, and flexibility. In contrast, negatively evaluated characteristics such as authoritarianism, dominance, and unconventionality tend to be negatively related to the dependent variables.<sup>13</sup> These personality traits affect group performance by strongly influencing how the individual will interact with other group members.

Is any one personality characteristic a good predictor of group behavior? The answer to that question is No. The magnitude of the effect of any single characteristic is small, but taking personality characteristics together, the consequences for group behavior are of major significance.

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## GROUP STRUCTURE

Work groups are not unorganized mobs. They have a structure that shapes the behavior of members and makes it possible to explain and predict a large portion of individual behavior within the group as well as the performance of the group itself. What are some of these structural variables? They include formal leadership, roles, norms, status, group size, composition of the group, and the degree of group cohesiveness.

### Formal Leadership

Almost every work group has a formal leader. He or she is typically identified by titles such as unit or department manager, supervisor, foreman, project leader, task force head, or committee chair. This leader can play an important part in the group's success—so much so, in fact, that we have devoted two entire chapters to the topic of leadership. In Chapters 11 and 12, we review the research on leadership and the effect that leaders have on individual and group performance variables.

### Roles

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Using the same metaphor, all group members are actors, each playing a **role**. By this term, we mean a set of expected behavior patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit. The understanding of role behavior would be dramatically simplified if each of us chose one role and "played it out" regularly and consistently. Unfortunately, we are required to play a number of diverse roles, both on and off our jobs. As we shall see, one of the tasks in understanding behavior is grasping the role that a person is currently playing.

For example, Bill Patterson is a plant manager with Electrical Industries, a large electrical equipment manufacturer in Phoenix. He has a number of roles that he fulfills on that job—for instance, Electrical Industries employee, member of middle management, electrical engineer, and the primary company spokesperson in the community. Off the job, Bill Patterson finds himself in still more roles: husband, fa-

#### role

A set of expected behavior patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit.

ther, Catholic, Rotarian, tennis player, member of the Thunderbird Country Club, and president of his homeowners' association. Many of these roles are compatible; some create conflicts. For instance, how does his religious involvement influence his managerial decisions regarding layoffs, expense account padding, and providing accurate information to government agencies? A recent offer of promotion requires Bill to relocate, yet his family very much wants to stay in Phoenix. Can the role demands of his job be reconciled with the demands of his husband and father roles?

The issue should be clear: Like Bill Patterson, we all are required to play a number of roles, and our behavior varies with the role we are playing. Bill's behavior when he attends church on Sunday morning is different from his behavior on the golf course later that same day. So different groups impose different role requirements on individuals.

**Role Identity** There are certain attitudes and actual behaviors consistent with a role, and they create the **role identity**. People have the ability to shift roles rapidly when they recognize that the situation and its demands clearly require major changes. For instance, when union stewards were promoted to supervisory positions, it was found that their attitudes changed from pro-union to pro-management within a few months of their promotion. When these promotions had to be rescinded later because of economic difficulties in the firm, it was found that the demoted supervisors had once again adopted their pro-union attitudes.<sup>14</sup>

#### role identity

Certain attitudes and behaviors consistent with a role.

**Role Perception** One's view of how one is supposed to act in a given situation is a **role perception**. Based on an interpretation of how we believe we are supposed to behave, we engage in certain types of behavior.

#### role perception

An individual's view of how he or she is supposed to act in a given situation.

Where do we get these perceptions? We get them from stimuli all around us—friends, books, movies, television. Many current law enforcement officers learned their roles from reading Joseph Wambaugh novels, while many of tomorrow's lawyers will be influenced by watching the actions of attorneys in *Law and Order* or *The Practice*. Of course, the primary reason that apprenticeship programs exist in many trades and professions is to allow beginners to watch an "expert," so that they can learn to act as they are supposed to.

**Role Expectations** **Role expectations** are defined as how others believe you should act in a given situation. How you behave is determined to a large extent by the role defined in the context in which you are acting. For instance, the role of a U.S. federal judge is viewed as having propriety and dignity, while a football coach is seen as aggressive, dynamic, and inspiring to his players.

#### role expectations

How others believe a person should act in a given situation.

In the workplace, it can be helpful to look at the topic of role expectations through the perspective of the **psychological contract**. There is an unwritten agreement that exists between employees and their employer. This psychological contract sets out mutual expectations—what management expects from workers, and vice versa.<sup>15</sup> In effect, this contract defines the behavioral expectations that go with every role. Management is expected to treat employees justly, provide acceptable working conditions, clearly communicate what is a fair day's work, and give feedback on how well the employee is doing. Employees are expected to respond by demonstrating a good attitude, following directions, and showing loyalty to the organization.

#### psychological contract

An unwritten agreement that sets out what management expects from the employee, and vice versa.

What happens when role expectations as implied in the psychological contract are not met? If management is derelict in keeping up its part of the bargain, we can expect negative repercussions on employee performance and satisfaction. When employees fail to live up to expectations, the result is usually some form of disciplinary action up to and including firing.

### **role conflict**

A situation in which an individual is confronted by divergent role expectations.

**Role Conflict** When an individual is confronted by divergent role expectations, the result is **role conflict**. It exists when an individual finds that compliance with one role requirement may make it more difficult to comply with another.<sup>16</sup> At the extreme, it would include situations in which two or more role expectations are mutually contradictory.

Our previous discussion of the many roles Bill Patterson had to deal with included several role conflicts—for instance, Bill's attempt to reconcile the expectations placed on him as a husband and father with those placed on him as an executive with Electrical Industries. The former, as you will remember, emphasizes stability and concern for the desire of his wife and children to remain in Phoenix. Electrical Industries, on the other hand, expects its employees to be responsive to the needs and requirements of the company. Although it might be in Bill's financial and career interests to accept a relocation, the conflict comes down to choosing between family and career role expectations.

**An Experiment: Zimbardo's Simulated Prison** One of the more illuminating role experiments was done by Stanford University psychologist Philip Zimbardo and his associates.<sup>17</sup> They created a "prison" in the basement of the Stanford psychology building; hired at \$15 a day two dozen emotionally stable, physically healthy, law-abiding students who scored "normal average" on extensive personality tests; randomly assigned them the role of either "guard" or "prisoner"; and established some basic rules.

To get the experiment off to a "realistic" start Zimbardo got the cooperation of the City of Palo Alto Police Department. They went, unannounced, to each future prisoners' home, arrested and handcuffed them, put them in a squad car in front of friends and neighbors, and took them to police headquarters, where they were booked and fingerprinted. From there, they were taken to the Stanford prison.

At the start of the planned two-week experiment, there were no measurable differences between the individuals assigned to be guards and those chosen to be prisoners. In addition, the guards received no special training in how to be prison guards. They were told only to "maintain law and order" in the prison and not to take any nonsense from the prisoners. Physical violence was forbidden. To simulate further the realities of prison life, the prisoners were allowed visits from relatives and friends. And although the mock guards worked eight-hour shifts, the mock prisoners were kept in their cells around the clock and were allowed out only for meals, exercise, toilet privileges, head-count lineups, and work details.

It took the "prisoners" little time to accept the authority positions of the guards, or the mock guards to adjust to their new authority roles. After the guards crushed a rebellion attempt on the second day, the prisoners became increasingly passive. Whatever the guards "dished out," the prisoners took. The prisoners actually began to believe and act as if they were, as the guards constantly reminded them, inferior and powerless. And every guard, at some time during the simulation, engaged in abusive, authoritative behavior. For example, one guard said, "I was surprised at myself. . . . I made them call each other names and clean the toilets out with their bare hands. I practically considered the prisoners cattle, and I kept thinking: 'I have to watch out for them in case they try something.'" Another guard added, "I was tired of seeing the prisoners in their rags and smelling the strong odors of their bodies that filled the cells. I watched them tear at each other on orders given by us. They didn't see it as an experiment. It was real and they were fighting to keep their identity. But we were always there to show them who was boss." Surprisingly, during the entire experiment—even after days of abuse—not one prisoner said, "Stop this. I'm a student like you. This is just an experiment!"