

## **ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **What Do We Mean by Organization?**

An **organization** is a consciously coordinated social unit, made up of a group of people, who work together on common goals on a relatively continuous basis. Manufacturing and service firms are organizations, and so are schools, hospitals, churches, military units, retail stores, police departments, volunteer organizations, start-ups, and local, provincial, and federal government agencies.

### **What is Organizational behaviour (OB)?**

Organizational behaviour (OB) is the systematic study of the actions and attitudes that people exhibit within organizations. It is individual behaviour and group dynamics in organizations. The study of organizational behaviour is primarily concerned with the psychosocial, interpersonal and behavioural dynamics in organizations. However, organizational variables that affect human behaviour at work are also relevant to the study of organizational behaviour. These organizational variable include jobs, the design and organizational structure. Therefore, although individual behaviour and group dynamics are the primary concerns in the study of organizational behaviour, organizational variables are important as the context in which human behaviour occurs. The term 'organizational behaviour' is defined by Stephen P Robbins as "a field of study that investigates the impact of individuals, groups and structures on behaviour within organizations for the purpose of applying such knowledge towards improving an organization's effectiveness". According to this definition, organizational behaviour

- Is a field of study with a common body of knowledge.
- It studies three determinants of behaviour in organizations. They are individuals, groups and structures.
- It applies the knowledge gained about individuals, groups and the effect of structure on behaviour in order to make organizations work more effectively.

Organizational behaviour is a basic and applied social science seeking knowledge about how individuals, groups, and organizations function for improving the effectiveness and wellbeing of employees and organizations.

### **Definitions**

- “Organizational Behaviour” is the study and application of knowledge about how people – as individual and as groups – act within organizations.
- It is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups and structure have on behavior within organizations for the purpose of applying such knowledge towards improving an organization’s effectiveness.
- Organizational Behaviour means the ***study of behavior of individuals, and groups in organizations and organizations themselves***, as they act and interact to attain desired outcomes.
- OB is a ***scientific study*** in which a number of research studies and conceptual developments are taking place. It is also an ***applied science*** wherein information about effective practices in one organization is being extended to many others.

*OB provides a useful set of tools at many levels of analysis – It helps managers to understand the behavior of individuals within an organization; understand the interpersonal relationships, when two people(coworkers or a superior –subordinate pair) interact; to understand the dynamics or relationships with in small groups, both formal teams and informal groups; to understand the intergroup relationships; and finally understand the organizations as whole systems that have inter organizational relationships*

### **Objectives of Organizational Behaviour**

There are some goals of organizational behavior which are as follows:

- 1. Describe:** The first goal is to describe, systematically how people behave under a variety of conditions. Achieving this goal allows managers to communicate about human behavior at work using a common language.
- 2. Understand:** A second goal is to understand any people behave as they do. The managers would be frustrated if they could talk about behavior of their employees, but not understand the reasons behind those actions.
- 3. Predict:** The managers would have capacity to predict which employees might be dedicated and productive or which ones might have absent, cause problem. And thus the managers could take preventive actions.
- 4. Control:** The final goal of OB is to control and develop some human activity at work. Since managers are held responsible for performance outcome, they are vitally interested in being able to make an impact on employee behavior, skill development, team effort, and productivity. Managers need to be able to improve results through the actions they and their employees take, and organizational behavior can aid them in their pursuit of this goal.

### **Features of Organizational Behaviour**

The essential characteristics of organizational behaviour are as follows:

- (i) **An Integral Part of Management.** OB is a part of general management and not the whole of management. It represents ***behaviour approach to management***. It is significant to note that because of the importance of human behaviour in organizations, OB has assumed the status of a distinct field of study.
- (ii) **A Field of Study.** OB is a field of study backed by a body of theory, research and application associated with a growing concern for people at the workplace. Its study helps in ***understanding the human behaviour*** in work organizations. It includes creative thinking among the managers to solve human problems in organizations.
- (iii) **Inter-disciplinary Approach.** The field of organizational behaviour is heavily influenced by several other behavioural sciences and social sciences. The prominent among these are ***psychology, sociology and anthropology***. Organizational behaviour draws a rich array of research from these disciplines. What makes it a field in its own right is the attempt to integrate various aspects and levels of behaviour.
- (iv) **Levels of Analysis.** OB involves *three levels of analysis of behaviour – individual behaviour, group behaviour and behaviour of the organization itself*. It helps in demolishing ‘incorrect’ assumptions one may hold about behaviour. It provides a rational thinking about people.
- (v) **Goal-Oriented.** OB is an action – oriented and goal-directed discipline. The major goals of organizational behaviour are to understand, explain and predict human behaviour in the organizational context so that it may be moulded into result-yielding situations. It provides a rational thinking about people and their behaviour.

(vi) **Human Tool.** OB is a human tool for human benefit. It helps in understanding and predicting the behaviour of individuals. It *provides generalizations* that managers can use to anticipate the effects of certain actions on human behaviour.

(vii) **Science and Art.** OB is both a science as well as an art. The systematic knowledge about human behaviour is a science. The application of behaviour knowledge and skills clearly leans towards being an art. However, organization behaviour is not an exact science like physics or chemistry. It cannot provide specific answers to all organizational problems. The exact prediction of behavior of people in organizations is also not possible. It is possible to predict relationships between variables on a broad scale, but it is difficult to apply predictive models in all situations.

(viii) **Satisfaction of Employees' Needs.** OB seeks to fulfill employees' need and aspirations. Every employee in the organization wants to fulfill his needs through organizational activities. It is the organization's responsibility to provide *congenial climate* in the organization so that people may get *need satisfaction* and the organization may *attain its objectives*. Thus, both organization and individuals can be benefited by each other.

## **LEARNING**

Learning is a term frequently used by a great number of people in a wide variety of contexts. Learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour or potential behavior as a result of direct or indirect experience. There are two primary elements in this definition:

- The change must be relatively permanent. This means that after "learning" our behaviour must be different, either better or worse as compared to our behavior prior to this learning experience. For example you "learn" to drive a car or have learned how to use a computer. This change must occur due to some kind of experience or practice. This learning is not caused by biological maturation. For example a child does not learn to walk, it is a natural biological phenomenon. We do not learn to eat or drink.
- Learning is thus a change in behaviour as a result of experience. Different psychologists and behavioural scientists have defined learning differently. Given below are a few important definitions of learning:

Stephen P Robbins - "Learning is any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of experience".

Steers and Porter - "Learning can be defined as relatively permanent change in behavior potentially that results from reinforced practice or experience".

It must be understood that the learning itself is not observable, but only change in behavior is observable which is the result of the process of learning. This change in behavior must be differentiated from changes in behaviour from other causes. The causes of such changes including aging, such as being stronger or improvement in memory in the early formative years, instinctive response tendencies such as a timid person being brave at the time of a crisis. Accordingly, as a unique determinant of behaviour, learning cannot take place unless the learner actually experiences what has to be learned.

### **Components of Learning**

1. Learning involves change, be it good or bad.
2. The change in behaviour must be relatively permanent. For that matter, a temporary change in behaviour as a result of fatigue or temporary adaptations are not considered learning.
3. Only change in behaviour acquired through experience is considered learning. Therefore, a change in individual's thought process or attitudes, if accompanied by no change in behaviour, would not be learning. For example the ability to walk that is based on maturation disease or physical damages would not be considered learning.
4. Some form of experience is necessary for learning. Experience may be acquired directly through practice or observation or indirectly as through reading.
5. Learning is not confined to our schooling only. As a matter of fact, learning is a lifelong process.

## Theories of Learning

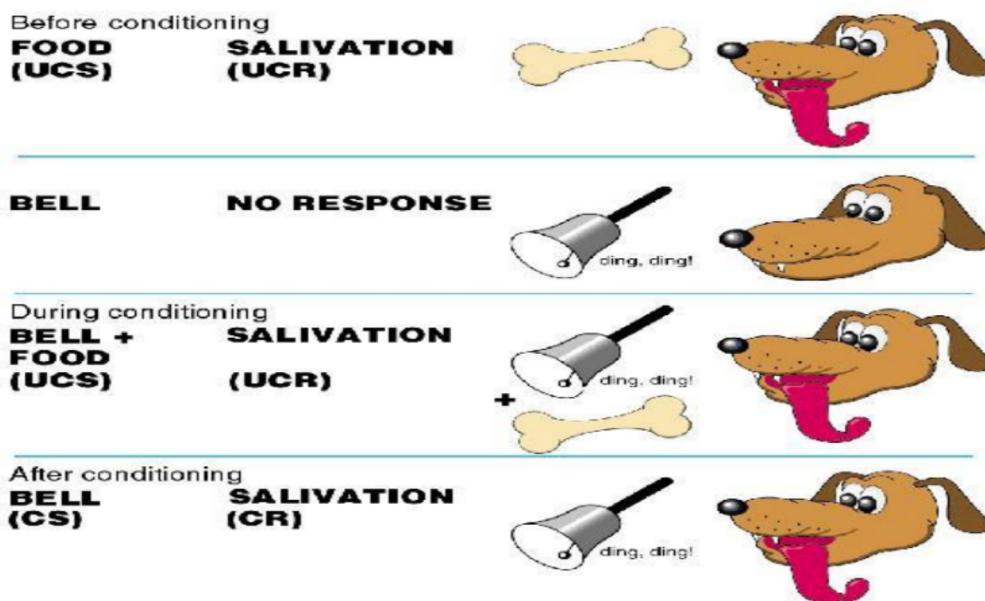
The most basic purpose of learning theory like any other is to better explain how learning occurs. Attempts have been made by the psychologists and behavioural scientists to develop theories of learning.

How do we learn? Four theories have been offered to explain the process by which we acquire patterns of behaviour:

1. Classical conditioning theory
2. Operant conditioning theory
3. Cognitive learning theory
4. Social learning theory

**Classical conditioning** refers to a learning procedure in which a unconditioned (strong) stimulus is paired with a previously neutral stimulus (weak). It refers to the learning process that results from this pairing, through which the neutral stimulus comes to elicit a response (unconditioned response).

**Classical Conditioning of Pavlov:** Ivan Pavlov (1849 - 1936) organized and directed research in physiology at the Institute of Experimental Medicine in St. Petersburg, Russia from 1891 until his death in 1936. His book "Conditioned Reflexes" is one of the classic works in psychology. Classical conditioning is modifying behaviour so that a conditioned stimulus is paired with an unconditioned stimulus and elicits an unconditioned behaviour. Ivan Pavlov, a Russian psychologist developed classical conditioning theory based on his experiments to teach dog to salivate in response to the ringing of a bell. When Pavlov presented meat (unconditioned stimulus) to the dog, he noticed a great deal of salivation (conditioned response). But, when merely bell was rung, no salivation was noticed in the dog. Then, when next Pavlov did was to link the meat and the ringing of the bell. He did this several times. Afterwards, he merely rang the bell without presenting the meat. Now, 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 meat were presented. In effect, the dog had learned to respond i.e. to salivate to the bell.



## 2. Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning argues that behaviour is a function of its consequences. People learn to behave to get something they want or avoid something they don't want. Operant behavior means voluntary or learned behaviour in contrast to reflexive or unlearned behaviour. The tendency to repeat such behaviour is influenced by the reinforcement or lack of reinforcement brought about by the consequences of the behaviour.

**Operant conditioning** is a type of learning in which the strength of a behavior is modified by the behavior's consequences, such as reinforcement or punishment,  
Reinforcement comes in two forms: positive and negative.

### Positive and Negative reinforcement

- Positive reinforcements are favorable events or outcomes that are given to the individual after the desired behavior. This may come in the form of praise, rewards, etc.
- Negative reinforcements typically are characterized by the removal of an undesired or unpleasant outcome after the desired behavior. A response is strengthened as something considered negative is removed.

Punishment, in contrast, is when the increase of something undesirable attempts to cause a decrease in the behavior that follows.

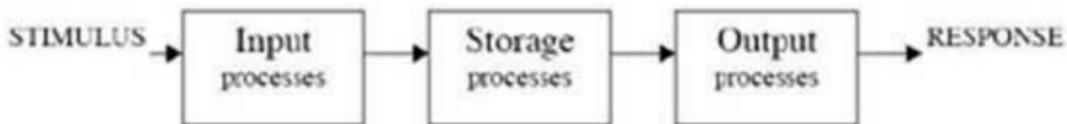
### Positive and Negative Punishment

- Positive punishment is when unfavorable events or outcomes are given in order to weaken the response that follows.
- Negative punishment is characterized by when a favorable event or outcome is removed after a undesired behavior occurs.

## 3. Cognitive Learning Theory

Edward Tolman was recognized as pioneer of Cognitive Theory.

Tolman believed individuals do more than merely respond to stimuli; they act on beliefs, attitudes, changing conditions, and they strive toward goals.. He felt behavior was mainly cognitive.



Tolman coined the term **cognitive map**, which is an internal representation (or image) of external environmental feature or landmark. He thought that individuals acquire large numbers of cues (i.e. signals) from the environment and could use these to build a mental image of an environment (i.e. a cognitive map).

By using this internal representation of a physical space they could get to the goal by knowing where it is in a complex of environmental features. Short cuts and changeable routes are possible with this model.

Tolman worked on **latent learning**, defined as learning which is not apparent in the learner's behavior at the time of learning, but which manifests later when a suitable motivation and circumstances appear.

In the 1920s, German psychologist Wolfgang Kohler was studying the behavior of apes. He designed some simple experiments that led to the development of one of the cognitive theories of learning, which he called insight learning.

Insight learning is the abrupt realization of a problem's solution. Insight learning is not the result of trial and error, responding to an environmental stimulus, or the result of observing someone else attempting the problem. It is a completely cognitive experience that requires the ability to visualize the problem and the solution internally - in the mind's eye, so to speak - before initiating a behavioral response. Insight learning is considered a type of learning because it results in a long-lasting change.

#### 4. Social Learning

Albert Bandura contends that many behaviours or responses are acquired through observational learning. Observational learning, sometimes called modelling results when we observe the behaviours of others and note the consequences of that behaviour.

The person who demonstrates behaviour or whose behaviour is imitated is called models. Parents, movie stars and sports personalities are often powerful models. The effectiveness of a model is related to his or her status, competence and power. Other important factors are the age, sex, attractiveness, and ethnicity of the model. Whether learned behavior are actually performed depends largely on whether the person expects to be rewarded for the behaviour. It emphasizes that people acquire new behaviours by observing or imitating others in a social setting. In addition, learning can also be gained by discipline and self-control and an inner desire to acquire knowledge or skills irrespective of the external rewards or consequences. This process of self-control is also partially a reflection of societal and cultural influences on the development and growth of human beings.

Usually, the following four processes determine the influence that a model will have on an individual:

1. **Attention Process:** People can learn from their models provided they recognize and pay attention to the critical features. In practice, the models that are attractive, repeatedly available or important to us tend to influence us the most.
2. **Retention Process:** A model's influence depends on how well the individual can remember or retain in memory the behaviour/action displayed by him when the model is no longer readily available.
3. **Reproduction Process:** Now, the individual needs to convert the model's Action into his action. This process evinces how well an individual can perform the modeled action.
4. **Reinforcement Process:** Individuals become motivated to display the modeled action if incentive and rewards are provided to them.