Module 2

Individual Behaviour

Introduction

Individual behaviour examines individual perception and attribution and also the role of personality in a work environment. This module will review individual needs and motivation theories as well as explain their importance in managing people. We will also discuss diversity in the workplace and its impact on human relations management

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

Outcomes

- *define* perception and attribution and understand their influence on behaviour.

- *define* personality and *explain* its 'Five' dimensions, as well as Locus of Control.

- *define* motivation and explain the distinction between content and process theories of work motivation.

- *identify* characteristics of a diverse workplace and discuss managerial implications of diversity.

- *identify* through self-assessment exercises, what 'type' you are, and whether you are a high Mach or a low Mach.

Terminology

Terminology

Attribution:	Attribution involves a process that we often use to identify or reach conclusions on the causes of specific events. Typically we attribute either personal or situational factors to explain specific events.
Diversity:	Diversity examines differences with respect to age, gender, race, educational backgrounds, ethnicity, and disabilities of workers.
Expectancy Theory:	A theory of motivation that suggests employees are more likely to be motivated when they perceive their efforts will result in successful performance and outcomes.
Equity Theory:	A theory of motivation that examines how a

person might respond to perceived discrepancies between her input/outcome ratio and that of a reference person.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory: Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation. It suggests that an individual's needs can be arranged in a hierarchy made up of five distinct levels – Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belongingness, Self-esteem and Self-actualisation needs. The most basic needs must be satisfied before seeking out higher order needs. As soon as one level of needs is met, those needs will no longer motivate behaviour. He also argued that these needs are instinctive.

Motivation: The force within a person that establishes the level, direction and persistence of effort expended at work. Level refers to the amount of effort or intensity we put into the job; direction refers to our choice of where to put our efforts (for example we might choose product quality over product quantity); and persistence refers to our stamina or how long we are able to maintain our effort.

Need for Affiliation: The need to establish and maintain good relations with other.

Perception

Perception is formally defined very much as you might expect: it is 'The process by which people select, organise, interpret, retrieve and respond to information from the environment that surrounds them' (Schiffmann, 1990). It is each person's interpretation of reality. Because perceptions across individuals differ so much, the same workplace events, problems and challenges will naturally be perceived differently among members within the organisation. It is important to be aware of this potential 'perception variety' which suggests that not all people will receive and interpret actions and words the same way.

Two stages of the perceptual process include information attention and information organisation. If we attempted to devote our attention to all information available to us, we would become incapacitated and overwhelmed. So instead, we tend to select, either unconsciously or consciously, what information we will process. We might not consciously think about the process of cycling while we are on a bicycle. Yet we will consciously tune out surrounding noise in a restaurant to concentrate on our own conversation. We organise information as efficiently as we can, and we often use schemas and scripts to do this.

Schemas and scripts have been identified as possible means by which individuals come to understand behaviour within organisations, and a means by which they come to influence behaviour.

A schema is a knowledge structure that we use to organise and make sense of social and organisational information and structures; for example stereotypes are schemas, we have schemas about groups of people, specific professions, cultures etc. And while schemas offer us a system for categorising information and understanding behaviour, they don't necessarily guide us into a specific action. This is where scripts are useful. Scripts guide one in understanding others' behaviours and help to guide one's own behaviour, or a sequence of behaviours and events. People tend to behave properly in an organisation because they know the right script – like people who 'know the ropes' can tell you what sequence of behaviours is appropriate, or necessary to manage a situation.

Perceptual Distortion

Individual histories, predispositions and other experiences can introduce distortion to our perceptions. Distortion affects both the selection and organisation processes and includes the phenomena known as stereotyping, the halo effect, projection and the self-fulfilling prophecy. These terms are defined below:

- **Stereotyping** involves attributing behaviours or attitudes to a person based on that person's membership or association with a particular group or category. We often make assumptions about behaviour based on a person's occupation. For example, we might believe that accountants are linear thinkers, who focus on efficiency and precision; we might assume that artists are lateral thinkers, and tend not to be effective in matters of business. Stereotypes tend to be inaccurate, and therefore we must be aware of the danger in adopting them.

- **The Halo Effect** exists when an individual allows one salient aspect of a person to dominate the individual's evaluation of that person. For example, an enthusiastic public speaker, who handles questions very well, might be perceived to be intelligent, knowledgeable and friendly. A poor public speaker might be perceived to be ill-informed or incompetent. If we give prominence to one or two characteristics we risk making broad assumptions about one's overall character, intelligence and effectiveness in an organisation.

- **Projection** exists when an individual attributes his/her own attitudes or feelings to another person. People often make the assumption that others are like themselves. A manager who believes that others respect the importance of confidentiality in the workplace might find that sharing information with some individuals was unwise. The chair of a meeting might assume that all participants place priority on the same issues, only to find out otherwise once a vote has been taken.

- **Self-fulfilling prophecy** exists when an individual expects another person to act or behave in a certain way, and they tend to see these expectations realised, whether or not they actually do.

Attribution

Attribution involves a process that we often use to identify or reach conclusions on the causes of specific events. Typically we attribute either personal or situational factors to explain specific behaviour. If we see a co-worker performing a task very slowly, we might attribute this behaviour to laziness, or other personal causes. Alternatively, you might infer that this particular task is very difficult, and therefore time-consuming, a situational attribution. Our tendency to attribute behaviour to personal or situational sources typically depends on three factors – consensus, distinctiveness and consistency:

1. Typically when we see a number of people behaving in the same way, we attribute it to situational factors. If one person in that group is behaving differently, we are likely to attribute it to personal factors. This attributional bias of behaving as a group is known as **consensus**. It is likely that individual acts which deviate from social expectations will provide us with more insight to their behaviour and motives. For example, our understanding of a co-worker's feelings about his boss might be better understood when we observe his behaviour in private, rather than his 'consensus behaviour'.

2. When one's behaviour is consistent across situations, we attribute personal factors to that behaviour. We may have a friend who is always calm, and never loses her temper. So when she loses her temper, we are likely to attribute this unique behaviour to a situation. This is known as **distinctiveness**. Because her behaviour is distinct from what we might expect from that person, we will likely attribute that behaviour to influencing variables in her environment, not to her personality.

3. **Consistency** is somewhat similar, but it is about behaviour over time rather than across situations. If someone behaves the same way across situations we attribute personal factors, but if they act distinctively in one particular event, we will likely attribute that behaviour to situational factors. For example, a co-worker might be consistently producing very high-quality work. Our experience with that person over the course of several years might confirm that. Then that same co-worker begins to produce much lower-quality work. It is likely that we will attribute the cause of this behavioural change as situational (perhaps the work load has grown substantially).

Why should we understand perception and attribution?

The discussion above articulates the reality of diverse perceptions and attributions in the workplace. Much of our interpretation of events and behaviours are judgmental. Therefore we must caution ourselves as managers, co-workers, volunteers, educators – in any position and work

environment – to appraise or evaluate others as objectively as possible. Often, people's progress in the workplace is dependent on appraisals (not always from their immediate supervisor but also from others in the organisation). Our expressed perception of others' performance can potentially play a significant role in their progress, their rewards, their satisfaction levels, and their interaction and relationships with others.

Personality

Personality consists of a combination of traits that characterise one person. We all notice distinct personal styles of people dealing with their work environments; the way they react to challenges, situations, and others in the workplace. One thing we must be aware of, is that there is no one best personality; people display a variety of personality characteristics, and it is this variety that we depend upon for a diverse environment that fosters an appropriate 'fit' with specific roles.

There has been on ongoing debate, since the study of personal characteristics began, as to the source of one's behaviour – is it inherited, or is it shaped by one's environment? Three specific influences on personality have been identified:

1. **cultural values** (for example, Sri Lankan versus European)

2. **social values**, which emerge from things like family life, one's religion and friends and colleagues that one associates with

3. **situation factors**, which can be specific opportunities, challenges or introductions, or perhaps incidences that affect or in some way shape one's values.

The discussion of personality types usually includes the "big five" framework, which suggests that personality dimensions can be categorised into one of five categories:

1. **Extraversion** is defined as the extent to which a person is outgoing or shy. Extroverts typically feel comfortable in social situations, whereas introverts or shy people tend to avoid social situations.

2. **Agreeableness** implies the degree to which a person is approachable or friendly. People who are defined as agreeable tend to be welcoming, warm people. Less-agreeable people make a point of remaining distant from social situations.

3. **Conscientiousness** represents the degree to which a person is approachable, reliable, dependable and organised. People who tend to be low on this scale are unreliable, disorganised and easily distracted.

4. **Emotional stability** implies that people can understand and manage stress levels well. They tend to have high self-esteem and display self-confidence. People low on this scale show signs of nervousness, anxiety and insecurity.

5. **Openness to experience** is a dimension that characterises fascination and range of interests. People who are very open to experience are curious and creative, even artistic. People who are less open to experience tend to be conventional, and appreciate the status quo.

Type A and Type B Personalities

The personality distinction between Type A and Type B personalities is one about which you might be familiar, from previous undergraduate courses. Type A personalities tend to display specific characteristics: they are competitive, they appear to be pressed for time continually, and they strive to achieve more and more in less time. They also have difficulty displaying patience with leisure time, and prefer to quantify their accomplishments when possible.

Type B personalities, on the other hand, feel much less compelled to discuss or display their accomplishments, and do not feel a sense of urgency like a Type A. They are not inclined to display their superiority over others, and can relax without feeling the guilt that is attached to a Type A personality.

Which 'type' is best suited to a work environment? This question cannot be answered with any real accuracy. But given the distinctions in behaviour between the two types, often we see Type Bs moving to the top of the organisation rather than Type As. This is primarily because Type B personalities are not willing to sacrifice quality for quantity, and often demonstrate creativity that is not found in Type As. On the other hand, Type A personalities are often recognised as hard workers; they work long hours and make decisions quickly. Research has shown, however, that Type A personalities tend to experience poorer physical health, particularly heart conditions, hypertension and coronary artery disease.

Personal Conceptions

Another meaningful group of types depends on personal conceptions, which represent the way we feel about our environment (social and physical), as well as our major beliefs and personal perspectives.

One measurement is **locus of control**, which reflects an individual's perception of whether events are within their control. **Internals**, or persons with an internal locus of control, believe that they are in control of their own destiny. **Externals**, or persons with an external locus of control believe that, for the most part, events and outcomes are beyond their control; their fate is determined by environmental forces.

Machiavellianism is another personal conception that is often referred to in the OB literature. This personality characteristic is named after Niccol Machievaelli, who in the 16th century wrote about the exploitation of power. Mach scales have been developed as an instrument that measures a person's Machiavellian orientation. This is a person (a machiavellian) who is selfish, and is motivated only in a way that will represent personal gain. They do not concern themselves with others, and do not hesitate to

manipulate others should they perceive a need to do so. They are typically influenced by personal relationships with others and try to sway others when it suits their own interests. The scale measures low and high Mach behaviour, and is useful in helping managers predict behaviour of employees. A person who rates high on the scale will have a greater probability of success in face-to-face, versus indirect personal associations, and they prefer to work in less-structured, informal environments. They might be perceived as calm and detached from others, and emotional situations. A low Mach person depends on structure, and has a preference to consider the ethical considerations in making decisions.

What type makes the best employees? The answer is: 'It depends.' Certainly if the organisation measures performance and results only, without considering what means were used to justify the ends, then a high Mach might be the appropriate choice to achieve planned objectives. On the other hand, should the organisation consider ethical behaviour to be a significant component of a performance appraisal, there might be a preference to employ a person that rates as a low Mach.

Motivation

Motivation is defined in this module as the force within a person that establishes the level, direction and persistence of effort expended at work. Level refers to the amount of effort or intensity we put into the job; direction refers to our choice of where to put our efforts (for example we might choose product quality over product quantity); and persistence refers to our stamina or how long we are able to maintain our effort.

Naturally, organisations seek out individuals who are motivated to perform well in the workplace. In addition, they hope to employ people who have the ability to motivate others with whom they work: subordinates, peers, and superiors. If organisations can motivate employees to become effective problem solvers, and to meet or exceed customer expectations, then a number of organisational goals and objectives can be realised. But individuals are complex, diverse, and often difficult to predict. And no one theory of motivation can explain human motivation, particularly across diverse cultures.

In this module we will address a number of theories of motivation that serve different purposes.

From a conceptual perspective, motivation is typically divided into content and process theories. **Content** theories are needs theories that identify a variety of needs that motivate individuals. **Process** theories examine the thought process that determines behaviour. So, for example, if we have a need for a sense of belonging in our work team, this need would be identified through content theory, as a specific need. What process theories would do is identify how the establishment or absence of the feeling of belonging affects one's behaviour at work.

Needs theories are concerned with explaining what motivates people in terms of their individual needs. This module discusses four needs theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG Theory, McClelland's Trichotomy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who studied human motivation, and concluded that individual needs can be arranged in a hierarchy, which is made up of five distinct levels. He argued that the most basic needs must be satisfied before seeking out higher order needs. He also argued that these needs are instinctive. The five levels of needs are described below:

1. **Physiological needs** are subsistence needs that individuals require in order to survive: food, shelter, oxygen, water. Organisations might satisfy this need by providing an income that enables employees to provide for their physiological needs.

2. **Safety needs** are those which serve to protect individuals from outside threats. Examples include shelter, security, a structured environment. An organisation can help satisfy this need by providing safe working conditions, job security, and comfortable surroundings.

3. **Belongingness** is a social need that is met when people have affection, love, and friendship. Organisations often help to meet this need through teamwork and various social opportunities within and outside the workplace.

4. **Self-esteem** focuses on the need for recognition and respect from others, acknowledgement of competence, independence. Often organisational members can fulfil this need with promotions or awards.

5. **Self-actualisation** needs are not as easily defined, but relate to developing one's full potential. People who are able to meet this need appreciate and accept themselves and others, and have very clear perceptions of reality.

Maslow argued that as soon as one level of needs is met, those needs will no longer motivate behaviour. It is an interesting theory, but not one that has received much empirical support. There may be needs other than those in Maslow's hierarchy that motivate people; spiritual needs for example. In addition, these needs vary in order and importance because of cultural distinctions. In a collectivist culture higher order needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation may become less important. Some cultures are high on uncertainty and avoidance, making safety and security needs more important. Other cultures that have a masculine or feminine orientation can influence the importance of different needs (Francesco & Gold, 1998; Hofstede, 1980).

Alderfe's ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer offered a 'collapsed' version of Maslow's hierarchy, and argued that more than one need may be activated at the same time. In

addition, his theory suggests that higher needs (also instinctive) become more important as they are satisfied, rather that less important. ERG Theory suggests that needs are broken down into three classes:

1. **Existence** needs are satisfied by material conditions, and make up the first two levels in Maslow's hierarchy. They include needs such as food, shelter, and safe working conditions.

2. **Relatedness** needs are dependent on social interaction, through communication and exchange of ideas with other members within the organisation. They are similar to Maslow's belongingness and self-esteem needs that include feedback from others.

3. **Growth** needs are intrinsic, and are focused on personal development, much like Maslow's self-actualisation needs and the esteem needs that are achievement-related.

Alderfer's theory argues that should one not feel a higher order need fulfilled, then he or she will have an increased desire to satisfy a lower-level need. And this allowance for regression back to lower level needs offers a more flexible approach to understanding individual motivation than Maslow's hierarchy.

McClelland's Trichotomy of Needs or Acquired Needs Theory

In the 1940s David McClelland, a psychologist, created what is known as the TAT – Thematic Apperception Test, to measure human needs. These tests necessitated viewing and interpreting pictures: people were to look at the pictures and then develop stories about their meaning, i.e., what they saw in the picture.

McClelland identified three themes as a result of these TAT tests, and proposed a set of higher-order needs, including need for achievement (nAch), need for affiliation (nAff) and need for power (nPower). He argued that unlike the two theories discussed above, these three needs are learned, rather than instinctive.

1. **Need for achievement (nAch)** exists when individuals place priority on the quality of their work, and have a preference for situations that enable them to shape the outcome. They tend to set difficult but realistic goals, and are willing to take moderate or calculated risks. People with high nAch will work hard towards a goal primarily because it motivates them.

2. **Need for affiliation (nAff)** is a focus on establishing and maintaining relationships with others. Individuals with this need tend not to be competitive, preferring cooperation and conformity.

3. **Need for power (nPower)** is often evident among middle and upper-levels of management, because these individuals by definition must influence other members of the organisation. They may make use of their position of power for the good of the

organisation, encouraging and facilitating others to become independent and performance-focused. On the other hand, they might be driven by a need to dominate others, and exercise their power impulsively, or in some discriminating way.

McClelland conducted cross-cultural studies with a focus on the need for achievement. He developed training programmes that included achievement-oriented behaviours in business games, as well as writing about achievement-oriented stories. McClelland found that participants (in these programmes) in the United States, Mexico and India were more successful in their environments than those without training and concluded that these needs can indeed be learned. It is important to note, however, that their success depended on an environment that supported achievement-oriented behaviour. Further studies indicated that cultures that emphasised a collectivist focus (such as Mexico and India) contradicted the individualistic nature of achievement needs, and therefore the success was not sustainable (Misra & Kanungo, 1994).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg developed the two-factor theory conducting interviews with engineers and accountants, and having them describe when they were motivated and satisfied, and when they felt unmotivated and dissatisfied. He found there were two sets of factors, called 'motivators' and 'hygienes' that were somewhat unrelated, in terms of satisfaction. He separated dissatisfaction and satisfaction as two separate continuums.

Motivators are job content factors, and are associated with feelings of meaningful work, accomplishment, achievement, responsibility, growth and advancement opportunities, and the job itself. Content factors are necessary to create positive motivation. **Hygienes** are job context or extrinsic factors, representing sources of job dissatisfaction that are associated with physical arrangements in the workplace, supervisors and interpersonal relations. Motivators are factors which lead to worker satisfaction, while hygienes are factors which prevent dissatisfaction. Herzberg argued that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are separate dimensions - so if the company improves a hygiene factor, such as working conditions or pay, it might not cause people to be satisfied at work, but it might prevent them from becoming dissatisfied.

There are a number of managerial implications of this theory. Of important note is that the findings of this theory are not universal. In some countries, hygiene factors such as supervision and interpersonal relationships were perceived as motivators rather than hygiene factors. So while we learn from this theory that the elimination of demotivators will not directly motivate employees, how we define motivators and hygiene factors will vary across diverse cultures.

Process theories

Unlike content theories, which focus on what motivates people, process theories examine how and why people are motivated. We will review two of these theories: Equity Theory and Expectancy Theory.

Equity Theory

Equity theory suggests that if people perceive a level of inequity or unfairness when they compare their work situation to that of others, they will be motivated to do something about it, in order to create (at least in their minds) a better or more accurate sense of fairness. The theory distinguishes between felt negative inequity and felt positive inequity. Felt negative inequity emerges when an individual feels that he or she is receiving less (in the way of compensation, or recognition, or advancement) than others are, in proportion to work inputs. For example, if I work diligently for 10 hours per day, and my colleague takes two hour lunches and talks to his or her friends on the phone, I will experience felt negative inequity.

Felt positive inequity exists when we feel that, compared with others, we are actually getting more. When feelings of **either** negative or positive inequity exist, there are a number of actions we might take to remedy this sense of inequity:

- change work inputs (work less hard)

- change the outcomes (rewards) – (ask for a wage increase)

- quit the job

- change comparison points (compare yourself with another worker)

- psychologically distort the comparisons (perhaps rationalise that the situation is temporary)

- do something to change the inputs or outputs of the comparison person (try to give them more work).

Studies have demonstrated that, when individuals perceive that compensation and reward systems are equitable, they have greater levels of job satisfaction and are willing to commit to organisational objectives. Like the content theories discussed above, perceptions vary across cultures. In a more collectivist culture, such as those in many Asian countries, people demonstrate a greater need for equality than equity.

Expectancy theory

Victor Vroom is the researcher associated with Expectancy Theory. He examined the sources of motivation for individuals who want to contribute to the organisation, and their desire to work. The theory says that work motivation is determined by individual beliefs regarding effort-performance relationships and work outcomes. For example, I might

think that, by working very hard for a few months, I will get the promotion I've been wanting.

There are three components to Expectancy Theory:

1. **Expectancy** is my sense of the probability that I can actually do the work (am I competent enough, do I have enough time, do I have enough help?). Our expectancy lies somewhere between 0 and 1. If I know unequivocally, that I can do the job, my expectancy will be equal to 1. If I know for certain that I cannot do the job, my expectancy will be equal to 0.

2. **Instrumentality** is also a probability, so is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. Instrumentality refers to our perception of the probability that doing this work will actually lead to, or result in the desired outcome. If I make these sacrifices (for example less time with my family, miss a number of choir practices) what are my chances of getting the promotion? If I am certain that I will get it (given those sacrifices), instrumentality will equal 1. If I am certain that I will not, instrumentality will be equal to 0.

3. **Valence** is the value that we attach to the actual outcome. Unlike expectancy or instrumentality, valence is a number between -1, and +1. Negative one is a very undesirable outcome and +1 is very desirable. So how important is the promotion to begin with? If it means something to you, but you are not willing to give up everything you might need to, in order to gain the promotion the valence might be equal to 1. Alternatively, you might have no interest in the outcome, in which case the valence would be equal to -1.

And Vroom suggested, through an equation, that each of these components is related to one another. $M = E \times I \times V$. Motivation is equal to expectancy (can I do it) times instrumentality (will it get me what I want), and valence (how badly do I want it?).

What does this mean for you as a manager? It is useful for you to have a good sense and an understanding of your employees' needs, as individuals. Each individual is different, and is motivated by various factors. If you are trying to manage people with a view to accomplishing specific objectives, and are willing to compensate them in ways that do not represent their normal set of rewards, then you need to know whether they believe they can do it. In addition, it is important to be aware of whether they think that the reward will materialise, and that the reward is important or appealing in some way.

Diversity

What is diversity and why is it important?

Diversity is an important concept for all to understand and appreciate, particularly given the growing diversity in the workplace, and the

globalisation of organisations. It examines differences with respect to age, gender, race, educational backgrounds, ethnicity, and disabilities of workers. As members of an organisation, you need to be aware that while there are legal and ethical reasons for effectively managing diversity, there are also a number of potential economic benefits of a diverse workforce. Organisations have experienced reduced costs, resource acquisition, marketing and problem-solving advantages as well as increased flexibility through diversity. The changing demographics of the workforce and internationalisation of business is having an effect on the formulation of diversity policies within many organisations today.

Levi Strauss for an example adopts some of the value principles that are based on *diversity*, *ethical practices*, and *empowerment* (Ivancevich, Konospake & Matteson, 2008).

On diversity, the management seek differing points of view from employees at all levels and across different cultures in the organisation. Levi Straus valued and honestly rewarded diversity and by emulating this value principle, employees were expected to demonstrate idea generation, participation in decision-making but importantly voicing out different opinions in job execution.

We know now that there are a number of advantages to heterogeneous groups of individuals. Ideas that emerge from a diverse group tend to help increase problem-solving ability through a broader range of perspectives on the issues. In addition, a diverse workforce tends to better understand the needs of a diverse customer base. Thirdly, organisations that are known and recognised for their diversity policies tend to attract a higher quality and more diverse workforce (Rice, 1994; Advancing Women in Business, 1998).

There are a number of characteristics of a multicultural organisation that are worth noting. These organisations tend to create workgroup cohesiveness, mitigate conflict and turnover and foster coherent action on major organisational goals (Cox & Blake, 1991; Merenivitch & Reigle, 1979). Some features of such organisations are:

- They actively seek to capitalise on the advantages of diversity, rather than attempting to stifle or ignore the diversity, and to minimise the barriers that can develop as a result of people having different backgrounds, attitudes, values, behaviour styles, and concerns.

- Organisational resources (jobs, income, and access to information) are distributed equitably and are not determined or affected by cultural characteristics such as race and gender.

- The ability to influence decisions and the way there are carried out is shared widely, not differentially by cultural characteristics.

- Minority group members are fully integrated in the informal networks of the organisation.

- The organisational culture is pluralistic in that it recognises and appreciates diversity and all cultural groups respect and learn

from each other. The culture acknowledges both the need for 'being the same' in some ways to work together effectively and the need for 'being different' in some ways to recognise individual and group interests, concerns and backgrounds.

- Institutional policies, practices and procedures are flexible and responsive to the needs of all employees.

- There is an absence of prejudice and discrimination.

- Majority and minority members are equally identified with the organisational goals.

- There is a minimum of intergroup conflict among diverse groups.

Creating and sustaining a work environment that accomplishes all of these things is very challenging. There are a number of obstacles to overcome, and the units in this module addressed many of these organisational and managerial challenges. While meeting the cultural diversity criteria stated above has been slow, there is some evidence that organisations are making real progress.

Module summary

Summary

In this module you learned that perception and attribution are important topics because all decisions and behaviours in organisations are influenced by how people interpret and make sense of the world around them and each other. The simple definition of perception is the process by which individuals select, organise and interpret sensory input; attribution, on the other hand, is an explanation of the cause of behaviour. Personality is the pattern of relatively enduring ways that a person feels, thinks and behaves, which is usually determined by both nature and nurture. Personality is represented by the Big Five personality traits: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Motivation is important because it explains why employees behave as they do. Throughout this Module you learned prominent motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, McClelland's Trichotonomy of Needs or Acquired Needs Theory, Herberg's two-factor theory and process theories (equity and expectancy). These theories provide complementary approaches to understanding and managing motivation in organisations.

Case study 2.1

Case study

Chang Koh Metal Ptd. Ltd., in China

Please read case study 2.1. 'Chang Koh Metal Ptd. Ltd.' in the case study handbook of your study materials and answer the questions below.

Case Study Questions

1. Comment on the fixed salary system that Andrew adopted from his former employer. Why was this system not effective for motivating the plant workers?

2. Do you think that scrapping the fixed salary system and replacing it with the piece-rate system was a good idea? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the piece-rate system?

3. Why was Andrew unsuccessful in his efforts to improve product quality? Do you think that a system of demerit points and wage deductions of the quality control workers would have been effective? Will more supervisors in the quality control department and shipping products to Singapore for final inspection solve the problem? What do you think would be an effective way to improve product quality?

4. Were cross-cultural differences a factor in the effectiveness of the salary systems?

5. Are there any conditions under which the piece-rate system might have been more effective?

6. What are some of the alternative ways to use pay to motivate workers in the plant? Are there alternatives to the piece-rate system and how effective are they likely to be? What does this case say about money as a motivator?

7. What should Andrew do now?

Source: Case and questions adapted from Johns & Saks (2001).

Self-assessment

Take some time to complete the exercise below. Try to determine which type you are.

ARE YOU A TYPE A?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the number on the scale below that best characterises your behaviour for each trait.

Casual about appointments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Never late
Not competitive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Very competitive
Never feel rushed	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Always feel rushed
Take things one at a time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Try to do too many things at once
Slow doing things	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Fast (eating, walking, etc.)
Express feelings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	'Sit on' feelings
Many interests	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Few interests outside work

Scoring key: Total your score on the 7 questions. Now multiply the total by 3. A total of 120 or more indicates that you are a hard-core Type A. Scores below 90 indicate that you are a hard-core Type B. The following gives you more specifics:

POINTS	PERSONALITY TYPE
120 or more	A1
106-119	A
100-105	A2
90-99	B1
Less than 90	B

Source: Adapted from Bortner (1969)

Self-assessment

For each statement, circle the number that most closely resembles your attitude.

Statement	Disagree / Agree				
	A Lot	A Little	Neutral	A Little	A Lot
1. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reason for wanting it rather than giving reasons that might carry more weight.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak, and it will come out when they are given a chance.	1	2	3	4	5
6. One should take action only when it is morally right.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Most people are basically good and kind.	1	2	3	4	5
8. There is no excuse for lying to someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Most people more easily forget the death of their father than the loss their property.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Generally speaking, people won't work hard unless they're forced to do so.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring Key: To obtain your mach score, add the number you have checked on questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10. For the other four questions, reverse the numbers you have checked: 5 becomes 1, 4 is 2, and 1 is 5. Total your ten numbers to find your score. The higher your score, the more machiaveliian you are. Among a random sample of American adults, the national average was 25.

Source: Christie & Geiss (1970)

Assessment

Assessment

1. Discuss why attributions are important determinants of behaviour in organisations.

2. Assume that an employee is generally performing above expected levels. Explain how you as a manager would utilise the attribution process to make judgment about a sudden decrease in job performance of this particular employee.

3. Explain how managers can use schemas to reduce perceptual inaccuracies.

4. Which of the content theories discussed in this module do you believe offers the best explanation of motivation?

5. Assuming you are the newly assigned global manager responsible for an international subsidiary that has employees from many part of the world, how would you go about motivating these individuals to perform their jobs well? Explain in detail.

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