

Does behavior  
always follow from  
attitudes



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In the world that we live in today, every individual is very unique. Their life style, hobbies, interests, likes and dislikes and many other characteristics, the way they portrait it is very differently, even each and everyone in a family will also have different characters or personality. The behavior of a person is hard to be predict if we do not understand them. So what we need to do to understand more about a person's behavior is to study their thoughts. By understanding it, we may know their attitude, and can predict the behavior of peoples.

It help us to gain a greater understanding of those factors that influence individual and group dynamics in an organizational setting so that individuals and the groups and organizations to which they belong may become more efficient and effective. The factors that may influence organizational includes individuals and group behaviour. Quite some of the research on organizational behavior is ultimately aimed at providing human resource management professionals with the information and tools they need to select, train, and retain employees in a fashion that yields maximum benefit for the individual employee as well as for the organization.

Organizations today are facing challenges that comes from their employees. That is the behaviour of their employees. The organizations want to have more understanding of their employees, so that can predict their behaviour. Besides, organizations also try to change their employees' mind set into more positive side. By doing this, it will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees and this will bring benefit to the organizations. By understanding this, we will be able to improve the

employees' satisfaction in organization and meet the requirement of the organizations as well.

Attitude can be defined as a predisposition to respond to a stimulus, that is something in a person's environment such as an event, thing, place, or another person, in a positive or negative way (M. Fishbein, I. Ajzen, 1975). For example, when we speak of a positive job attitude, we mean that the person involved tend to have pleasant internal feelings when they think about their jobs. Attitudes can be see as a favorable or unfavorable evaluation reaction toward something or someone exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior. Sometimes people refers its as the ABC's of attitudes, that is affection, behavioral, and cognitive.

An affective component includes beliefs and knowledge about and evaluations of the stimulus. The affective component refers to our feelings, the emotional part of the attitude. Finally, an attitude's behavioral component is the inclination to behave in a certain way as a response to one's feelings and cognitions. In a workplace, a person's attitudes are very important determinant of performance related behaviors, such as the quantity and quality of output, organizational commitment, absenteeism, turnover, and a host fo other important outcomes.

On general level, a person's attitudes influence that individual to act in a particular way (J. Cooper, R. T Croyle, 1984). Of course, whether an attitude actually produces a particular behavior depends on a number of factors such as family and peer pressures, past and present work experiences, and group norms. For instance, people may dislike what they are doing but hold back

their effort because of a lack of perceived rewards or pressure from co-workers. In this example, an employee didn't get a promotion he thought he deserved; a coworker got it instead.

The employee's attitude toward his supervisor is illustrated as follows: cognition (the employee thought he deserved the promotion), affect (the employee strongly dislikes his supervisor), and behavior (the employee is looking for another job). As we previously noted, although we often think that cognition causes affect then causes behavior, in reality these components are often difficult to separate. We can see this kind of phenomenon around us. Its happening to ourselves and many others. Normally before people react, they will be thinking for a moment about the cause and effect of their actions.

Besides that, the emotion that people having during that particular time when thinking, will also affect the outcome of the behavior. Behaviour is quite simply, it is the way we act, the things we do and say, like facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, and word choices. Generally speaking, behaviour follows attitude. We tend to behave the way we feel, think and belief. In organizations, attitudes are important because of their behavioral component. If worker believes, for example, that supervisors, auditors, bosses and time-and-motion engineers are all in conspiracy to make employees work harder for the same or less money sense to try to understand how these attitudes were formed, their relationship to actual job behavior and how they might be changed. Isn't it logical that people watch television programs that they say they like or that employees try to avoid assignments they find distasteful. Attitudes that individuals consider

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important tend to show a strong relationship to behavior. The more specific the attitude and the more specific the behavior, the stronger is the link between the two.

For instance asking someone specifically about his or her intention to stay with the organization for the next 6 months is likely to better predict turnover for that person than if you asked him or her how satisfied he or she was with his or her pay. Attitudes that are easily remembered are more likely to predict behavior than attitudes that are not accessible in memory. Interestingly you are more likely to remember attitudes that are frequently expressed. So the more you talk about your attitude on a subject, the more you are likely to remember it, and the more likely it is to shape your behavior.

Discrepancies between attitude and behavior are more likely to occur when social pressures to behave in certain ways hold exceptional power. This tends to characterize behavior in organizations. This may explain why an employee who holds strong anti-union attitudes attend pro-union organizing meetings; or why tobacco executives, who are not smokers themselves and who tend to believe the research linking smoking and cancer, don't actively discourage others from smoking in their offices. Sometimes, though, we find ourselves in a position when we have to alter our behaviour to be different from our underlying attitude.

We can see that from Leon Festinger's theory, Cognitive Dissonance. Leon Festinger gave an example that many people know that smoking cigarettes will cause cancer and other diseases, but nonetheless continue to smoke,

and this is called cognitive dissonance (George A Milite, 2001). Cognitive dissonance (Festinger, L. 1957), is a significant area within the realm of attitude change involves the concept of cognitive consistency. Essentially, people strive to achieve a sense of balance between their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

If you hold liberal political views, for example, it would be unlikely for you to vote for a high conservative candidate. There are times, however, when you might be forced into a position or unwittingly do something that does not “fit” with your beliefs and attitudes. This situation creates cognitive inconsistency or imbalance. Since the resulting psychological imbalance is unpleasant or uncomfortable, we try to reduce that imbalance to attain cognitive consistency once again. One of the ways we reduce such imbalance is to modify our attitudes or rationalize our behaviour in a way that creates a sense of balance (W.

J. McGuire, 1966) The theory of cognitive dissonance try to explain how people attempt to reduce internal conflicts when they experience a clash between their thoughts and their actions (L. Festinger, 1957). For example that if you think that it is important to support the Malaysia automobile industry but you believe that Japanese or German cars are of better quality than Malaysia cars, you might experience some dissonance after buying a Malaysian car. One of the way to reduce this imbalance is to alther your beliefs about comparative quality.

For instance, that Malaysia cars are just as good if not better than Japanese cars. If you purchased a Japanese car, you might attempt to reduce your

dissonance by thinking that the only way that the Malaysia automobile industry is going to improve its quality is to lose sales volume to the Japanese. So that this competition will lead to improvements in the quality of Malaysia built cars. In each instance, beliefs and attitudes are modified to support the behavior. Other source of cognitive dissonance can be found, like where a choice or decision has negative consequences.

For example, you vote for a particular individual as a candidate to be your superior, and that particular individual subsequently had the most votes, but later is perceived to do a poor job in office. You might look for positive aspects of the choice. You might attempt to reduce the dissonance by rationalizing that the candidate was not as bad as he or she could have been, that the other candidates would have been much worse, or that conditions had sufficiently changed so that no one would have been able to do a good job. When expectations are unfulfilled or disconfirmed is another kind of cognitive dissonance.

For instance, following a merger between two savings banks, a substantial number of organizational members were to "let go" due to overlapping job responsibilities. Although the chief executive officer of one of the banks expected that the friendly merger would lead to expanded opportunities for employees rather than the reduction in force, he eventually argued that "due to volatile economic conditions in the industry the bank would have had to fire a number of people even if the merger had not taken place." (A. F. Buono, J. L.

Bowditch, 2003) Another type of cognitive dissonance is that under forced compliance or insufficient justification. For example, if we are forced into doing something that is boring, trivial, or difficult without extrinsic compensation, we often try to think of certain aspects of the tasks that were interesting in order to rationalize the time spent. Extrinsic rewards, however, can sufficiently reduce dissonance, such as when a task might be boring but we “ did it for the money,” so that rationalization is unnecessary. Attitude and behavior may differ in Western countries and Asian countries.

It is due to the culture of the places that we live at. By living in different places, there will be different peoples, languages, cultures, norms, environment and others. With different kinds of beliefs, feeling, environment, and perceptions, attitude can be different. For instance, the Geert Hofstede’s five cultural dimensions, power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation (G. Hofstede, 1980). Power distance refers to the degree of inequality that exists and is accepted among people with and without power.

A high power distance score indicates that society accepts an unequal distribution of power and people understand “ their place” in the system. Low power distance means that power is shared and well dispersed. It also means that society members view themselves as equals. Most of the Asian countries is having high power distance. For example, country like Malaysia, subordinates probably send reports only to the top management and most of the time will be conducting closed door meetings where only a few, powerful leaders were in attendance. In the other hand, most of the Western countries is having low power distance.



For instance, countries like Australia, the people expect and accept power relations that are more consultative and democratic. They see equality in one another regardless of the formal positions. This shows us the way people perceive power differences. Secondly, individualism refers to the strength of the ties people have to others within the community. A high individualism indicates a loose connection with people. In countries with a high individualism, there is a lack of interpersonal connection and little sharing of responsibility, beyond family and perhaps a few close friends.

A society with a low individualism would have strong group cohesion, and there would be a large amount of loyalty and respect for members of the group. The group itself is also larger and people take more responsibility for each other's well being (G. Hofstede, 1991). Country like U. S, they have high individualism practice. Individuals would strive to achieve their goals individually. They don't play in a team. The Japanese are different from Americans, Japanese people will work in a team to achieve something. Masculinity refers to how much a society sticks with, and values, traditional male and female roles.

High masculinity are found in countries where men are expected to be tough, to be the provider, to be assertive and to be strong. If women work outside the home, they have separate professions from men. Low masculinity scores do not reverse the gender roles. In a low masculinity society, the roles are simply blurred. You see women and men working together equally across many professions. Men are allowed to be sensitive and women can work hard for professional success. Japan is high masculinity country whereas Sweden is low masculinity country.

According to Hofstede's analysis, if you were to open an office in Japan, you might have greater success if you appointed a male employee to lead the team and had a strong male contingent on the team. In Sweden, on the other hand, you would aim for a team that was balanced in terms of skill rather than gender. The fourth is the uncertainty avoidance. It refers to how much members of a society are anxious about the unknown, and as a consequence, attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. For example, countries that have high uncertainty avoidance such as Germany.

Germans are not keen on uncertainty, by planning everything carefully they try to avoid the uncertainty. In Germany there is a society that relies on rules, laws and regulations. Germany wants to reduce its risks to the minimum and proceed with changes step by step. On the other hand, countries such as Singapore and Malaysia have low uncertainty avoidance that favour managers who take more risks, have fewer written rules, offer less-structured activities and experience higher labour turnover. The last dimension is long-term orientation (G. Hofstede, 1991).