

PMIR-SEMESTER-II [e-Content]

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UNIT-II [PART- 4]

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

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In this unit, the discussion on individual behaviour will continue. We will examine one of the factors that influence individual behaviour.

UNIT 5 ATTITUDES

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we discussed perception and learning. Now we will turn to attitude and values. To put it simply, attitude may be defined as a tendency to react positively or negatively in regard to an object. On the other hand, value is defined as a concept of the desirable, an internalized criterion or standard of evaluation a person possesses. In the process of understanding individual behaviour within an organization, value and attitude are vital concepts.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and nature of attitude
- Describe the functions of attitude

5.2 MEANING AND NATURE OF ATTITUDE

The word 'attitude' comes from the Italian for 'posture' it means it's how you carry yourself, something you hold in your whole being, your entire approach to the world. Attitude is a collection of the type of personality, feelings towards the outside world, confidence within self and more.

Components of Attitude

The attitudes, irrespective of what they are, generally consist of three major components. These are:

1. **Evaluative Component:** The evaluative component of attitude is a function of how we feel about something. It refers to our liking or disliking for a particular person, any particular event or any particular situation. Such person, event or situation becomes the focus of our attitude and is known as attitude object. For

example, you may feel positively or negatively about your boss, about your friend, about the movie you have seen or about anything you happen to see.

2. **Cognitive Component:** Feelings, however, do not simply and automatically develop. Most often they are based on knowledge. For example, if we know that your friend is talking ill about you behind your back, such knowledge would result in negative attitude towards your friend. Similarly, you might believe that your supervisor does not know much about the job. This belief is based upon your knowledge of how the supervisor is handling the job. These beliefs, which may or may not be justified comprises the cognitive component of attitude.
3. **Behavioural Component:** What you believe about something and how we feel about it would determine your behaviour regarding that particular person, event or situation. For example, if you believe that your boss is embezzling company funds and you feel negatively about it, you are likely to behave with little respect for such a boss. You may either inform his superiors about it or you may want to look for another job. Such predisposition to act in a certain way contributes the behavioural component of the attitude. Such a predisposition may not actually predict your behaviour. For example, if your boss is embezzling company funds, you may take some steps or you might simply ignore it by convincing yourself that it does not directly concern you. In other words, your intention to behave in a certain way dictates how you actually do.

Based upon these components, attitudes can be defined as relatively stable clusters of feelings, beliefs and behavioural predispositions. By including the words relatively stable, we are referring to something that is neither permanent nor fleeting. In other words, once attitudes are formed, they tend to persist and can only be changed by strong outside or inside forces. For example, your attitude towards someone may be negative but may change if situations or circumstances change.

Attitude and Behaviour

It is assumed that the relationship between the attitude of a person and his behavior is causal in nature, meaning that the attitudes that people hold determine their behaviour and what they do. Logic also suggests such a relationship. For example, people watch television programs that they like, that is, their attitude about such programs is positive.

The relationship between attitude and behaviour is well documented. However, a debate is still going on as to whether the changes in attitudes affect the changes in behaviour or whether the changes in behaviour affect the changes in attitudes. In other words, it is not clear as to which one is the cause and which one is the effect.

Attitude Formation

Some of the learned characteristics responsible for attitude formation are:

- **Experiences:** Our personal experiences with people and situations develop our attitude towards such persons and situations. Through job experience, people develop attitudes towards working conditions, salaries, supervision, group dynamics and so on. Similarly, interaction with other people would determine your attitude towards them. A positive interaction with a person would result in a positive attitude towards that person. Many people who are afraid of swimming or horse riding or darkness can trace back this fear to some fearful or negative experiences in these areas in the past.
- **Perceptual biases:** Perception is the result of a complex interaction of various senses such as feelings, seeing, hearing and so on and plays an important part in our attitude and behavioural formation. For example, if a manager perceives a subordinate's ability as limited, he will give him limited responsibility. Similarly, we lose many good friends due to our changed perception about them. Observation of the other person's attitude: When we like someone, we try to emulate that person's attitude. For example, when we are impressed by someone keeping calm under stressful circumstances and we appreciate such calmness, we might try to do the same. Similarly, our attitude towards a spiritual person changes if we observe him committing what we consider a sinful act.
- **Association:** Our association with the group we belong to strongly influences our attitude. Our close association with a group would encourage us to be consistent with the attitude of the group. Belonging to an elite group or a religious group would determine some aspects of our attitude. Family association determines our attitudes from the very beginning. There is a high correlation between the parents and the children with respect to attitude in many specific areas. Similarly, attitudes of our peers as we grow older also

influence our own attitudes. We make friends with people who share our own attitudes, interests and preferences. Many a times, our parents object to our friendship with persons whom they deem undesirable and encourage us to make friends with those who have an outlook similar to our own.

- **Personality:** Personality is a set of traits and characteristics, habit patterns and conditioned responses to certain stimuli that formulate the impression that a person makes upon others and this impression is a function of a person's attitude. This personality may come out as warm and friendly or arrogant and aggressive. From an organizational behaviour point of view, it is believed that people who are open minded seem to work better than those who are narrow-minded. Similarly, people who are extroverts and outgoing are more likely to be successful as managers than those who are introverts.

5.2.1 Attitude Measurement

In social settings, we can judge a person's attitude easily in the sense that we either like or dislike a given attitude. However, at work, it is more difficult to measure the attitude of workers towards work. Such measurement becomes necessary for the management to predict employee behaviour which will affect the quality of work. From the view point of measurement, attitudes may be defined by describing measurement systems that social psychologists use to measure attitudes. The most common and frequently used method of measuring attitude is by simply asking people about their attitudes towards various issues, people and factors. This is accomplished by attitude surveys and questionnaires. Generally, bipolar scales are used to measure the attitudes towards a job in terms of liking it or disliking it. However, different scales have been created in order to measure the degree of such liking or disliking.

One of the most commonly used ranking scales is the one which has five categories ranging from most favourable to most unfavourable. Typical categories and their ranks are:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral (Undecided)
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

The standard survey for measuring the attitude of the employees generally presents them with a series of statements and questions which also has a rating scale indicating the extent of agreement or disagreement as stated above. Some examples of statements are: *'This management is very fair in dealing with employees'* or *'My job makes the best use of my abilities'* or *'I know what is expected of me'* and so on by totaling the responses on the customized questionnaire, the individual's attitude score can be calculated. The analysis and evaluation of these scores can then be carried out for different teams, work groups, departments or the complete organization.

The results of attitude surveys can sometimes surprise the management. One company management was very happy with the way things were going. Employees were actively involved in divisional decisions and the profitability was very high leading to the assumption that employee morale was very high. The management conducted a small attitude survey in order to confirm their thinking and belief. As a part of the survey, the employees were presented with some of the statements in order to identify their extent of agreement or disagreement. These statements included the following:

- At workplace, your opinions are given importance
- You are encouraged to become a leader if you are willing to do so
- Your personal development has been discussed with you in the period of last six months

The answers were totally unexpected. The results of the survey indicated that disagreement to the first statement was expressed by 43 percent of the employees, disagreement to the second statement was expressed by 48 percent of the people and 62 percent employees expressed their disagreement for the third statement. Based on this survey, the management made some changes to boost the employee morale, especially giving attention to such matters that caused alienation among the employees. By using such surveys on a regular basis, the management can get a valuable feedback about the perceptions carried out by the employees with respect to their working conditions. The management can also become aware of the different potential problems that may hit the organization. The diagnosis of these problems is possible at an early stage with such surveys. Once the management is notified of these problems, they can take needful steps in order to rectify these problems and timely actions can be taken in order to avoid any negative consequences.

One of the purposes of such surveys is to determine how variables relate to each other and how changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable. For example, if we want to find a correlation between how fairly people believe they are being paid and various work-related attitudes such as their willingness to help co-workers. The researchers might find that the more workers feel that they are unfairly paid; the less likely they are to help their co-workers.

Such studies can alert the management to take steps to create a more collegial work environment. There are two key work attitudes, which determine the importance of attitude behavior relationship with respect to productivity. These are job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Equally important are the complex relationships between job satisfaction and job performance.

5.3 SUMMARY

1. The direction of an attitude is favourable, unfavourable or neutral. We may like, dislike or be neutral in our views about a person, a job or a situation.
2. It is assumed that the relationship between the attitude of a person and his behaviour is causal in nature, meaning that the attitudes that people hold determine their behaviour and what they do. Logic also suggests such a relationship.
3. The question often arises, 'how are the attitudes and subsequent behaviours formed?' While attitudes are basically learned over the years, some inherited characteristics do affect such attitudes.
4. In social settings, we can judge a person's attitude easily in the sense that we either like or dislike a given attitude. However, at work, it is more difficult to measure the attitude of workers towards work.
5. Having an attitude implies the existence of an object towards which an attitude is required. A value, however, is an ideal to which the individual subscribes; it represents a basic conviction that a specific mode of conduct is preferable (in a personal or social sense) to any other, and it is relatively stable and enduring (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach 1989).

*******GOOD-LUCK*******