

Attitudes, Personality and Organizational Behavior

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ABSTRACT: An interesting topic, often approached in scientific studies and followed insistently by the human resources departments of large companies is represented by the relationship between attitudes, personality and organizational behavior. Given that personality means diversity and is determined by both genetic factors and the individual's past learning, we can argue that during the process of gaining experience, with age, personality is susceptible to change which leads to changes in attitude and organizational behavior. In general, the sociological approach to attitude relates to social values. Psychological points of view investigate attitudes according to certain aspects of the personality: motivation, emotional states, cognition or behavioral dispositions. It is well known that attitudes precede behaviors. Of interest to those who lead groups is to know to what extent attitudes foreshadow behaviors and what is the connection between motivation, attitude and behavior. Regarding the organizational behavior, we are especially interested in the attitude towards work, respectively the satisfaction of the employees and the connection between it and the organizational performance.

KEYWORDS: personality, attitudes, organizational behavior, employees, change

Introduction

People enter groups and organizations with specific characteristics that influence their behaviors, the most obvious of which are personality, perception and attitude.

These characteristics are intact when the individual enters the organization and for the most part, the organization cannot alter them. However, they have a real impact on the individual's behavior.

At an individual level, managers and employees need to learn how to work with people who may be different from themselves in a variety of dimensions, including personality, perception, values, and attitudes. Each individual in turn has different levels of job satisfaction and motivation, which affects the way managers manage human resources (Langton, Robbins and Judge 2010, 12-13).

Communication studies in the late 1950s have speculated that people are trying to find information that is on the same wavelength as their attitudes and that they reject messages that conflict with them

More recent studies show that people are looking for information that is relevant to them, and not because it strengthens their beliefs (Gregory 2009, 114). In this sense, we can say that attitudinal processes include both cognitive aspects (perceptions and thinking) and affective aspects (emotions and feelings).

The behavior-attitude connection

In interpersonal relationships, attitudes can include positive connotations - of closeness or negative connotations - of antipathy or contempt. Attitudinal consistency can be explained by the consistency of individuals to remain in the paradigm of their own set of values and beliefs. Often, people's attitudes seem to be just an expression of their stereotypes. However, attitudes are the cognitive and affective approach able to ensure the behavioral coherence of each personality (Stanciu and Ionescu 2007, 9-10).

Attitudes are formed in the communication process; the mutual influence of individuals from an attitudinal point of view is also mediated by communication. The most relevant psychic element of an attitude is the motivational-emotional one. Attitude (Pânzaru 2010, 16): "*is a*

relatively stable emotional tendency towards a consistent response to a specific object, situation, person, or human category. Attitudes involve emotions directed at specific targets (for example, if a person wants to express his attitude towards his boss, he will say that he likes them or not). Attitudes are relatively stable; of course, some attitudes are less strong than others and as a result more open to change.”

By attitude, Boncu means: “*an internal disposition of the individual, which underlies his perception and his reactions to an object or stimulus*”, while Gordon W. Allport considers that: “*an attitude is a state of mental and neural preparation, organized by experience, which exerts a directing or dynamizing influence on the individual response to all objects and situations with which it is related*” (Boncu 2003, 125).

Attitudes cannot be directly observed and measured; they are the manifest of mental states through verbal behavior, actions, etc. They are formed through learning, being accumulated through single, and multiple, direct or mediated experiences. In addition, attitudes influence and guide behavior.

Regarding the internal structure of attitudes, most specialists agree with the triadic model. It involves the following elements: affective (emotions, feelings and associated physiological reactions), cognitive (knowledge about the object of attitude and its properties) and behavioral (intentionality of action). In addition to the properties of orientation and intensity, attitudes also have the property of centrality which refers to the position of some in relation to others. If attitudes are central, they are harder to change (Stanciu and Ionescu 2007, 10-11).

Attitudes are influenced by values and are acquired from the same sources as values: friends, teachers, parents and role models. Attitudes focus on certain people or objects, while values have a more general focus and are much more stable than attitudes. “*Employees should be allowed to participate in decisions*” is a value; the positive or negative feeling towards the position held when participation is allowed is an attitude.

When it comes to work, attitudes can be towards supervision, payment, promotion or anything else that can attract positive or negative reactions. Employee satisfaction and attitudes are one of the key areas in which the effectiveness of an organization can be measured.

Attitudes at work influence the results of the organization, therefore there are also a number of methods that we can use to change employees' attitudes. Formally defined, an attitude is a predisposition to respond in a positive or negative way to someone or something in a certain context. For example, when we say that we “like” or “dislike” someone or something, we express an attitude. It is important to remember that an attitude, like a value, is a hypothetical creation, which simply exists, cannot be seen, touched or isolated by anyone else. Rather, attitudes are things deduced from what people say in an informal or formal way (through polls) or from behavior (Schermerhorn Jr., Hunt, Osborn 2011, 29-30).

The behavior-attitude connection is also influenced by contingency: the time that elapses between the moment of attitude formation and the moment when we can observe a behavior. The shorter the time between when the attitude is measured and when the behavior can be observed, the greater the coherence between the two, the more accurate the prediction will be.

Even if attitudes do not always predict behavior, the connection between attitudes and potential or intentional behavior is important for managers to understand. If we think about conversations or what we hear about negative attitudes towards work, we must know that they often turn into increased work expenses, absenteeism, lack of punctuality and even illness. It is the responsibility of managers to recognize attitudes and to understand their background and implications.

Attitude change

Attitudinal change can be explained by the stimulus-response theory of reinforcement; between the stimulus and the response, the processes of attention, understanding and acceptance are interposed. As a result, the answer calls for a change in attitude. Attitudes change if “*the stimulus*

for a new response is stronger than the stimulus for the old response” (Chelcea 2000, 77). We can say that the attitude change is influenced by the attractiveness of the source transmitting a message, the message factors and the social context.

Studies of whether attitudes can anticipate behaviors have the most contradictory results. Some have shown that there is a censorship between attitude and behavior, in the sense that people do one thing and say another. In other words, there is a discontinuity between attitude and behavior. Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein (Ajzen and Fishbein 2010, 99-101) showed that: *“attitude and behavior are made explicit by the relationship between their component elements: the object of attitude, action (manipulation of the object), time and context”*.

Davidson and Jaccard (Davidson and Jaccard 1979 (1364-1376), 1371) argue that behavioral predictions can be made if attitude is measured at a specific level and not globally. That forecast also depends on the time period between measuring attitude and producing behavior (if the interval is shorter, the prediction is better). In addition to attitude, there are other factors that announce the behavior: the intensity of the situational constraint, the pressure of peers and the degree of repeatability of situations.

Sharp attitudes announce immediate, clear, predictable and explicit behaviors. Hesitant or pluri-valent attitudes cannot be translated into behavioral predictions. On the other hand, the individual experience prior to a subject, known to the observer-manager, allows him to anticipate the behavior of the subordinate, by repetition, especially if there was a reward for the same behavior.

Regarding the organizational behavior, we are especially interested in the attitude towards work, respectively the employee satisfaction and the connection between it and the organizational performance. It is not always easy to change a person's attitude towards work.

Attitudes towards work are only one component of a person's attitude structure. They can be linked and correlated with several other attitudes, which makes it difficult for managers to change employees' feelings and actions.

However, attitudes and job satisfaction can change and sometimes this happens quickly. Employees who are happy and productive may become less satisfied and dissatisfied as a result of managerial action. This is one of the reasons why many organizations pay special attention to attitudes and regularly conduct attitude surveys among employees.

The hope of managers is that by evaluating the attitudes of employees, valuable information is obtained about the effectiveness of different management strategies.

Attitude stability varies dramatically and depends on the individual, attitude and context. Evidence shows that when people are placed in a different social context, their attitudes can change completely. For example, the attitude of some union employees in a company was anti-management, but when some were promoted to managerial positions their attitudes became pro-managerial. At one point, restructuring took place and some of the last promoted returned to their original positions. At the same time, their attitudes have also changed, becoming anti-managerial.

There are also attitudes that are very stable over time, regardless of the situation. A study that assessed how employees perceive certain characteristics of the job such as autonomy, variety, feedback, found that these attitudes were remarkably stable. Emotional reactions related to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the supervisor were not stable and varied from employee to employee. As a general rule, it can be said that attitudes are more stable than emotions.

About attitude and personality

By attitude at work, says Stanciu (Stanciu and Ionescu 2007, 14-15), we refer to the way an individual reacts to the typical situations described by a task. Personality as a whole rarely provides clues to performance potential, but it is recognized that proactive attitudes toward work lead to high levels of performance. However, among the personality traits, conscientiousness and the need for self-improvement through learning are clear indications that announce performance and ensure job satisfaction.

If someone considers that learning is something native, he/she will evade improvement, avoid studying and resign himself/herself to a mediocre professional condition. For those who believe that “*success is learned*” it is a joy to see that the effort of diligent study brings them professional satisfaction, increased self-esteem and fulfillment of the need for growth.

Learning when others do not is a testament to perseverance and self-esteem. It translates into perseverance at work and results in a remarkable attitudinal and behavioral balance. “*In the category of personality traits that can foreshadow the attitude towards work, there is also loyalty, an expression of prosocial behavior. In the consciousness of many people, loyalty and fidelity are personality traits as important as competence*” (Stanciu and Ionescu 2007, 14-15).

There is a complex link between personality and performance and it has been shown that personality has a direct influence on leadership skills and style, team performance and organizational efficiency in general.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can state the following: knowledge of personality traits involved in carrying out work activities is necessary to establish the agreement between man and work, to determine the extent to which the individual responds to work demands, but also the consequences of their deviations from norms.

Professional success involves a number of personality traits of the individual, communication styles, types of interaction and the type of organizational behavior approached, all of which make their mark on his/her performance and productivity at work (Pipaș 2013, (1393-1401), 1401).

The problem of personality, attitude and organizational behavior is of great importance in modern organizations, being appreciated empirically as essential for the social and professional performance of an individual.

21st century managers no longer form subordinate executors, but a team of personalities and attitudes with various autonomous skills, who fully manifest their own personality, who want to take on new responsibilities and who want and can make easy decisions for the organization even and in the most risky situations.

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