
UNIT 16 MODELS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES*

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16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the different models of organisational behaviour; and
- Understand the challenges and opportunities associated with the models.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Models help us understand complex things and ideas in an easy and simple manner. Organisational Behavioural models are frameworks that explain why people, individually and in groups, behave the way they do while working in an organisation. Organisational Behavioural models help to predict the actions, and reactions to stimuli, of individuals, dyads and teams in an organisational setting.

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16.2 ORGANISATIONAL SUB-SYSTEMS

An organisational system consists of three sub systems: People, Technology and Structure. The people subsystem consists of elements like individuals, dyads and groups. Individuals carry out the tasks that are necessary to attain organisational objectives. While they do so, they interact with their superiors (superior-subordinate relationship) and with other members in their workgroups. Technology subsystem provides the mechanism to convert inputs into outputs (products and/or services). Structure defines how the organisation is set up in terms of hierarchies, jobs, reporting lines etc.

16.3 S - R MODEL (STIMULUS - RESPONSE MODEL)

The S - R model is attributable to Russian psychologist, Ivan Pavlov who proposed the Classical Conditioning theory. Classical conditioning causes a response to be attached to a stimulus that did not induce the same response before conditioning. There are four key terms associated with Classical Conditioning: Unconditioned Stimulus (US), Unconditioned Response (UR), Conditioned Stimulus (CS) and Conditioned Response (CR).

Unconditioned stimulus (US) unconditionally and automatically triggers a natural response, by default. The response that gets triggered when Unconditioned Stimulus is introduced is called Unconditioned response (UR). Conditioned stimulus (CS) is initially a neutral stimulus and hence does not trigger the desired response initially, but after conditioning takes place it triggers a Conditioned Response (CR).

Pavlov noticed that the dog that he used in his experiment used to salivate when presented with food. Here, presenting food is the unconditioned stimulus and salivating is the natural response to it (the unconditioned response). This is something that need not be taught to the dog; it occurred naturally to him. Pavlov subsequently noticed that the dog associated his assistant with the food, and that it began to salivate as soon it heard the footsteps of the assistant. Pavlov instantly recognised the power of this discovery and tried to confirm it with the use of another neutral stimulus (ringing a bell). Ringing a bell can be considered a neutral stimulus in the context of this experiment, as ringing the bell, by itself, cannot induce salivation. Pavlov then made it a practice to ring the bell while feeding the dog. Over a course of time, the dog started salivating as soon as it hears the bell, even if food was not presented. This was a conditioned response. This discovery later got developed into classical conditioning theory.

The conditioned response can be made extinct as well, by breaking the association. When the bell was rung a large number of times without presenting food, the association got broken and the dog stopped salivating when the bell was sounded.

In an organisational setting, for example, motivating an employee can be used as a method to elicit a desired outcome (say, making an employee put in extra effort to attain perfection in a particular task) from him. In this case, 'motivation' is the stimulus and 'Putting in extra effort' is the response.

16.4 R - S MODEL (RESPONSE - STIMULUS MODEL)

R - S model is based on Operant conditioning theory proposed by American Psychologist, B.F. Skinner. Operant conditioning occurs through rewards and punishments for behaviour, when a person makes an association between a particular behaviour and a consequence. According to Oxford dictionary, the word 'operant' means 'involving the modification of behaviour by the reinforcing or inhibiting effect of its own consequences.' This model is based on principles of 'Hedonism', according to which, pursuit of pleasure is the most important objective of humans. It is the net pleasure (Pleasure minus Pain) that humans try to maximise. This being so, it follows that desirable behaviour can be elicited in an organisational setting by increasing 'pleasure' or reducing 'pain' as a reward for exhibiting behaviour that the organisation wants. According to Skinner, it is not only the 'cause' that matters, but the 'consequences' too. Behaviour that has pleasant consequences is likely to be exhibited over and over again. Skinner called this the 'reinforcement' of behaviour. Conversely, if the consequences are unpleasant, it is not very likely that the behaviour will be exhibited repeatedly. Thus, consequences can be a 'reinforcer' or 'punisher'. Consequences that are neither reinforcers nor punishers do not affect the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated, and are hence termed 'neutral operants'.

An example from an organisational setting would be one in which the superior rewards an employee with permission to leave the workplace one hour earlier than usual, if the products produced by him during the day is of sublime quality. This will work as an inducement for the employee to produce excellent quality products, and he is likely to strive for it every day. Thus, 'permission to leave one hour earlier' is a 'reinforcer' as it leads to repetition of desirable behaviour.

On the other hand, a superior who has the habit of allotting extra work to employees who finish their already allotted work ahead of schedule, will cause the employees to work slowly, because the employees will learn from experience that working fast has an unpleasant consequence. However, punishments can bring out desirable behaviour too. For example, if shabby work is punished with say, a reduction in perks, employees are more likely to do a decent job. In a similar manner, reduction in unpleasant consequences can also draw out desirable behaviour.

16.5 ABC MODEL

ABC model combines the features of S - R and R - S models by using three constructs, Antecedents, Behaviours and Consequences. Antecedent is that which takes place before the behaviour is exhibited. Antecedent is the action or circumstances that trigger the behaviour. Consequence is the response that follows the behaviour. As per the ABC model it is the consequences that 'maintain' the behaviour.

An antecedent (A) is a cue or a signal that stimulates an individual to perform a particular behaviour. Behaviour (B) itself is of two types, 'Reflexive' and 'Operant'. Reflexive behaviour is involuntary and it comes naturally without

the need for learning it. For example, we get startled when we hear a loud sound when we are not expecting it. Operant behaviours are voluntary and are learnt through operant conditioning. Consequences (C) immediately follow behaviour.

16.6 S - O - R MODEL

S-O-R model consists of stimulus as an independent variable, organism as mediator, and response as the dependent variable. According to Robert Woodworth, who is credited with coining the expression Stimulus-Organism-Response, the response to a stimulus depends on the emotional and mental state of the organism. Thus 'Organism' mediates the relationship between stimulus and response. Same stimulus can bring out different responses in different individuals. Similarly, same stimulus can bring out different responses even in the same individual under different mental states of the individual.

For example, in an organisational setting, since no two individuals are alike, different employees will desire different rewards. A reward, which is very much valued by one employee, may not be that desirable for another employee. Similarly, a mode of punishment which is very much dreaded by one employee may not be a frightful one for another employee. For example, an employee might be very pleased if he is given a new challenging job role with more responsibilities as a reward for performing excellently in his present job role. However, another employee who prefers routine jobs and hates to shoulder responsibilities might not only not like the reward, but may actually see it as a punishment. This, of course, is an extreme example. However, even when all employees share a common view as to whether a certain intervention is a reward or a punishment, the degree to which they desire it or despise it will invariably differ from one employee to another.

An example for differing reactions to punishment is one where an employee is transferred to an office at a distant place in the country as a means of punishment. An employee who has family commitments at the present place of posting will certainly find this punishment very disturbing, whereas a bachelor, or for that matter any employee, who is not so bound to the present place of posting, will view the punishment as just a minor irritation.

Since the way in which the reward or the punishment is perceived is different for different employees, the responses are also likely to be different. This is the core aspect of S - O -R model.

It is also likely that the same individual may respond differently to the same stimulus under different circumstances (mental/emotional state). For example, an employee who would usually value 'recognition' from his superior by way of a 'pat on the back' or a 'word of praise', may not care much on a day on which he is particularly disturbed due to some family issues.

16.7 S - O - B - C MODEL

S - O - B - C model is more comprehensive in that it incorporates factors from many other models. S stands for stimulus, O for Organism, B for Behaviour and C for Consequences. In some versions, S stands for Situation which has an

even wider scope than Stimulus. As per this model, the stimulus can be overt or covert. Similarly, even the behaviour and consequences too may be overt or covert.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain S-R and R-S models of the Organisational Behaviour.

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2. Discuss the features of S-O-R.

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16.8 SYSTEM MODEL

According to Ivan Pavlov, “it is clear to all that the animal organism is a highly complex system consisting of an almost infinite series of parts connected both with one another and, as a total complex, with the surrounding world, with which it is in a state of equilibrium”. It can easily be seen that the same is true with a modern day organisation as well.

According to Oxford dictionary, the word ‘system’ means “a set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network”. In this sense, an Organisation can also be called a ‘system’, since it is comprised of several units (including individuals) that work together to achieve a common goal. The organisational system has several subsystems within it. The way in which the subsystems/units are organised within the Organisational system determines the ‘structure’ of the organisation. In the formal organisational system (FOS), hierarchy, specialisation and division of labour are key elements. The organisation draws its objectives and its resources from the society. Individuals form a key element within the organisational system.

In the system model, an individual employee is not viewed in isolation; the model aims at integrating all employees into the organisational structure to utilise their expertise. Thus each employee will have a well defined role to play within the system. The management has to hold together the subsystems and individuals together and ensure that each unit is working in a manner which best contributes to the formal organisational system.

16.9 AUTOCRATIC, CUSTODIAL, SUPPORTIVE AND COLLEGIAL MODELS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The four models mentioned in Keith Davis's article, 'Evolving models of Organisational Behaviour' published in 1968 in 'The Academy of Management Journal' are Autocratic model, Custodial model, Supportive model and Collegial model. While models like S - R model, S - O - R model, S - O - B - C model etc relate to micro level behaviours connected with particular stimulus and response thereto, Autocratic, Custodial, Supportive and Collegial models describe the management style/orientation employed by the organisation.

16.9.1 Autocratic Model

In the autocratic model, the managers issues commands to the employees and extracts obedience in a ruthless manner. In an autocratic set up it is easy for management to exercise control over the activities within the organisation.

Opportunities

1. Autocratic model is very useful to get routine things done, especially if the manager is a taskmaster.
2. Autocratic model does get results, although moderate.
3. It is useful under certain extreme scenarios like organisational crisis, wars etc.
4. Even under normal circumstances, autocratic model cannot be written off completely. It can co-exist with other models to deliver optimum results.
5. There is a well-established line of control. Some inexperienced workers prefer to work in an organisation that has employed the autocratic model, as ambiguities are minimum in this model.
6. Autocratic model is the best model to deal with unmotivated and lasy workers.

Challenges

1. Those who are in charge should have the power to threaten (usually implicitly) the employees with dire consequences if they do not comply with orders. In the absence of such power, the model will fail.
2. Autocratic model envisages tight control of employees and is hence disliked by employees for obvious reasons.
3. The employees tend to be obedient, but they do not respect the manager much. Hence, although they deliver (minimum) performance, they do so reluctantly.
4. Most employees dislike being micro-managed. There are many employees who are skilled and are highly motivated to work even without being directed. Such employees may lose their morale and motivation when

autocratic model is employed. Management may find it difficult to get cooperation from these employees.

5. One-way communication from superiors to subordinates is an essential feature of autocratic model. This one-way channel prevents employees from providing feedback to the management. Thus it can lead to a situation where those at the top get cut off from the ground realities in the organisation.
6. Employees are forced to obey when they do not want to obey. This can frustrate the employees, and the pent up frustrations can explode at inopportune moments costing the organisation dearly.
7. Even when the frustrations are kept under wraps by the employees for fear of being rebuked, they might try to find out ways to do harm to the supervisor/organisation stealthily.

16.9.2 Custodial Model

The custodial model emerged as an improvement over the autocratic model, given the drawbacks of the latter. Custodial model envisages dependence of employees on the organisation instead of on the manager. Under the model, the organisation provides benefits that go beyond mere sustenance.

Opportunities

1. The employees of an organisation which employs the custodial model are better off than the employees working in an autocratic organisation, and are hence more satisfied and at peace.
2. Studies have shown that those organisations which shifted from autocratic model to custodial model experienced better results like less attrition, less absenteeism, less healthcare costs etc.
3. Custodial model is an improvement upon the autocratic model. An organisation that employs the custodial model can consider it a base from which to further improve its practices.

Challenges

1. In the custodial model, the employees become somewhat satisfied with the inducements provided, but are not motivated enough to perform at the maximum potential. At best, one can expect only 'passive cooperation' from such employees.
2. Not only are the employees not motivated to improve their capacities, they do not even perform, usually, at their full capacity.
3. Organisations which do not have the economic resources at their disposal to provide benefits envisaged under Custodial model cannot employ the model.
4. Employees become too much dependent on the organisation that they could not leave the organisation even when they want to quit. This can lead to a situation where the employee continues with the employer reluctantly with less than optimum results for the organisation.

16.9.3 Supportive model

Supportive model is one in which good leadership takes the place of monetary rewards as the main motivator. It provides the employees with an environment in which their capabilities will be nurtured in the interests of the individual and the organisation. It is assumed that, given the right kind of support, employees will perform well without being micro-managed.

Opportunities

1. Supportive model envisages an organisation as a social system and the worker as the most important element in it. This understanding paves the way for better utilisation of human capabilities.
2. The supportive model views a worker as a complex personality (rather than as a simple, undemanding, easily replaceable tool) and arranges an environment to help the employees develop. This works in favour of both the employee and the organisation.
3. 'Status' and 'recognition' needs of employees working in organisations that employ supportive model will be met and hence they are likely to become more motivated to work.
4. The custodial model requires substantially more money than the autocratic model. However, by contrast, the difference between supportive model and custodial model is more in terms of culture than in terms of money required to implement the model. Hence, resources available at the organisation's disposal is not a constraint for employing supportive model.

Challenges

1. A perfect supportive model is likely to exist only in theory. It is not very easy to put theory into practice.
2. Satisfaction of self-esteem needs, which is possible in supportive model, though a sought after benefit in rich countries, may not be of much value in a developing country, as the employees in a developing nation who might be having only a hand to mouth existence, may not be concerned much about ideas like 'self esteem'.

16.9.4 Collegial model

The dictionary meaning of the word 'collegial' is 'relating to or involving shared responsibility, as among a group of colleagues'. In the collegial model everybody in the organisation work as a team. Manager is more of a coach, than a boss. It is the performance of the team that matters, not that of the individual or the coach.

Opportunities

1. Collegial model works very well in environments like that of research laboratories that are characterised by unprogrammed intellectual work.
2. The managers create an atmosphere of partnership and hence the employees feel wanted and useful. This motivates the employees to a very great extent.

3. The employees view the managers as joint contributors and not as a superior. Since they feel that there is no one to impose discipline from the top, they resort to 'self-discipline', which can do wonders on the productivity front.

Challenges

1. Collegial model can be used only where its usage is appropriate. For example, it is not suitable in an inflexible environment like that of an assembly line.
2. Managers cannot be complacent that collegial model is the best and cannot be surpassed. It is certainly not true. As insights into human behaviour gets deeper and deeper, newer and newer models will get evolved.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What are the opportunities and challenges associated with autocratic and custodial models?

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2. Discuss supportive and collegial models of Organisational Behaviour.

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16.10 CONCLUSION

Knowledge about S - R model, R - S model, ABC model, S - O - R model and S - O - B - C model etc help to predict and manipulate the responses of various players in an organisation to conditioned and unconditioned stimulus. It also tells us about the variables that might moderate the relationship between stimulus and response.

Knowledge about human behaviour is increasing as days pass, and hence we need newer Organisational Behaviour models to use this new knowledge. Thus, autocratic model evolved into custodial model which in turn developed to supportive model and eventually to collegial model. A model a manager believes in will guide his managerial actions within the organisation. Since his managerial actions will have a direct bearing on the well being and productivity of his subordinates, study about organisational behaviour models has tremendous practical utility as well.

It is not possible, neither desirable, to reach to a conclusion as to which the best model is. It depends on the circumstances, the type of organisation, type of task to be accomplished, current level of need-satisfaction of employees etc. The models in the order of their evolution (autocratic, custodial, supportive and collegial) closely correspond to different levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Autocratic model satisfies the physiological needs of employees, while it does not provide adequate overall security. It caters to the bare minimum sustenance needs alone. Custodial model emerged in response to this shortcoming. It fulfills the security needs of employees. Supportive model goes one step further to satisfy the self-esteem needs while collegial model aims at the satisfaction of self-actualisation needs.

The fact that one model is employed, does not automatically mean that other models are shunned. Quite often, different models co-exist in the same organisation at the same time. A point worth noting is that models have evolved to become more democratic and employee friendly.

16.11 GLOSSARY

- Collegial** : This term related to relationship between employees in the organisation or people who work together. It denotes the shared responsibility in the organisational set up.
- Operant Conditioning** : Operant conditioning is a learning process through which the strength of a behavior is modified by reinforcement or punishment. It is also a procedure that is used to bring about such learning.

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16.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- S-R is called as a Stimulus - Response Model.
- It is based on the Classical Conditioning Theory.
- Ivan Pavlov who proposed the Classical Conditioning theory.
- It causes a response to be attached to a stimulus that did not induce the same response before conditioning.
- R-S is called as a Response - Stimulus Model.
- This model is based on Operant conditioning theory.
- It is proposed by American Psychologist, B.F. Skinner.
- Operant conditioning occurs through rewards and punishments for behaviour, when a person makes an association between a particular behaviour and a consequence.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- It is called as a Stimulus-Operant-Response Model.
- It consists of stimulus as an independent variable, organism as mediator, and response as the dependent variable.
- The stimulus depends on the emotional and mental state of the organism. The same stimulus can bring out different responses even in the same individual under different mental states of the individual.
- The way in which the reward or the punishment is perceived is different for different employees, the responses are also likely to be different.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Autocratic model, the managers' issues command to the employees and extracts obedience in a ruthless manner.
- Custodial model emerged as an improvement over the autocratic model, given the drawbacks of the latter.
- Challenges and opportunities of autocratic model and custodial model.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Supportive model is one in which good leadership takes the place of monetary rewards as the main motivator.

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- It envisages an organisation as a social system and the worker as the most important element.
- It views a worker as a complex personality.
- The collegial model is related to or involving shared responsibility, as among a group of colleagues.
- In this model organisation work as a team. Manager is more of a coach, than a boss.
- It works very well in environments like that of research laboratories that are characterised by unprogrammed intellectual work.
- This model can be used only where its usage is appropriate. For example, it is not suitable in an inflexible environment like that of an assembly line.



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