PETER P. DAWSON

FUNDAMENTALS OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

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In loving memory of

Thomas Charles Dawson

PREFACE

In their Managerial Grid, Blake and Mouton define the most effective manager as one who has maximum concern for both production and people. They state that such managers use a "Team Management" style, described below:

> Work accomplishment is from committed people; interdependence through a "common stake" in organization purpose leads to relationships of trust and respect.*

A primary thesis of this text is that several psychological barriers must be overcome before a student of management is able to achieve a team management style. These barriers consist of the following beliefs, which are held as truths by many individuals:

- That their heredity and socialization somehow make them inherently superior to others who may be different.
- That they can directly motivate employees by using some standardized system.
- That what they perceive is reality.
- That there are a limited number of fixed personality types, and that individuals can be classified by type. Once all individuals of the same type are so classified, their behavior can be predicted.

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*Robert R. Blake and Jane Srygley Mouton, *The New Managerial Grid* (Houston, Tex: Gulf Publishing Company, 1978), p. 11.

- That their communications skills are good and need little improvement.
- That leadership success will result from their ability to systematically manipulate a small number of crucial variables such that the task is achieved and the employees are satisfied.
- That team management is not feasible in the competitive "win-lose" real world because those with power and status, who can tolerate the stress, resolve conflicts by overcoming the opposition.
- That they can—alone—solve problems and make decisions more effectively and efficiently than a managerial work group can.

Before those who hold to one or more of the preceding beliefs can exploit the advantages of team management, they must make significant changes in their attitudes and behavior. Such changes take place only after some upending experience causes them to make an agonizing reappraisal of their psychological status quo. This text is based on the contention that, until these basic psychological changes are made, the organizational behavior concepts, systems, and models developed through research tend to be used ineffectively.

The delay in adopting the Quality Circle (Chapter 6) concept in the United States is an excellent example of progress being hindered by psychological barriers. In the 1950s Rensis Likert presented American management with all the ingredients necessary to develop Quality Circles, but his work was generally ignored or at best given lip service. It was not until the upending experience of severe Japanese competition in the 1970s that American management belatedly began giving Likert's work the consideration it deserved.

Each chapter of this text has been designed to address one of the cited barriers in four ways. First, the student is exposed to just enough basic theory so that he or she can benefit from experiential exercises. Second, participation in a series of experiential exercises provides the learner with upending experiences, thereby making the need for change more apparent. Third, learners become involved in small group discussions in which they exchange disclosures and feedback as a means of verifying their new perceptions. Fourth, learners have an opportunity to experiment with changed behaviors in the real world environment.

Throughout the text certain common themes are presented. Among the more important are:

- Self-awareness is essential to good management, and the ability to gather and use feedback properly is the key to becoming aware of one's self.
- Each individual is a unique person with unique needs, and some unique combination of each person's feelings and logic will determine the behavior that best meets his or her needs.

- Human perception is so faulty that the development of mature perception checking skills is crucial to management success.
- Personality is not a fixed quality, but rather a set of habitual attitudes and behaviors that are unique to each individual and that are subject to change at any time the person so desires.
- Good communications are *never* permanently attained. They can be achieved only on a day-to-day basis by continuous effort.
- In any given management situation, there are a multitude of human and task variables over which the manager has only partial control. Available leadership theories and models address so few of these variables that they are not often useful in practice. The successful manager in any specific situation is the one who is able to appropriately address the right set of variables at the right time.
- Power, status, conflict, and stress, if not abused, can be productively utilized in team management.
- Productive management teams are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of work groups. Therefore, team members have a healthy respect for individual effort at times when it can be more effective than that of the group.

Custom-produced versions of this text have been used by several instructors as a tool to exploit the advantages of experiential learning in their introductory level organizational behavior classes. These instructors are in general agreement that the method requires so much personal involvement on the part of the learners that they become highly motivated to participate. While a few students are too shy to feel comfortable with the approach, the majority look at an experiential learning session as an exciting oasis in a desert of lectures, case studies, and quantitative problems. The excitement generated by experiential methods is a boon not only to college professors, but also to organization development seminar leaders whose success hinges on holding the interest of seasoned managers.

For the teacher who is using the experiential approach for the first time, some adjustments have to be made. The two most significant are as follows:

1. Classroom exercises must be well planned before the class session.
2. Instructor activity in the classroom must be reduced as the students take responsibility for their own learning.

It is not unlike shifting from autocratic to participative management.

During the writing of the text, special attention was paid to meeting the needs of both the teacher and the learner. The assumption was made that, to meet these needs, the text must: hold the interest of the learner, contain material that is relevant to the prac-

tice of management, provide for a supportive learning environ-
ment, and support a course of instruction that is consistent with the
workload and time constraints of both the learner and the teacher.

Another goal of the text design was to systematically present
the concepts, exercises, discussion topics, and behavioral experi-
ments such that they represent sequential building blocks to the
learners. Obviously, it is not possible to meet the needs of all teach-
ers in this regard. Therefore, an attempt has been made to design
each chapter so that it can stand alone and be presented in any
order desired by the teacher. The degree of success attained in this
attempt will depend on the individual needs of each teacher. Com-
promises had to be faced in an effort to meet the following goals:

1. Design of a text that would provide the conceptual material
   needed to support the exercises and experiments.
2. Inclusion of sufficient useful exercises and experiments so
   that teachers and/or students would have a choice.
3. Keeping the reading burden and the cost of the text at a rea-
   sonable level.

To accommodate the latter two goals, it was necessary to limit the
theoretical concepts to those needed for a basic understanding of
organizational behavior. Several instructors have found the mate-
rial adequate for a lower level introductory organizational behavior
course, but teachers who require a more extensive theoretical cov-
erage will want to supplement this text with an in-depth theory or
readings book.

The behavioral experiments contained in this text are pre-
sented in a standardized workbook format on perforated pages.
This was done to give the students specific guidance, to ease the
removal of sheets for submission to the teacher, and to make evalu-
ation of the experiment reports less of a burden to the teacher.

Since several self-awareness instruments and exercises have
been included in the text, it is important that users understand the
nature and purpose of these instruments. The validity of such de-
vices is always a matter of controversy because research efforts to
establish validity usually contain value judgments, and findings
based on statistical inference do not guarantee validity for any one
person. Therefore, the results should not be taken as gospel by any
single individual. Nevertheless, these instruments and exercises
are excellent learning tools because they provide valuable clues
regarding one's behavior and attitudes. Students should be encour-
aged to give careful consideration to each instrument result that
seems contrary to their own self-perceptions. Every such finding
should be made the subject of self-analysis and peer feedback be-
fore it is accepted or rejected.

In the text the reader will find some original concepts, as well
as some new combinations of the findings of recognized au-
thorities. Such portions of the text reflect the synergistic impact of
over twenty years practical managerial experience on a teacher of
organization behavior. It is from this experience that the examples

given in this text were drawn. Each example has a historical background of the composite lives of several human beings I have known. In like fashion, the examples involving minorities and women are real. I have known a Jorge Garcia (Chapter 2) and have been introduced to his proud father Juan at graduation. I have also counseled several Elwood Howells (Chapter 3) as they struggle to reach the mainstream of the American life style, and I have advised the Maggie Briggses (Chapter 7) as they try to cope with the problems of being a minority born in the mainstream. I believe it is important that students of management face the feelings and controversy that such examples foster, and try to solve the problems involved. I have attempted to present these issues with realism and dignity, and have cleared the examples with an affirmative action professional.

One of the major problems facing the author of a book such as this is the proper accrediting of the original source of each exercise and experiment used. Many of these learning devices have been informally passed from teacher to student and from colleague to colleague for many years. Also, they have been revised and adapted in so many different ways that they scarcely resemble the original. I have tried my best to identify and accredit the original source of each nonoriginal part of the book as it was my intention to give credit to everyone who has contributed to the contents of this text. If errors have been made, correction is solicited.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the many scholars who have granted me permission to use their creative work. I must single out Stephen C. Iman, Roy Lewicki, Glenda Morris, and June Dawson for their assistance and suggestions for improvement of the text. My thanks also to Della Welch, Susan W. Whitcomb and John P. Faris for their helpful reviews of the original manuscript. In addition to the above mentioned scholars, I want to acknowledge that the content and format of this text were greatly influenced by helpful feedback from my students. Finally, my sincere appreciation is extended to Della Myers for her preliminary art work, and to Gloria Dittmer and Alice Holloway for their editorial and stenographic support.

Peter P. Dawson

CONTENTS

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It takes courage to be your own person. Most of us are merely marionettes dangling from invisible strings that are held by people and events in our past.

SOCIALIZATION AND LEARNING

Theoretical Concepts

INTRODUCTION   Two of the common assumptions made by managers are that human beings can be categorized into specific groups and that the way members of a given group will behave can be predicted.

Individuals and groups do have common traits, but often managers make poor decisions because they concentrate on this commonality. The central theme of this text is to emphasize the uniqueness of the individual and thereby better equip managers to perform their primary task of "getting things done through other people."

There is considerable evidence that each individual has a unique heredity and socialization. The outcome is a person who must be treated as an individual and whose behavior can be predicted only on an individual basis. The objectives of this chapter are:

1. to identify the roots of this individual uniqueness, roots found in one's heredity and socialization;
2. to show how unwanted attitudes and behavior resulting from heredity and socialization can be changed through learning; and

3. to demonstrate that organizational socialization has a significant impact on the new employee.

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The moment a new human being is conceived, the heredity die is cast. Some unique combination of genes passed down through the generations becomes fixed and will determine many characteristics of the child to be born approximately nine months later. While scientists agree that characteristics like race, color, and physical structure are obviously inherited, there is not agreement on such characteristics as intelligence, personality, nervous stability, or one's subconscious.

Carl G. Jung, a great pioneer in psychotherapy, believed that tendencies toward certain behaviors were caused by a subconscious that could be passed down through the generations.[1] Supporting Jung are the many instinctive behaviors found in human beings and lower animals. Would it be possible to teach an infant to express contentment by crying and discomfort with a smile? Female sea turtles bury their eggs in the warm sand and leave them to hatch. How then do baby turtles know that, as soon as they burst out of their eggs, they must crawl toward the sea? Obviously, the borderline between heredity and socialization is not well defined and is a source of disagreement among authorities.

The disagreement involves one key issue: How much of an individual's behavior is a result of heredity, and how much is the result of the person's socialization? In this context, *socialization* is defined as the combined impact of all elements of an individual's environment on that individual's behavior patterns. Even while still an embryo, the new child is deeply affected by its environment. A healthy 21-year-old female who carefully follows the prenatal advice of her physician has a much better chance of delivering a normal child than an ailing middle-aged mother who uses tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or drugs. Once born, the new human being encounters a unique series of environmental conditions that continue until he or she dies.

Even children in the same family are subject to different sets of conditions to which they must adjust.[2] Generally, a first child receives more attention and supervision than those who follow. As a result, he or she tends to be more serious, anxious, achievement-oriented, and willing to conform than his or her siblings. Middle children receive less parental attention and must learn to compromise with an older and bigger child. Consequently, they tend to be diplomatic, good at negotiating, more relaxed, and able to maintain better interpersonal relationships than the first born.

The last child is the family pet, often showered with love and just allowed to grow. Therefore, babies of the family tend to be charming, good companions, playful, and lighthearted. They believe someone will always care for them.

Each child has his or her own set of friends, teachers, role models, and experiences. Even identical twins behave differently due to the many different conditions that have an impact on them

[1]Carl G. Jung and others, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1964), pp. 75, 76.

[2]Lucille K. Foren with Henry Still, *The Birth Order Factor* (New York, N.Y.: David McKay Co., Inc. 1976), pp. 10–13.

³Behaviorists define learning as the process of making changes in one's attitudes and behaviors. The behaviorist thus believes (in contrast to the concept that learning is merely the storing of knowledge in one's brain) that one must change his or her attitude or behavior before learning takes place. One might ask the behaviorist what change of attitude or behavior occurs when one learns to speak and write a dead language such as Latin? A behaviorist would answer that the person who learns Latin has a changed attitude about the derivation of modern languages, will be more confident when discussing legal and medical terms, and will proudly translate mottos on crests and dates on cornerstones.

as individuals. To cope with these ever changing conditions, individuals change their attitudes and behaviors to best meet each person's perceived needs.³ Thus, unlike the impact of heredity that tends to be static, the impact of one's environment remains dynamic throughout life.

In summary, while most authorities agree that both heredity and environment greatly influence one's attitudes and behaviors, the question of which dominates remains unanswered. Fortunately, the answer to that question is not as important to the manager as the fact that heredity and environment combine to produce unique individuals, each with a unique set of attitudes and behaviors. In the next section of this chapter, the relationships between the factors that determine human behavior are integrated into a model of the behavioral process.

THE BEHAVIORAL MODEL

Figure 1–1 presents a model of the behavior process showing the relationship of heredity, socialization, and learning to behavior. To better understand the model, consider the case of Dick Bailey whose heredity gave him a big strong body (blocks 1 and 3) and probably calm nerves, native intelligence, and a competitive instinct (block 4).

Raised in a family of four boys whose father was a good athlete, Dick received positive reinforcement to excel at contact sports. Courage, cleverness, and toughness were rewarded. It was Dick's good fortune that he was a top athlete during his school years for which he also received much praise. Thus Dick's socialization (blocks 2, 4, and 5) led him to perceive that he was an important person, with a need to excel, expectations for immediate success, and an aggressive attitude. Dick believed his values and the situation to be ideal for him (block 6) to forge ahead in his chosen career of marketing.

Upon graduation from business school, Dick was very confident and highly motivated in his first job as a machine tool salesperson (block 7). He sold machine tools using the same aggressive tactics that led to his success as an athlete (block 8), but the results were disappointing. Apparently the harder he tried, the less success he had (block 9). The impact on Dick (block 10) was devastating. He became discouraged and asked his boss Jim Parker to accompany him on his next sales trip.

It did not take Jim long (block 11) to discover the problem. Dick was just too pushy in pursuing a sale. Jim asked Dick to let him do the selling for the rest of the day so that he could demonstrate how customers should be approached. Dick was amazed how passive the boss was. Jim carried on friendly conversations with secretaries while he waited patiently to see a potential customer. He merely explained the strengths and prices of the machine tools without ever putting pressure on the customer. Dick was also surprised to see how much both the customer and Jim knew about machine tools.
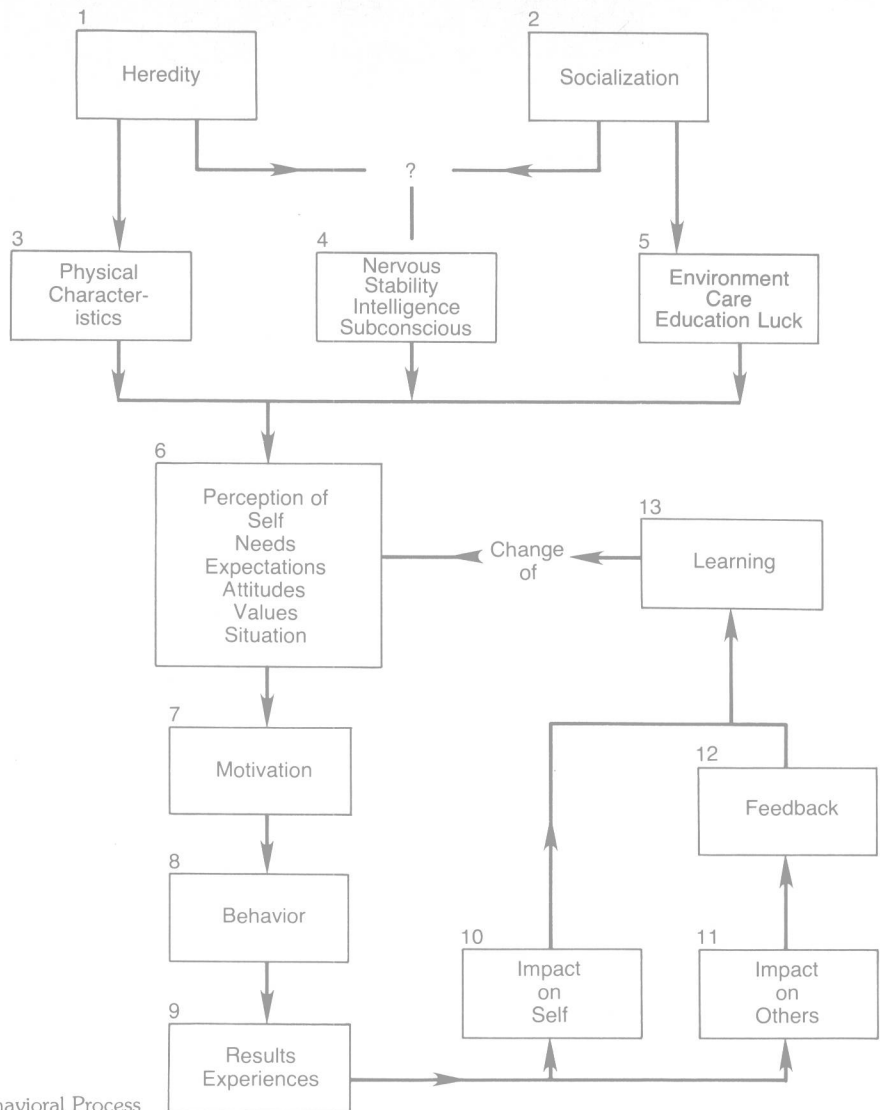
FIGURE 1–1. The Behavioral Process

When they got back to the office, Jim invited Dick to have a cup of coffee. As they drank their coffee, Jim gave Dick sound feedback (block 12) on how he could improve. Dick's brain was spinning from the day's experience. He told Jim that starting tomorrow there would be a changed Dick Bailey (block 13).

Being intelligent, Dick learned that it was necessary, first of all, to change his perceptions about himself (block 6). He was a sales trainee, not a superstar. The machine tool sales situation was one of keen competition. He therefore needed training and experience before he could expect to excel in sales. He needed a more customer-oriented attitude. This all led to different motivations (block 7) and behaviors (block 8) that would hopefully produce more favorable results (block 9).

There is little a student of management can do about the past, so each individual must live with his or her particular heredity and previous socialization (blocks 1 through 5). Nevertheless, the attitudes and behaviors resulting from heredity and socialization can be modified in most cases by learning. By performing successive

iterations (blocks 6 through 13) of the behavioral process model, individuals can learn the attitudes and behaviors needed to achieve their goals.

LEARNING THEORIES

While there are many separate theories of learning, all of them fall into one of two general classifications: *stimulus-response learning* and *cognitive learning*.

Stimulus-Response Learning. Early stimulus-response researchers, such as Thorndike[4] and Watson[5], found that, to learn, the learner had to receive some sort of reward and that, the more frequent and recent the behavior-reward cycle took place, the more likely the behavior would be repeated.

Skinner[6] extended the research in the stimulus-response area, developing what he calls *Operant Conditioning* learning theory. Skinner believes that all organisms will change their behavior (learn) to seek more satisfactory conditions or to avoid less satisfactory conditions. Skinner substantiated his theory by experimenting with naive subjects such as chickens and rodents. The *operant* (a naive subject like a chicken) was observed until it randomly performed a desired task (pecking a colored knob in a cage). When this occurred, a kernel of corn was dropped in the operant's food tray. After this sequence happened several times, the operant would learn the relationship between pecking the knob and being rewarded with a kernel of corn. When the chicken pecked the knob every time it wanted corn, the operant was said to have been *conditioned*. Similarly, if the operant behaved in an unwanted manner, such behavior could be extinguished by negative reinforcement. A more complex task can be taught by breaking it down into several small subtasks and conditioning the operant to perform the subtasks one at a time until the whole sequence is completed. Skinner also found that, once the operant was conditioned, the frequency of reinforcement could be reduced, but not totally discontinued. He concluded that random positive reinforcement of desired behavior was optimum.

Costello and Zalkind distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcers. *Intrinsic reinforcers* are the direct effect of the behavior. Relief of hunger by eating is an example of an intrinsic reinforcer. Intrinsic reinforcers are often beyond the control of the manager and thus not as useful to the manager as the extrinsic reinforcers. *Extrinsic reinforcers* are not directly related to the behavior. Instead, they are selected by the person in control to reward or punish the operant. Examples of extrinsic reinforcers selected by managers are pay raises, compliments, rewards, and the like.

Costello and Zalkind[7] found weaknesses in operant conditioning, especially in the use of negative reinforcement. Most extrinsic positive reinforcers are limited in supply and, even if available in abundance, often lose their effect if given too often. It is common knowledge among managers that costly across-the-board pay increases offer little incentive to workers. Another disadvantage of

[4]Edward L. Thorndike, *Animal Intelligence* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1911), p. 244.

[5]J. B. Watson and R. Raynor, "Conditioned Emotional Reactions," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3 (1920), 1–14.

[6]Robert D. Nye, *What is B. F. Skinner Really Saying?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), pp. 25–38.

[7]Timothy W. Costello and Sheldon S. Zalkind, *Psychology in Administration* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 214–15.