

A course in Organizational Behaviour

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Ever since I graduated from school, I have taken many different types of courses. Some were training courses for a summer job, and some were part of my curriculum in college. The ones that I found beneficial were numerous. However, instead of talking about a course that would only assist me in my field, I would like to talk about one that I will benefit from in both my personal and professional life.

The course was called **Organizational Behavior**. It was taught to us, the business program students, in our second year in college. The course is mainly about how employees in different types of organizations behave, why they behave as they do, and how to control their behavior in the future for the advantage of both the organization and the employees themselves.

There were various useful topics covered in this course. Amongst them were models of organizational behavior, leadership models, organizational change, and multicultural issues in the working environment.

Organizational behavior models and leadership models were quite similar. They both focused on how a leader or a manager treats his group of employees or whoever his followers are. He could have an autocratic style where he gives orders and expects obedience, he could have a supportive style where he provides all the support needed to the followers and makes them feel as one group, or he could use a collegial style where everyone is a part of one team working together for one goal.

Organizational change was another interesting topic in this course. It was all about changes that occur in organizations; what causes them, how to deal with them, resistance to change and how to implement changes successfully in organizations.

Another topic of great benefit was multiculturalism. Since our country is rapidly becoming a multicultural society I found the topic extremely useful. Various matters were covered such as parochialism, ethnocentrism, and culture shock. Different methods of overcoming some of these matters were studied and looked at.

Various techniques were used throughout the course. We used notes and books for some chapters, research projects for others, some physical activities for specific topics, and many exciting in-class competitions. For example, the class would use the course notes for some topics, read it together, and then have an open discussion. The teacher would use many examples from newspapers in relation to the topic. Another topic, organizational change in particular had a different approach. The students were given a whole independent week to work on a research project and learn about organizational change. After submission of the projects, the topic was covered in class briefly as everyone already had an idea about the goal. This approach was very useful as it helped students search for information themselves rather than having the instructor pushing the knowledge to them. In regards to physical activities, as an introduction to a topic about group decision making, the teacher divided the students into several groups and gave them a list of activities to do, including moving around the campus collecting some items. Each group arrived at a certain time and the lesson

started by pointing out how each group made their decisions which were analyzed later. Finally, in-class competitions were done at the end of the semester where students were divided into two separate groups competing on which can answer more questions with more accuracy. Those competitions were very exciting and helpful as they got students to all participate and take part instead of sitting and listening to a lecture.

In regards to the reason behind finding this course beneficial, I have many. I can simply say that each topic covered in the course will assist me in my future job and my personal life.

Let us start with leadership models. For the past two years in college, I always felt that I have the ability to lead my friends, whether it was in class with our studies or on our own time. I always wanted to be a great leader in my country who serves and sets a great example as a UAE national. Therefore, I can now use different organizational behavior or leadership styles in dealing with my friends or my colleagues in the future. I have tried using them since we have taken the course and it certainly was advantageous. Leaders can have many styles to use with their groups of colleagues or followers. After studying those different styles such as autocratic, participative, and free-reign for example, I had an idea on when to use each style and what kind of group to use it with. For instance, at some times I would emphasize the group's emotions more than production and vice versa. I gained a lot of information on when to apply each style, and I found it extremely effective.

The UAE is a developing country witnessing rapid growth day by day. That could be seen in detail in our city, Dubai. This is where organizational change steps in. Change is possible anywhere and at any time. Therefore, it is extremely essential to know why change occurs and how to successfully deal with it. This has helped me in my personal life in understanding people's behavior to any type of change and how to accept the change and help others do so. For instance, when the weekend system changed in the UAE in September 2006, the logical reaction took place and people around me seemed to resist the change and show some criticism. After seeing that, I tried linking it to the course and saw the similarities in the reasons leading to resistance, habits would step in here. I tried calming down those around me by explaining that changes are natural but dealing with them should be wise. In terms of my future job, I should expect to witness organizational change and some resistance from the employees. For that reason, it would be very useful to know how to control the change to your benefit.

Finally, the reason I feel multiculturalism will be of an advantage is mentioned above. We are living in a multicultural society where people from all around the world work with each other. Thus, knowing how each person thinks and interprets situations is incredibly helpful. It helps in treating each in an appropriate manner, and creating a positive environment where no one holds any grudge on another. Multiculturalism as mentioned above is about how people feel about their culture. Since the working environment in most sectors in our country is multicultural with employees from numerous nationalities. Therefore, I found it advantageous to know about this topic when I worked at different companies for internships. Whenever I interacted with any of my colleagues, I would mainly take into consideration what they might feel about our culture compared to theirs in order to avoid any offence. Additionally, I would try to enlighten them about our culture in order to break the barriers and have a healthier working environment.

In conclusion, I believe that this was one of the most useful and beneficial courses I have taken and advise all my friends who have not studied it to consider attending a course or at least reading about it.