CHAPTER 15

Basic Elements of Individual Behavior in Organizations

Summary of Learning Objectives and Key Points

1. Explain the nature of the individual-organization relationship.
   • A basic framework that can be used to facilitate this understanding is the psychological contract—the set of expectations held by people with respect to what they will contribute to the organization and what they expect to get in return.
   • Organizations strive to achieve an optimal person-job fit, but this process is complicated by the existence of individual differences.

2. Define personality and describe personality attributes that affect behavior in organizations.
   • Personality is the relatively stable set of psychological and behavioral attributes that distinguish one person from another.
   • The “Big Five” personality traits are:
     • agreeableness
     • conscientiousness
     • negative emotionality
     • extraversion
     • openness
The Myers-Briggs framework can also be a useful mechanism for understanding personality.

Other important traits are:

- locus of control
- self-efficacy
- authoritarianism
- Machiavellianism
- self-esteem
- risk propensity

Emotional intelligence, a fairly new concept, may provide additional insights into personality.

3. Discuss individual attitudes in organizations and how they affect behavior.

- Attitudes are based on emotion, knowledge, and intended behavior.

- Whereas personality is relatively stable, some attitudes can be formed and changed easily. Others are more constant.

- Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and organizational commitment are important work-related attitudes.

4. Describe basic perceptual processes and the role of attributions in organizations.

- Perception is the set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment.

- Basic perceptual processes include selective perception and stereotyping.
Perception and attribution are also closely related.

5. Discuss the causes and consequences of stress and describe how it can be managed.

- Stress is an individual’s response to a strong stimulus.
- The General Adaptation Syndrome outlines the basic stress process.
- Stress can be caused by task, physical, role, and interpersonal demands.
- Consequences of stress include organizational and individual outcomes, as well as burnout.
- Several things can be done to manage stress.

6. Describe creativity and its role in organizations.

- Creativity is the capacity to generate new ideas.
- Creative people tend to have certain profiles of background experiences, personal traits, and cognitive abilities.
- The creative process itself includes preparation, incubation, insight, and verification.

7. Explain how workplace behaviors can directly or indirectly influence organizational effectiveness.

- Workplace behavior is a pattern of action by the members of an organization that directly or indirectly influences organizational effectiveness.
- Performance behaviors are the set of work-related behaviors that the organization expects the individual to display to fulfill the psychological contract.
- Basic withdrawal behaviors are absenteeism and turnover.
- Organizational citizenship refers to behavior that makes a positive overall contribution to the organization.
- Dysfunctional behaviors can be very harmful to an organization.