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Why Do People Behave the Way as they Do: Factors Affecting Human Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The physical environment provides real time inputs to the human brain through sensing organs. Human being has very little control over them. Similarly physiological system has a constant effect, on the processing of input data, on which we do not have much control. Leaving aside the effect of those factors, for every stimulus, under certain environmental and physiological conditions, the psychological factors play most important role to control human behavior. Some of these factors are in built within ourselves- linked with our upbringing and learning process- and some are connected with our socio-economic conditions and work place. If we know these factors we may be able to predict, to some extent, the behavioral pattern of our bosses, peers and subordinates and our wives and children to make our life little easier. We may be able to visualize when to start and how to start a transaction to obtain the best result.

Keywords: Behavior, human, psychology, process, creation, information.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Have we ever thought why do we create different environment for different transaction? Most of us will say "that is the way to deal with people". But many of us would not be able to say why do we have these different approaches. The answer is to get positive behavioral response. However, in all these cases we are not sure about the desired behavioural response from the person dealt with, though we have taken all the necessary preparation to create the right environment. Again in all the three cases if we replace the persons dealt with keeping the environment and all other conditions same, then for the same input behavior will we get the same behavioral response? The answer is no, we cannot expect the same behavioral pattern from different people even under the same conditions. Even if we know the usual behavioural pattern of the person dealt with, he may not respond in the expected way. The success or failure of any transaction would depend on the proficiency of the person starting the transaction, his knowledge of the individual, mental condition of the individual at that moment and the environment of the transaction. Yet there remain a number of factors unknown, as such the behavioural response cannot always be predicted.

1.2   In fact human behaviour is very difficult to predict. Every human being behaves in a different way. Two different persons will behave differently under the same circumstances.
Even the same person may respond differently under the same apparent conditions at two
different times, leaving aside different behavioural pattern under different social, economic and environmental conditions. If so much unpredictable is the behavior of human being, then how do we deal with them? But, we need to interact with them, every moment, in our family, in our society and in our work place. Behavioural scientists also agree that human behavior is a complex subject and there is no "made easy" guide or solution to follow to be successful while dealing with subordinates, superiors or peers. However, they have identified certain factors – physiological, psychological, environmental, social, and economic and of course the input behaviour or stimulus - those have vital influence on the behavioural pattern of every human being. But the influences of these factors vary at different time, place and circumstances even on the same individual, leaving aside the variation from person to person. We may be in a better position to deal with people if we have the knowledge of these factors affecting human behavior.

2.   Human Behavioral Process

2.1   Human behavior can be overt and covert. Overt behaviours are verbal expressions and movement of limbs. Covert behaviours are thinking and emotion. We cannot see or judge the covert behaviour. We can only hear and observe the overt behaviour. Various behavioural scientists have explained human behaviour and the intrinsic reason behind them in different ways. Freud has concluded that unconscious desire and libido (desire of sex) control human behaviour and personality. Some has said that behaviour is a function of personality and environment. However, most of the

behavioural scientists agree that:

      2.1.1   Human behavior is caused.

      2.1.2   Human behavior is motivated.

      2.1.3   Human behavior is goal directed.

2.2   In other words for every behaviour there has to be a cause or stimulus/input. The stimuli are sensed by the sensing organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin). Then the stimuli would be processed within the brain according to the motivational state, perception and goal orientation of the person. The output is the response or behaviour. Human behavioural process can be diagrammatically represented as shown bellow:
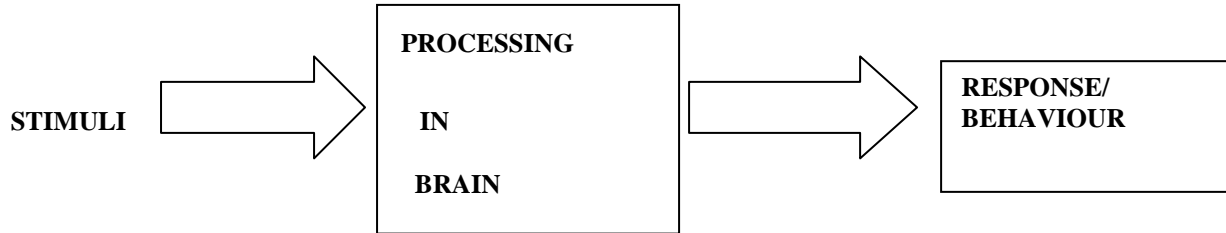

Figure – 1 Human Behavior Process

Table-1

STIMULI IN THE FORM	PROCESSING DEPENDS ON	RESPONSE
STIMULI	PSYCHOLOGICAL	OVERT
a. Test	a. Learning	a. Movement
b. Touch	b. Perception	b. Speech
c. Heat	c. Ego-state	
d. Light	d. Personality	
e. Sound	e. Motivation	*COVERT*
		a. Emotion
		b. Thinking
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
a. Climate		
b. Terrain	*PHYSIOLOGICAL*	
c. Ecosystem		
d. Population	a. Heredity	
e. Resources	b. Nervous system	
	c. Sense organs	
	d. Muscles and glands	

3.   Factors Affecting Human Behavior

3.1   Development of Human Brain and the Process of Learning

3.1.1   Human brain is the most wonderful creation of the Creator. It is said that if one tries to simulate the human brain with electronic valves it would occupy at least the space covered by the city of London, yet it will not be exact. Man has invented and discovered many things but cannot simulate human brain with its emotions and feelings. Human brain contains millions and millions of memory cells. When a child is born all these brain cells remain free. Only a few of them are filled up while in mother's womb. After birth these memory cells start being filled up at a faster rate with the information the child receives through sensations, observations and feelings. A child receives these information at first from his surroundings, parents and family members. When the child starts growing up he starts receiving information from the society and school. Subsequently, when he sees hears or receives any stimulus his brain compares it with the recorded messages and comes up with a solution. Thus the child starts recognizing things.

3.1.2   He also starts making sound as he has heard which ultimately becomes his learning of how to speak. His behavioral pattern also starts taking shape. Thus the behavior of a person is greatly influenced by the inputs he received as a child from his environment, parents and family members and subsequently from his school and the society. These form the basis of the values he believes in and his perception. His response to any stimulus would depend on how he perceives the stimulus and the processing of the stimulus in his brain depending on, among other factors, the values he believes in. Values and perception of a person are to some extent permanent in nature. However, with training and gaining of experience modification of behavioral

pattern is possible, but total unlearning of the initial records is not possible.

3.2   Ego State of a Person: All of us are familiar with the terms Id, Ego and Super-Ego. These words relate to mental states of people and they greatly influence their behaviors. Every person has a mix of these three ego states within himself. His personality and general behavior depend on the dominant ego state. But under different circumstances different ego states may control the behavior. The effects of Id, Ego and Super- Ego on human behavior are discussed bellow:

  3.2.1   **Id:**   Id is the natural instinct or impulse within a person. It is a mental state relating to raw unpolished behavior. If a person is hungry and if he sees food his natural instinct would be to grab it for him or if a person sees something beautiful his natural instinct would be to have it for himself. If the person's Id were very strong he would have them without thinking for others.

  3.2.2   **Ego:**   Ego is the mental state of a person relating to his position in the society. It is the consciousness of the reality of the environment, and by scanning the environment a person's Ego guides him to what his behavior should be relative to the situation. The Ego of a person controls his natural instincts or impulsive behaviors considering the accepted norms in the society.

  3.2.3   **Super-Ego:**   Super-Ego relates to mental condition, which is controlled by conscience and morality. People, having dominating Super-Ego, are guided by their conscience and morality. No rules, regulations and police force are necessary to control them. They exercise self-control in their behavior under all circumstances. They do not think about their personal gains.

3.3   Personalities Within a Person : Every individual has got three personalities within himself: a parent, an adult and a child. They are called ego states or personalities within a person. An individual's personality is a mix of the three personalities in various degrees within himself. The main characteristics of the ego states and the way they control human behavior are discussed bellow:

  3.3.1   **Parent.**   In early days of life a child watches the behaviors of his parents and elders and everything gets recorded in his memory. Subsequent reinforcements make these behaviors deep rooted. These form the basis of his parent ego state. A person dealing from his parent ego state brands things readily as "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong" and would easily advise as "should" and "should not". Parent ego state has the following two subdivisions:

    3.3.1.1   **Nurturing Parent.**   This is the caring and affectionate part of the parent ego state. When this ego state is activated a person would behave like a superior and would like to dish out advice, excuse people easily for mistakes and reward people.

    3.3.1.2   **Controlling Parent.**   This is the critical part of the parent ego state. When controlling parent ego state is activated a person would find fault in others. He would admonish and punish people for their mistakes.

  3.3.2   **Adult.**   It is that part of personality which is based on logic, rationality and conclusion drawn from facts. Therefore, adult behavior is rational, logical and realistic. Adult behavior is necessary for critical analysis, problem solving and decision-making. Adult behaviors and dealings are matured behaviors and they are desirable most of the time but not always.

  3.3.3   **Child.**   Child is the natural or basic instinct part of an individual's personality. Child ego state has the following three subdivisions of personalities within itself.

3.4   Personality Mix.   It has been discussed earlier that a person's personality is a mix of the three personalities present within himself and the dominant personality state controls most of his behaviors. However, the same person can do dealings from all the three personalities. In our day-to-day behaviors we do dealings from our parent, adult and child without realizing the change of personalities within ourselves. In his family a person is a child to his parents, husband to his wife and father to his children. Similarly, at work place the same person is a subordinate to his superiors, superior to his subordinates and colleague to his peers at the same time.

3.5   Life Position: Our behavior is based on what we think about ourselves and what we think about others. Depending on the way one is brought up in his childhood and the treatments he received from others, one takes up any of the following four possible life positions that reflects his ideas about himself and about others:

3.6   Perception: It is said that a person sees or hears what he perceives, not that what has been shown or what has been said. Perception plays a greater role, especially, when the view or the message is not very distinct. The process of perception is the selection and organizing of all input data from the surrounding and interpreting them to give a meaning. Two different persons would perceive and interpret the same incident or event differently. In the words of behavioral scientists it can be said that people differ because they differ in perception. The process of perception is an internal mechanism and it depends on a number of internal and external factors. Some of the internal factors are permanent in nature, but others vary with learning and motivational level. For the same person perception also changes with the change of time, place and society. It also changes with the

economic and political development of the society the person lives in. However, internal processing of any input data for behavioral response is greatly influenced by the perception of the person.

4. Hierarchy of Needs

4.1 Abraham Maslow, a behavioral scientist developed the theory of man's hierarchy of needs. He grouped all human needs into five categories. He suggested that these five categories of human needs are in such a hierarchy that unless the lower needs are satisfied higher needs remain dormant. Once a lower need is satisfied then the next higher need

becomes prominent. Maslow's Hierarchy of Need is depicted diagrammatically in Figure 2. The lower the level of the need the stronger is the urge to satisfy it. Conversely, the higher is the level of the need the weaker is the urge to satisfy it. The strength of the needs as proposed by Maslow is depicted in Figure 3. Unsatisfied needs are the motive force behind a person's behavior. The five categories of needs are discussed bellow one by one.
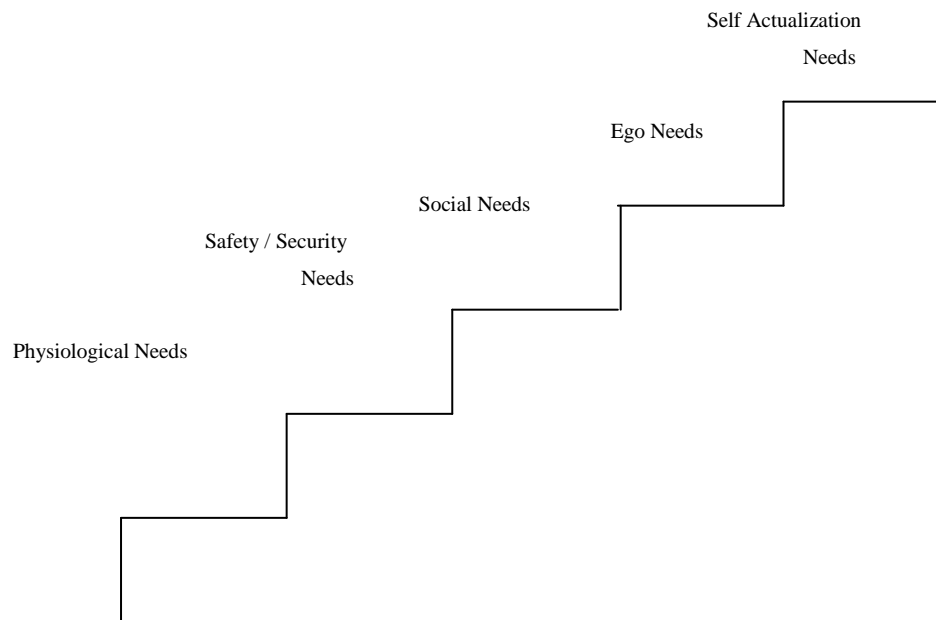

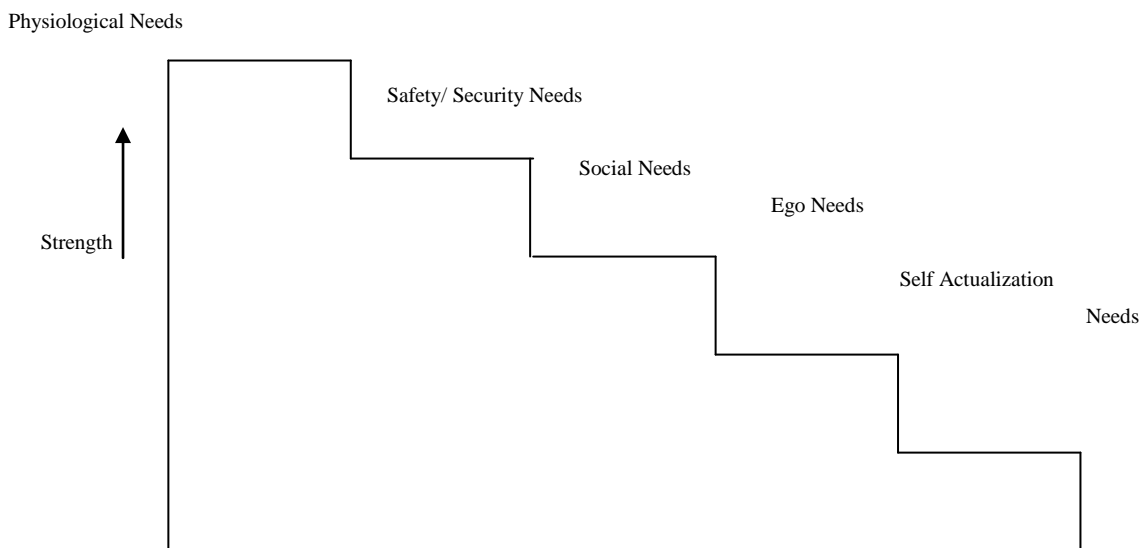**Figure 2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.**

Figure 3 Diagram Showing Strength of Needs.

4.1.1   **Physiological Needs.**   The basic needs of people to satisfy hunger, thirst, and rest / sleep, sex, etc are grouped under Physiological Needs. Human being has the strongest urge to satisfy these needs. If a man is hungry or thirsty he will look for food or drink. Until the time he can satisfy his appetite and quench his thirst, his only motive will be to manage food and drinks for him and for his family.

4.1.2.   **Safety and Security Needs.**   Once the physiological needs are satisfied they no longer remain the motive force behind human behavior. People want to know that their jobs are secured and they want protection and safety from hazards of environment, work place and economic instability. For mental security people want consistency, orderliness and predictability in the society.

4.1.3   **Social Needs.**   Once the other two lower levels of needs are either fully or partially satisfied the Social Needs become predominant. This is the need to love and to be loved, and the sense of belongingness to a family, a society or a group. In a family if a child gets the impression that he is not loved or he is not cared for, the child would suffer from inferiority complex. He would not grow up as a normal person. In the work place also people try to form both formal and informal groups.

4.1.4   **Ego Needs.**   Ego or esteem needs are high level needs. These are the needs associated with success, self-respect, status, promotions, responsibilities, authority, power, etc. Satisfaction of these needs gives an individual a sense of worth, capability and usefulness. Most people want respect from their fellow being.

4.1.5   **Ego Needs.**   This is the highest level of human needs connected with the desire to express one's capabilities and achievement with the ultimate aim of self-fulfillment, but not for recognition and praise from others. People, having the self-actualization need dominating over the other needs, will take pain to gain mastery of job and spend time in research and development to find out how things could be done in a better and easier way for the greater benefit of the human society. Such people are not many in the job environment.

5   Where Do We Stand in the Need Hierarchy

5.1   We have discussed earlier that any need satisfied no longer remains a motivator. All people have all the needs, but the strength of the needs varies from person to person. Hierarchy of needs is not always strictly applicable, as the needs overlap and may jump from one level to another. For most of the people need mix exist. In the developed world by and large the physiological needs and the safety and security needs are satisfied. But in the Third World countries the motive force is still the fulfillment of the two lower level needs. But human behavior does not follow a mathematical pattern, we would be wrong if we suppose that we will have a happy   and contented work force if they are given money, order and job security (that is if their physiological and security needs are satisfied).

5.2   In fact men bring all these needs to work place, but they will not commit their best performance only after satisfaction of these needs. Fulfillment of these needs will remove dis-satisfaction, but will not bring satisfaction to people. Commitment of the best performance of the employees will depend on the hope of fulfilling some higher level needs, like promotion, status, responsibility, job satisfaction, recognition.

6   Motivation

6.1   We have discussed earlier that human behavior is caused, human behavior is motivated and human behavior is goal directed. Motive force or motivation plays a very important role behind every human behavior. That is why investigators always look for the motive behind a crime and from the motive they can find out the criminal. Although motivation is a mental condition which cannot be seen, but it is affected by many external factors like unsatisfied needs, presence of dis-satisfiers or de-motivator and satisfiers or motivators. Professor Herzberg carried out an extensive study on what helps people to put in their best at work. He took a statistical samples of people from all walks of life and from many different countries and interviewed them.

6.2   He found that, in general the causes of satisfaction are not the same as the causes of dissatisfaction. If a factor giving satisfaction were absent the result is not dissatisfaction, but a situation of no satisfaction. Similarly, if a cause of dissatisfaction were absent the result is not satisfaction, but a situation of no dissatisfaction. It may be remembered that the mental condition of de-motivation is directly related to the mental condition of dissatisfaction. Similarly, the mental condition of motivation is directly related to satisfaction. De-motivation brings in negative behavior and motivation brings in positive behavior. We will discuss the dis-satisfiers and satisfiers in the following sub-paragraphs.

6.2.1   **Dis-satisfiers.**   Professor Herzberg identified certain factors in the work place as dis-satisfiers and termed them as hygiene factors. He argued that there comes a time when you clean out the drains no matter how much more polishing you give to the drain it would not function any better. As such they are not going to put in their best performance. This reconfirms Maslow's theory that once a need is

satisfied it no longer provides a motive force.

6.2.2   **Satisfiers.**   Professor Herzberg found that the factors those provide satisfaction and consequently motivate people to work hard and to put in their best performance are different in nature than the dis-satisfiers. He found that the dis-satisfiers are connected with the surroundings of the jobs, whereas the satisfiers are connected with the job content or the job itself. Professor Herzberg found that by providing a stimulating job (or enriching the job itself) we could stimulate individuals to perform better. Creativity and innovation are related with satisfiers and motivators, but cannot be achieved by providing money and other maintenance factors.

7.   Behavior in A Group

7.1   Human being is a social animal. A man always wants to belong to a family, a society and a group in his workplace. A man's behavior as an individual is different from that as a member of a group. A man as a member of a group sacrifices some of his individual needs or goals in favor of the goals and needs of the group. Needs or facilities those control individual motives no longer affect the motivational level of the group, called morale. Elton Mayo, a behavioural scientist, confirmed this fact by conducting experiments, from 1930 AD to 1950 AD, in the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric Company. Mayo selected two groups of workers: one group he called the Control Group and the other he called the Target Group. Initially he kept all the facilities of the Control Group as constant, but increased the facilities of the Target Group. To his utter surprise Mayo found that the production of both the groups went up. In the second step again he kept all the facilities of the Control Group same as before and kept on reducing the facilities of the Test Group. Again the production of both the groups increased. Mayo concluded that, an organization was a social system, a system of cliques, grape vines, informal status systems, rituals and a mixture of logical, non
logical and illogical behavior.

7.2   A worker is not necessarily responsive only to economic incentives, but he is also responsive to his personal sentiments and emotional involvements. His overriding motive remains his desire to stand well with his fellow workers. Mayo's interview of the workers further revealed that the mere feeling of treatment as a group increased production. Social interaction was more important to them. They felt themselves as part of the group and got emotionally involved, that motivated them to work hard to keep up the reputation of the group even under adverse working conditions. This fact brought human relations approach in management. Therefore, adoption of a successful human relations approach would result in more productivity (desired behavior) and greater satisfaction of the employees.

8.   Conclusion

8.1   From the above discussion it is evident that human behaviour is mostly unpredictable. For a given input no two persons will respond in the same manner even under the same conditions. It is a complex function of many variables- some of them are known and many are unknown. However, it is revealed by behavioural scientists that human behaviour is caused, it is motivated and it is goal directed. If we know the motivational level of a person and his goal orientation, then we may be able to predict the response of the person for a given stimulus. However, the prediction may not be correct.

8.2   The psychological factors include the learning process, ego state, personalities within a person, life position taken up by a person and his perception. The process of learning starts when a child is born. The child starts learning from his surroundings, his parents, his family
members and subsequently from his school and from the society. It has been seen that many attitudes and behaviours are display of initially learnt records and many childhood learning cannot be unlearnt. Therefore, the upbringing of a person has a great effect on his behavioural pattern. The ego state of a person has a great effect on his behaviour. A person having strong Id does not care for ethics, manners, etiquettes, traditions and norms of the society. He tries to satisfy his own needs. On the other hand, a person having strong ego will bother for ethics, manners, etiquettes, traditions and norms of the society. But a person having strong super ego will not think about himself, he will think about the well being of others and the society. The life position depends on the upbringing of the person and the dealings he received, especially at childhood. It is said that a person sees or hears what he perceives. Perception of a person plays most important role on the processing of information in human brain. Intensity, size, contrast repetition and motion and novelty have effects on our perception.

8.3   Some socio-economic factors like needs, working conditions, work itself and society or group play important part on motivation and goal orientation of a person. Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of human needs. He found that unsatisfied lower level needs remains the driving force behind the behaviour of man. Once a need is satisfied it no longer remains a driving force, the needs of next higher level take over as the driving force. However, there are exceptions to these rules also. Some people graze over two or three levels of needs simultaneously. Few exceptional people even jump to the top level without fulfilling their lower level needs. It is an accepted fact that unsatisfied needs are a major driving force behind human behaviour. Professor Herzberg has found out that there are certain factors like supervision, money, working conditions, etc. when they are not enough or conducive bring dis-satisfaction.

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