

CHAPTER 3

Attitudes and Accommodation To Work

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Opening Fig

The CEO's challenge to the HR manager was clear, "Go find out what our sales people think about working for Lindley Pharmaceuticals. I want to know how they feel about every aspect of working here. I'm tired of guess work about why our people are leaving; rather than telling me what you think, tell me what they think and why they think that!"

Attitudes can have a significant effect on the behavior of a person at work. In the world of work we are concerned with attitudes toward supervision, pay, benefits, promotion or anything that might trigger positive or negative reactions. Employee satisfaction and attitudes represent one of the key areas of measuring organizational effectiveness. This chapter considers the role of workplace attitudes in influencing important organizational outcomes and the methods organizations use to develop these attitudes in their workers.

FUNDAMENTALS OF WORK ATTITUDES

Attitudes are propensities, or tendencies, to react in a favorable or unfavorable way toward an object. The object could be almost anything in the world around us. Attitudes reflect a person's likes and dislikes toward other persons, objects, events, and activities in their environment. It makes sense to study and know about attitudes because strong attitudes will very likely affect a person's behavior. Attitudes toward supervision, pay, benefits, promotion, or anything that might trigger positive or negative reactions. As a result, employee satisfaction and attitudes represent one of the key areas for measuring organizational effectiveness.

Because of the importance of the links of task, contextual, and ethical performance with important measures of organizational effectiveness, one of the key goals of managers should be to create linkages between employee performance and their satisfaction. However, it is not always easy to change a person's attitudes about their work. The reason is that, as you will see, attitudes toward work may be only one important aspect of the person's structure of attitudes. They might be linked strongly to other important ones, making them deeply embedded, and thereby limiting how much managers can succeed in altering the way employees feel and act. However, particular attitudes and satisfactions at work can and do change, sometimes quickly, as events change. Employees who are happy and productive one day can become dissatisfied and resentful overnight as a consequence of some managerial action. This is one of the reasons why many organizations pay close attention to attitudes by conducting periodic **attitude surveys** of employees, and by seeking feedback in other

ways. The hope of managers such as the one in the case that opened this chapter is that assessing employee attitudes can provide important information about the effectiveness of different management strategies.

Psychological functions attitudes perform for people

Attitudes perform some useful psychological functions for people. For example, suppose someone on your work team that you admire and look up to comes under attack in a staff meeting by a team from another department. Your positive attitudes toward her and the things she stands for will help you to come to her (and your own) defense. In doing so, you protect your self-image, and have a motive to express the values that you and your friend espouse. Your attitude toward the attackers could shift toward the negative, providing you an even stronger justification about how to deal with them in the future. Here are some things that attitudes do for you [1].

- 1 They provide a **frame of reference**. Attitudes help us to make sense of the world by giving us a frame of reference from which to interpret our world. We selectively perceive only a part of the total world around us. We are likely to select those facts that are consistent with our attitudes and ignore or discount those that are not.
- 2 People **express values** through their attitudes. Words and actions demonstrate our values and allow us to share them with others and to affect the world in which we live. Strong democratic values might emerge at work in staff meetings where employees are given a chance to participate in solving a problem or making a decision.
- 3 Attitudes help us **protect our ego**. Attitudes help us to maintain our self-image and self-respect. For example, a supervisor might have feelings of superiority regarding subordinates. An attitude that subordinates are lazy and not trustworthy, or that they are not trained well enough to assume much responsibility, probably tends to enhance the supervisor's feelings of superiority.
- 4 Attitudes can facilitate **reconciling contradictions**. Most of us have some contradictory attitudes or beliefs, yet, in many instances, these inconsistencies do not cause us to feel uneasy or have a sense of dissonance. This happens when the contradictions between inconsistent beliefs, behaviors, or attitudes are reconciled by **compartmentalization**. We are able to place the contradictions in separate compartments and not connect them, thereby reconciling them [2].
- 5 Attitudes aid in **personal adjustment**. We tend to develop attitudes consistent with those parts of our life we find satisfying or dissatisfying. For example, blue-collar workers may be more favorable to political parties which support higher wages, more protectionist trade policies, and better health benefits in general since these might be viewed by workers as being more valuable to them. Similarly, you would expect executives in oil companies to have more favorable attitudes toward politicians who favor more offshore drilling or increased exploration in national parks.

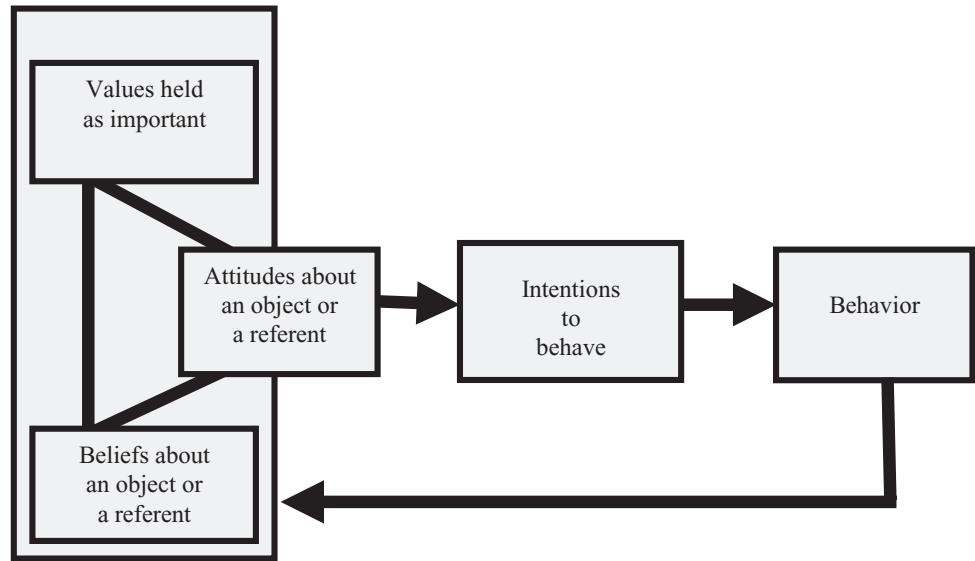


Figure 3.1 A model of attitudes

A MODEL OF ATTITUDES

Attitudes can be understood more easily if they are viewed in terms of their components and their dynamics. Figure 3.1 shows that attitudes are tied to values and beliefs, and they precede intentions to behave and actual behavior.

The affective component

The basic way that we refer to attitudes is to say that they are “positive” or “negative.” The **affective component** is the emotional tone generated by or toward the object of the attitude. It simply means that we have some preference – like or dislike – toward the object. Strong and important attitudes are more likely to lead to a behavioral or a psychological response than weak attitudes.

The object of attitudes

Attitudes always apply to some identifiable **object**. People have attitudes about something or someone, for example, toward the federal government, their supervisor, their job, or the use of seat belts. It is not technically accurate to say someone has a good attitude or a bad attitude without specifying the object of the attitude.

The cognitive component

The affective component of the attitude develops as a result of things that we observe in the world around us that we associate, positively or negatively, with the object of the attitude. These are called the **cognitive dimensions of attitude**. If we take the example of attitudes toward the job, or job satisfaction, some of the cognitive components that you might associate with it could be your pay, the actual working conditions, the parking facilities, the hours that you work, and so on. What is important is that your specific attitude toward your job will be a function of perceptions and evaluations about these factors. Another person might have a different set of cognitions associated with work, he or she might even be in a job very similar to yours and even in the same firm. For example, if they are not highly committed to the work, they might focus on the amount of time available for vacation, the hours worked, the level of strict versus loose supervision. The key point is that these relevant cognitions about work can vary from person to person, in large part depending upon their personality and how they view the world.

Values and beliefs

Values reflect a sense of right and wrong. Values are more general than attitudes, and they need not have an identifiable object. They define the good life, and identify goals worthy of our aspiration. Values are expressed in statements such as “equal rights for all,” and “hard work is the road to success.”

Attitudes form as your cognitions (perceptions) of your environment are evaluated in terms of your relevant values. For example, if you value economic well-being, then the amount of your pay is assessed to determine if it is consistent with the value that you put on “economic well-being.” If it is, then a belief is formed that pay is a positive factor and it will contribute to the positiveness of the attitude. If it is seen as a negative factor, then cognitions about pay will contribute to the negativeness of the attitude. We know, for instance, that employees who have high positive affectivity and whose basic values are not met at work are more likely to leave, while those who find their values are met will remain [3].

Beliefs are the thinking component of attitudes. They do not refer to favorable or unfavorable reactions; they only convey a sense of “what is” to the person [4]. However, beliefs may not necessarily be factual even though they represent the truth for a particular person. Beliefs also can vary in how absolute they are. One might believe that nuclear power plants are all unsafe, or believe that this is only sometimes true.

Values underlie attitudes and are usually consistent with them. Cognitions are evaluated against values, and beliefs are formed about whether they are positive or negative. When there are strong positive beliefs about those cognitions that we associate with our work, then these beliefs and values should lead to a positive feeling

about work. If they are negative, our attitudes about work may be negative. If they are mixed, then we might have an indifferent attitude about work.

Attitudes and intentions

Managers are concerned about our attitudes toward our job because they might lead us to take some action. Suppose our attitudes toward work are negative and we are frustrated because of what we judge to be low pay and poor working conditions. This could foster intentions, or motivate us, to seek promotion to a job where pay is higher and conditions are better, or maybe even to seek a job elsewhere. Our choice will depend on which alternative we feel has the greatest likelihood of success.

Attitudes and overt behavior

Attitudes often lead to overt behaviors, but not always. Except for behavior, all other aspects of attitudes are internal to the person; they are not observable. The behavioral component of attitudes is important because people draw inferences about attitudes, beliefs, values, and intentions by observing what you say and what you do. For example, if you have a co-worker who has been spending a great deal of time working late at the office, you might infer that he or she has a very positive attitude toward work and the company. However, it could be something else, such as an overdue credit-card bill that your co-worker is trying to pay off.

ATTITUDINAL CONSISTENCY AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

An attitude does not usually exist in isolation. You do not, for example, have an attitude toward your work that exists independently of other attitudes that might also be linked to work. It is likely, for example, that your attitude toward where you work is linked with your attitudes toward the work itself that you do, your co-workers, the location of the workplace, and so forth. These different, related attitudes form an **attitude cluster** and more than likely, though not always, they will be consistent with each other as well as the specific values, cognitions, and beliefs for each specific attitude in a specific attitude cluster. However, they also will be consistent with other attitude clusters to which they are strongly linked. For example, we can say that you have a work attitude cluster, a family attitude cluster, and a political attitude cluster. Each of these will include specific attitudes that make up the cluster. One attitude cluster might or might not be linked to another. For example, the work attitude cluster might be very tightly linked to the family attitude cluster but not to the political attitude cluster.

The theory of **cognitive dissonance** is based on the idea that people need to have consistency between their behavior and attitudes, beliefs, or thoughts (cognitions) [5].

When there is inconsistency (dissonance), we are motivated to reduce it because we experience discomfort. Another basic idea of this theory is that we are motivated to explain or justify our behavior, thoughts, or feelings. In short, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors must be consistent with each other. Suppose you are quite happy with your work and have been for a long time because the specific attitudes that make up the work attitude cluster (how you feel about the job, the supervisor, and the location) are all positive. Then, along comes a new manager and you find that his actions toward the work group are demeaning, demanding, and distant, resulting in your attitude toward your boss becoming negative. Now you have a dissonant attitude in the work attitude cluster. One way to deal with this is to modify your overall attitude toward work by reducing your level of job satisfaction. You might recall examples of times when you had problems with him, how he deals in negative ways with other workers, or tell others that he is not important to your success. If your work attitude cluster does become negative and, if at the same time, there are cognitive elements that are common with your family attitude cluster, this could produce dissonance.

We know, for example, that there is strong positive relationship between work satisfaction and life satisfaction [2]. This means that some cognitive dimensions will be common in both the work and the life attitude cluster. For example, one cognitive dimension of your work attitude cluster and your family attitude cluster could be “location.” You like your job because it is located near other members of your family and, at the same time, you are contented because your spouse and family are happy there. This overlap will lead to some discomfort when things at home are going well, but you are dissatisfied at work. However, suppose that there is no overlap of cognitive elements with your political attitude cluster, this would pose no adjustment problems.

Dissonance can also arise when there is **insufficient justification** for what you do. This is called **decisional dissonance**. Dissonance can be reduced before you take action. Suppose your new boss tells you to reprimand a subordinate, a behavior that you find unpleasant and harsh. If you were ordered to do so, you may have little or no dissonance because your boss has given you **sufficient justification** (a direct and clear-cut order) to do it. However, in the absence of such an order, the justification may be insufficient. Following the act, the dissonance may remain strong and the motivation to reduce it persists. You would therefore have to rationalize your action. You might justify the reprimand by convincing yourself that your boss wanted you to do what you did but just did not say so. If the employee has a hostile reaction to the reprimand, it can serve to confirm that he deserved it, reducing your dissonance even further.

Dissonance also arises when there are **disconfirmed expectations**. If a customer complains about one of your products, dissonance arises because it is inconsistent with your image of the company’s reputation. Here again, developing a belief that rationalizes, or explains, the condition can reduce dissonance. You might think that the complaint was triggered by the customer’s failure to follow directions in using the product.

Not surprisingly, dissonance is more severe when we are personally involved, such as when our own decisions lead to an unexpected problem. People often refuse to admit they have made a mistake. Dissonance theory predicts that people will persist in the original decision. They will even repeat it as a way of justifying it, thus compounding the bad decision rather than face the dissonant admission that they were wrong in the first place [6, 7]. In one study [8], students played a business game in which they allocated funds to different projects. Those students who allocated funds to unsuccessful projects made subsequent further investments in the same unsuccessful project, especially when they felt responsible for the bad decision.

SOCIALIZATION: DEVELOPING WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Socialization is one way to understand how people develop the values and beliefs that lead to a whole range of general and specific attitudes about work. It can also have significant influences on our behaviors. Through socialization, we are exposed to countless personal experiences that have lasting effects. The human mind has the capacity to link common events and to generalize across them. These associations may also result from very remote experiences. For example, if you had a bad experience with a sales clerk years ago, that experience could affect your attitude toward a whole company or toward the sales profession in general. Socialization is a process that begins when you are born and continues throughout your life. In this section we will review socialization experiences that occur early in your life, those that directly prepare for your professional life, and the continued socialization that occurs within work organizations.

Early socialization experiences

In your very early years, you begin learning how to respond to authority and authority figures, such as parents and teachers. These authority figures have power, can give rewards or withhold them, and can administer punishment or refrain from its use. Responses to parents learned at home become further developed and reinforced in churches, schools, and other organizations. These experiences set the stage for the development of work attitudes and values, all affected by parental influence, socioeconomic background, sociocultural factors, and personality.

During this socialization period, you have experiences that affect later feelings about work [9, 10]. Toward the end of this period, around 18 to 20 years of age, you begin to separate from family and early friends, and take steps toward independence and into the adult world. Preliminary organizational and career choices are made, and usually some commitment to training of some kind. Those who attend college pick a major, some join the military, others go into vocational training, or take entry-level work positions.

Parental influence

One way that parental influence has an effect on what career you choose is whether the child-rearing practices of the parents lead to an orientation “toward people” or “not toward people” [11, 12]. A person who has developed an orientation toward people is likely to have a career in the service industry, business, or in the arts and entertainment; they are likely to have come from a home in which there was a loving, over-protective environment [13]. Those whose early home atmosphere was one in which there was avoidance by the parents and, perhaps, rejection, are likely to be oriented “not toward others,” and seek careers in science, technology, or in some form of work in the outdoors.

Socioeconomic factors

Your social class (upper, middle, or lower), family income, occupational status, and education levels also affect work orientations. First, parents from higher social classes tend to earn more and have better connections that they can use to help their children [14]. Second, children from higher social classes usually aspire to careers in business or in the professions, while children from lower-class families tend to believe that they will work in service trades. Third, children initially aspire to a career similar to that of the father and other family members (mothers and grandparents) and are likely to choose one that resembles it [13]. This, of course, is determined to some extent by the educational opportunities available, which are most often dependent on family income.

Higher social classes also pass different work values on to their children from those in lower social classes. For example, fathers from the upper classes place a higher value on self-direction and less value on conformity, while the opposite is true for fathers from the lower classes [15]. One way that this is reflected is in the ways that young managers from a higher socioeconomic status react to career mentoring at work. Those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds who had good career mentoring had higher promotion rates and pay than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who had similarly good mentoring [16]. More than likely, they are able to capitalize at work on what they learned in early years from their family experience.

Preliminary work socialization

You begin to develop more specific orientations toward a certain career – or orientations relevant to a particular type of organization – during **preliminary work socialization** before beginning a career in a work organization. This occurs in three ways:

- 1 You begin to develop some specific competence.
- 2 You experience some degree of occupational socialization.
- 3 You make choices about your first place of work.

The early phase of this aspect of work socialization occurs from age 17 to about 33 [17]. During this period, the center of your life will probably shift from your family to your own world. You become immersed in a career and in an organization, but as an apprentice, a novice, a beginner, learning the relevant skills, attitudes, and culture of a specific organization and a specific job.

Occupational competence is developed as you make early choices about what knowledge and skills to acquire. Becoming competent in an occupation and learning the ropes takes several years. For instance, even great artists and chess players do not achieve prominence until they have worked at their craft for at least ten years [18]. You can expect the same thing for your work career. By the end of this stage, however, if you have worked at it, you can achieve a level of competence so that you can be a full contributor to an organization.

For some careers, **occupational socialization** begins in professional school, where the would-be professional is first exposed to the perspectives, values, and ways of thinking characteristic to the chosen field. Students in clinical psychology or architecture, for example, not only learn technical aspects of their field but also learn how to act like psychologists and architects, as they work on projects or as psychology or architectural interns.

Sometimes occupational socialization can be a very controlled process, such as happens in medical schools, seminaries, convents, and military academies. If you were to choose these careers, you would find yourself, in the early years, separated from other parts of society and becoming submerged in the organizational culture as well as learning the skills of the profession. Professional values are fostered by participation in student groups, by taking courses, and through interaction with teachers. After successfully completing this training, the person is admitted to the field and is commissioned, ordained, or passes through some other acceptance ritual. By this time, important organizational and occupational values have become deeply embedded.

On the other hand, most preliminary work socialization is less formal, such as your experience in secondary schools, universities, and colleges and sometimes what you learn in a part-time job during your early years. These less formal and less controlled forms of occupational socialization do not have as strong effects, but they still shape later work experiences.

Organizational socialization

After you have joined a work organization, organizational socialization begins: adapting to the unique culture of the organization. Among the important things learned as a result of organizational socialization are lessons about the norms and expectations

of organizational members. These norms and expectations are reflected specifically in the **psychological contract**, the mutual expectations between an organization and its members. “These expectations not only cover how much work is to be performed for how much pay but also involve the whole pattern of rights, privileges, and obligation between the worker and organization” [19]. The psychological contract is informally and continuously negotiated throughout the organization socialization process and during your career in the organization. It is an important and useful concept that you will see in later chapters.

There are two types of organizational norms learned through the socialization process. The most important are called **pivotal norms**, those that must be accepted by everyone in the organization. Failure to comply with pivotal norms results in pressures to leave from others in the organization [19]. For example, an important and large retailing organization has a “customer is right” norm for returning purchases. A salesperson who questions and angers a customer is very likely to be fired. **Peripheral norms** are less important. They are desired, but it is not essential that the person accept them. An example of a peripheral norm is the recent custom of “dress down Friday,” a day on which employees in professional offices may, if they wish, wear more casual clothes instead of coats and ties for the men, or skirts and jackets for the women.

The first significant exposure to the organization’s norms and expectations in the psychological contract comes during the phase of organizational entry, the time after you join the organization and experience it for the first time as one of its members. It is a period when you become aware of what differences exist, if any, between your personal values and the requirements of the organization. This can be a disrupting experience as you face changes, contrasts and a few surprises, and have to make some sense of all this [20].

Organization entry is affected by a number of factors. One is the **person-organization fit**, the congruence between patterns of organizational values and your own individual values. When this fit is good, you are likely to be more satisfied and have stronger intentions to stay in the firm [21]. A second factor is the expectations that you bring to the job. Before starting the job, most people have positive but often inaccurate expectations about the company, working conditions, co-workers, and opportunities for advancement. When these expectations are not met, the results are lower job satisfaction, lower organization commitment, higher intentions to leave, lower organization tenure, and lower performance [22].

The form of the organization socialization process itself is a third factor. For example, persons may be brought in with a group and experience group socialization, while in other instances they come in singly, one at a time [23]. Group socialization is often used when large numbers of recruits are brought into an organization at one time. Indeed, many firms have extensive management training programs to socialize college graduates who all join the firm following spring graduation. One study found that those who entered in group socialization were more satisfied with their job and had less conflict between their job and family roles as compared to those who were brought in individually [24].

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ACCOMMODATION

After being in an organization for a while, you eventually reach some level of psychological and behavioral commitment and accommodation to it. This is not to say that you will have high job satisfaction and be highly committed to the organization itself. It only means that a balance has been achieved between the way that you relate to the organization and the way that it relates with you.

Accommodating to an organization is usually expressed in two ways:

- 1 One is how willing you are to meet the norms of task, contextual, and ethical performance requirements. This is a very basic and key aspect because it means that you can perform your job at least well enough that the organization sees your performance contribution as good enough.
- 2 The second aspect of accommodation is that you achieve some level of organizational commitment. **Organizational commitment** is the degree to which you identify with the organization, relative to other factors that affect you at work, such as the work itself or factors outside the organization that compete with it for your commitment and identification.

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional concept. This means that there are at least three facets that pull on you from the work perspective and that you will have some level of identification, or orientation, toward each. As we have pointed out earlier, this results from your socialization experiences both before and after you enter a work organization. These three facets of commitment can be easily understood if you refer to the three organizational personality orientations that were introduced in the previous chapter: the **organizationalist**, the **professional**, and the **indifferent**.

It is useful to think of these three orientations as a commitment profile. It is unlikely that a person would be oriented toward only one of the facets and not toward any of the others [24]. Instead, it is probably safer to say:

- 1 At any one time, you may have a dominant focus of commitment. For example, a person could have a strong organizational commitment, but have a weak professional commitment and indifferent foci.
- 2 The dominant orientation at the time of job choice will affect the kind of position you seek. If you have a strong organizationist focus, you are likely to seek a position in an organization that offers you opportunity for career advancement *within* the firm. If you have a strong professional orientation, you will be looking for work that will give you plenty of freedom to work in your chosen work area.
- 3 The focus of commitment may change over time. There are many circumstances that may lead you to change. For example, if you start with a strong

organizational focus but find that you are passed over several times for promotion, that orientation may diminish and an indifferent orientation might become stronger as your positive reinforcement from the organization is reduced.

There are different motivations for sustaining the identification you have with an organization, regardless of your organizational personality. Those who have studied organizational commitment have identified three different reasons for, or bases of, commitment [25]:

- 1 Continuance commitment
- 2 Affective commitment
- 3 Normative commitment.

Continuance commitment means that you stay with an organization because you feel you cannot afford to leave. You might not be able to find a higher-paying job; you might believe that to leave you will be working in a company with lower status or reputation; or you might not want to lose the long-term investment that you have made that will be paid off in terms of a good set of retirement benefits.

Affective commitment means that you identify strongly with the organization because it stands for what you stand for; you believe strongly in its goals and objectives. For example, many whose work careers are with political parties make that choice because their own political beliefs and those espoused by the party are the same.

Normative commitment means that you stay with an organization because of pressures from others in your life who think you should be there. For example, you might work in the same company that your mother or father worked in for many years, simply because they made it clear to you that they believe this is the best place for you to work.

Table 3.1 shows how these different types of commitment and the organizational personality orientations may be related. For example, you can see that a person with a professional orientation may have continuance commitment, affective commitment, or normative commitment. Obviously, when the basis of commitment is not consistent with the organizational personality orientation, you can expect some uneasiness and stress to occur.

As you might expect, a high level of organizational commitment is something that most firms would like to see in their employees have because it reduces some managerial problems. For example, strong organizational commitment is related to lower turnover and absenteeism [26] and to the level of contextual behaviors, or organizational citizenship activities, that a person is willing to engage in at work [27].

Table 3.1 Organizational personality orientations and different bases of commitment

Bases of commitment	Organizational personality orientation		
	Organizationist	Professional	Indifferent
Affective	you have been positively reinforced over your work career by pay increases and promotion for your performance and loyalty	you are a specialist working in an organization whose major product is what you do occupationally, e.g. pharmacologist in a pharmaceutical firm	you are not likely to have high affective commitment
Continuance	you are well paid and in a high-level position but it is unlikely that you would be able to better yourself by changing firms	you are a research scientist in a prestigious university who would like to move to a warmer climate but all of your opportunities are at lesser schools or places with inferior research facilities	you have a job that permits you to spend more time at your real love (fly fishing), so even though the pay is less than you want, you won't leave
Normative	you have a promotion opportunity to another firm located elsewhere but do not accept it because your spouse and family are happy in your present city	you have an opportunity to move to another position with a better research facility but do not move because it would mean leaving your project team and good colleagues	you wouldn't think of moving to another company because the pay is good and most of your family has worked in the same place for the past 30 years

Guide for Managers: MAKING BETTER JUDGMENTS

There are a number of things that we can do to make better judgments about attitudes of others in evaluating their suitability for almost everything that goes on in organizations. For example, in interviews, prospective employees are often asked, “How do you feel about working here?” or “How satisfied were you with the type of work that you did in your previous job?” Attitudes are also important when evaluating someone for promotion. We hear comments like, “He doesn’t have a good attitude toward affirmative action” or, “He just doesn’t believe enough in quality to do the job right.” This means that we should be very careful about judging attitudes of others (as well as our own, we might add).

FOCUS ON SPECIFIC, RATHER THAN GENERAL ATTITUDES. Rather than generalizing, such as saying that an employee has a good or a bad attitude, it is better to try to focus on employee attitudes in terms of their more specific objects, such as attitudes toward pay, toward supervision, and so on. This helps you decide what you have to change in the organization, such as modifying the pay system or training supervisors. There is often very little that you can do about these general attitudes, since they may reflect the positive or negative affectivity of the person.

NOTICE DEPTH OF FEELING AND BEHAVIOR. Do not dismiss or underestimate the depth of feeling and the behavior associated with attitudes, values, and beliefs. Don’t trivialize the attitudes of others by thinking or telling them that their feelings aren’t important. Attitudes are very important to the psychological well-being of people and some are strongly held, especially those linked to the person’s self-image. More importantly, they may be related to attitudes, values, and beliefs that are not directly related to work itself.

UNDERSTAND HOW ATTITUDES WORK AT WORK. Negative attitudes toward the job or the organization may lead an employee to want to avoid work or quit, and they may do so because job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover and to commitment. However, never assume that a satisfied employee is always a productive employee or that a productive employee is satisfied. There is a weak relationship between attitudes and task performance, though it is statistically significant.

PERIODICALLY ASSESS EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND SATISFACTION. It is a good idea for organizations to evaluate attitudes and satisfaction with employee surveys. It is also useful to involve the employees in the design, collection, and interpretation of the study. However, never conduct surveys unless you are fully committed to act on the findings and report the actions you have taken.

ACCEPT PEOPLE’S TENDENCY TO JUSTIFY, RATIONALIZE, AND EXPLAIN THEIR BELIEFS. It helps them reduce cognitive dissonance, and appear consistent to themselves and others. However, you should strive to ensure that they understand as clearly as possible what is expected in terms of work performance and that you can accept their attitudes so long as they do not have negative effects on others or on their own performance.

SUMMARY

Attitudes refer to what people like and dislike; they predispose them to act favorably or unfavorably toward an object or event. They function in several ways to help people to adapt to their world. Attitudes are related to beliefs and values, all of which are acquired from infancy through our experiences and associations with people, events, and the media. Specific attitudes can be learned at any time and applied to any experience. Employee attitudes about various aspects of their job are often studied by employers, because it is known that attitudes affect attendance, retention, work commitments, interpersonal relationships. They affect satisfaction, performance, and constructive voluntary contributions to organizational success. They can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of an organization.

There are a number of different factors that contribute to our attitudes about our work life. Child-rearing practices that affect the individual's personality and self-concept can be important early influences. Work socialization is how individuals must learn about the characteristics and culture of their chosen occupational field. Organizational socialization is the process of learning about the norms of our work organization. These may be directly taught by others, may be learned through the process of observing others, or may be learned through the process of conditioning – by behaving in certain ways and having such behaviors responded to in different ways by others.

If we don't adjust well to our job or the organization in which we work, it can negatively affect an individual's performance, morale, and health as well as those of others associated with them, both at work as well as family members and friends.

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