Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week - 03

Lecture – 11

Lecture 11: The perceptual process

Hello everyone. Welcome back to the course on Organizational Behavior, Individual Dynamics in Organization.

In module 1, we introduce you to the concept of organization, organization behavior, what are the approaches we make use of in organizational behavior. We looked into OBM, organizational behavior management per se, how different fields have contributed, different disciplines have contributed to the single body of knowledge called OBM. We also looked into the difference between individuals. Then we progress ourselves into module 2 which was more about diversity where we looked into diversity in greater detail. We understood what you mean by diversity, how diversity is different from inclusion, what are the different types of diversity including the demographic diversity as well as the cognitive diversity. Now we move to module 3 and one of the most important aspects in the whole course which is perception and decision making.

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So, here we directly go into the perceptual process and we look into perception and decision making. This is one of the most intricate aspects and I would like to take it in the beginning itself, the perceptual process. Let me start with this quote, we are always in the continuous process of receiving information and making sense of the world around us. I repeat, we are always in the continuous process of receiving information and making sense of the world around us. So, every now and then, every second we see stimuli striking us, we are creating or trying to develop responses towards those stimuli and making sense of the world around us, interpreting those stimuli. So these are themes of this entire lecture lies around this phrase.

What is perception? Let us understand that. Perception is nothing but a sensory impression to interpretation. In other words, a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. So,

they might have a certain level of information coming in their way, how they try to make use of that particular information at their disposal and try to render, try to give meaning to the particular environment in which they are, this is what perception in broad sense means. It is a sensory impression to interpretation.

Now when we look into the perception per se, it is highly varied, especially when it is being considered on a individual basis. It highly depends on individual. Perceptions are unique to individual. For example, the same place of work might seem conducive to somewhere else it might be awful for some others.

We have many a time seen ourselves. Let us take a step back and introspect ourselves. Many a time we see that there are some situations, some context which we are not so happy about. There are situations or context which we do not want to go and work with. There are environment which is not so friendly in terms of the work culture. There is a toxic work culture that is going on in the organization. But then we see that there are some individuals who do not take care of them, who do not care, who are not mindful of these things because of their inherent passion towards the job. So, the same situation, the same context which is actually awful to somebody might be very pleasing, very charming to somebody else because he or she might be engrossed in his or her work. So, perceptions are unique to individuals in the case that there are situations which are different, difficult, hard for somebody but might be very easy, might be very soothing, might be very conducive for somebody else. This is what makes the whole concept of perception relevant for OBM, Organizational Behavior Management.

Individuals behavior is based on the meaning they give to the reality rather than the reality itself. As I already mentioned, you go to your workplace, the reality might be that your boss is too much strict, he is stringent, the work practices are too much hectic, you are not getting sufficient time for relaxation. But there could be some factor, for example, your skills specifically aligned with the requirements of the job and you are sort of enjoying the particular job. In those situations, you do not tend to understand the reality as such but you are more than happy about the reality which you are in, which you are working on. So basically, it is nothing but the meaning you give to the reality changes the whole predisposition or changes the whole reality in total.

So let us look into what is self-concept. In the entire scheme of perceptual process, the self-gains importance. Now I am not going deeply into the psychology but I would like to give a sort of a management angle to what is known as a self-concept. What is self-concept? Self-concept is an individual's self-beliefs and self-evaluations. So, who am I? How do I feel about myself? These are the two important things generally that dictate your self-concept. Who am I? What do you feel about yourself? This is something which is very particular you might feel, you might tend to ask yourself every now and then. For

example, you might ask today, after a month you might be a different person altogether. You might have gone through a very different difficult experience in life. You might feel that after that difficult experience you might ask you the same question. It might give you a different answer.

Whom am I? How do I feel about myself? So, this is particularly what is understood as self-concept which guides the individual's decisions and actions. Now that particular understanding that where do I come from? What is me? What is that I feel about myself? This is something which triggers me to every single action. This is what makes or qualifies me to take a rational decision if I may say. One's self-esteem and behaviour influencing how they interact with the world around us, with the world around them specifically. For example, there might be individuals who are very high in self-esteem.

For them even if it is a negative behaviour, even if it is a negative environment, even if it is environment which is ridiculing them, which is looking down upon them, which is not motivating, which is entirely humiliating them, but still the self-esteem is so high that they have an intact self-concept that they will feel that the work, the task assigned is more important to them. So, evaluating one's worth starts from having a positive or negative attitude about oneself. So basically, how you start developing the self-concept is entirely worth on the proper understanding of what you are and what do you feel about myself. If I feel that I am not good for this job. If I feel that I am not made for this particular activity.

If I feel that I am an outlier in the entire group, I do not belong here, then you are a person like that. Instead, if you feel that you are the person, you are the individual who is having that particular skill which the task is demanding, you are the same person who is having the particular ability to execute the task in a most desirable way, then that is your self-concept. So, self-concept is essentially a variable concept and depends on individual to individual. The individual differences is pretty much the relevant factor, the critical factor and self-concept guides your decisions no doubt about it.

Now let us look into self-concept in detail and there are three angles which I would like to look at self-concept from. One is complexity. When you look into complexity, there are distinct roles or identities individuals perceive about themselves. Sometimes students perceive them, sometimes people perceive as students. I am a student of organizational behavior. I am a student of psychology. I am a student of decision sciences. I am a student of medicine. I am a student of entomology. So, any discipline you can be a student. So that is one identity. The same person would be a friend, a friend in the particular classroom setting, a friend in the neighborhood, a friend in let us say a big charity organization.

The same individual might be a daughter of a mother, might be a daughter of a particular community. So, the same individual once they are running let us say they are running a small business venture, they might be a manager, they might be the lead production manager, they might be the controlling manager for something. So, there are different hats that are put in, there are different roles that are being identified. This is the complexity in self-concept. The same individual, the same individual could be student, the same individual could be teacher, the same individual could be a friend, daughter, a manager, etc.

etc. So, this is the complexity that is more the more critical.

The second is the consistency. Now when you look into the consistency element, the degree to which the individual's identities require similar personal attributes, similar personal attributes time and again the particular identity, the individual identity would cater or would demand, would warrant the personal attribute which is required. For example, the consistency as a learner, he might be a student in let us say in one of the bright students in one of the disciplines. Now he goes, he gets a job as a teacher. There also there is a eagerness to learn. So, he is a learner. Now he goes for a training program, there also he excels and everybody notices his eagerness or urge to learn. His/her urge to learn. So consistently the self-concept is of a student or let us take another case.

You as an individual, you are a very helpful person, you are very helpful in let us say in your family. You are the person, the go-to person when it comes to any of the specific needs of your family, not only your immediate family even your distant family. Somebody comes to you, asks for a help and you cannot deny that. The same goes with your neighborhood. You are the go-to person when it comes to any help in the neighborhood. So there is this friendly self that has developed.

Now when you venture into academics, let us say you go to your college, you go to your university, you are the person who is trying to help out the people who are not understanding the concept. There is a natural help or a natural aid or a natural friend that is coming out of you. Now let us take the case further. You are a person who is venturing into an organization would be the most sought-after person either because of your knowledge, skill, expertise or maybe because of the referent power.

We will look into those in details. Referent power is basically the likeability, the likeability to a particular individual. So, this might be the different situations where there is consistency of this friendship that is happening across your self-concept. This is the part of consistency.

And the third is clarity. When you are looking for the degree to which an individual's self-concept is clear, confidently defined and stable. It does not mean that at this point in

time you are a friend. Next point in time let us say you are supposedly a friend in the family and suddenly a distant relative comes and you loathe him or her. There is an inherent dislike towards a particular person, could be some historical reason associated with that. You suddenly say that you cannot help them. This is in counter purpose with what your personality or what yourself that is already displayed before. So this is lack of clarity. Lack of clarity actually creates a problem with not only the individual per se with the people who are dealing with the individual also.

So, the degree to which an individual's self-concept is clear, confidently defined and stable is what clarity is. So basically, self-concept is defined by three parameters. One is complexity, another is consistency and the third is clarity.

Now let us look into the different characteristics and processes of self-concept. Self-concept as I already defined moves around these three principles of complexity, consistency and clarity. But when you look into self-concept, self-concept complexity is also the separation of various identities that we take up. As I have already mentioned, you might be an individual in a particular setting who is more helpful. You might be a friend, you might be a student somewhere, you might be a manager at the same position, the same individual. But when you look into low self-concept that can arise from more but similar kind of identities.

Let us say there are two identities. You are looking at the example of Dushyant. He is a manager. He is a manager at the particular job which is a manufacturing plant. He is also an engineer. So different roles which he is having is one of a manager, another of an engineer and similar role, maybe a trainer.

So all these roles if you see are least correlated among themselves. But if you look into situations like he being the same person who is a manager, who is a father, let us say who is a friend, at some point he is a student, all these have different complexities. So there the self-concept is relatively high. So varied identities having low correlation with each other add to more complexity. So let us look into self-concept or self-concept in terms of complexity.

Now there could be a situation where people are different. Let us say some individuals who are managers, who also happen to be engineers, who also happen to be trainers at those particular points. So, there is a low correlation among people who are existing there. When you are looking into low correlation, there are individuals who say let us look into a situation where low correlation, how it actually translates into more complexity. Let us look into situations where you are an engineer at one point, you are a father at another point, you are a let us say a friend at another point, you are a student at a totally different context.

So all these situations there is low correlation with each of these roles. In such cases the complexity is high and that is where the self-concept is more refined. So, the point which varied identities having low correlation with each other add to more complexity and this makes the self more consistent. So, consistency is low when self-views require personal attributes that conflict with attributes required for other self-views. Let us take an example of a safety officer engaging in a risky sport.

So, the moment you are putting in the concept of a safety officer, the moment you are bringing in safety officer into picture, you have a certain perception about the guy or the girl. So, this particular perception does not go matching or hand in hand with that of a person engaged in a risky sport. So, you are not trying or you are not comfortable in assuming that a person who is actually a safety officer will also get into something like a risky sport. So, this concept or this is against the consistency principle. So, consistency is low in those situations.

For example, we are looking at administrator of an educational institution. We are looking at a principal of a school. All these situations we are also hoping or assuming that these individuals are good at teaching. So, this is where the consistency has become high. They have reached the position, they have reached the apex of that educational institution, however low, however high it is because of their excellent teaching skills and their acumen towards learning and teaching. So, this is what consistency in terms of self-concept means.

And basically, clarity increases through self-reflection. If I have an understanding of what I am, what I am and I have that understanding with greater clarity because of the self-reflection, what all are my strengths, what all are my weaknesses, how it could be dealt. We will look into different aspects like self-efficacy etc. in the coming slides. So how will be I reflecting myself in certain situations actually puts clarity into my self-concept.

So basically, if you look into self-concept characteristics and process, there are four. One is self-enhancement, two is self-verification, three is self-evaluation and the fourth one is social self.

Let us look into self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is the inherent motivation to have a positive self-concept. Every now and then every single individual strives to attain this. No doubt we all have a specific self-concept associated with ourselves. But every single point, be it in terms of your work, be it in your studies, be it in your realm, in terms of your family or society, always the attempt is to become a better person. In other words, the attempt is to motivate yourself to gather some momentum and become or develop a

positive self-concept. This is self-enhancement to have others perceive us favourably, to have others look us favourably.

For example, let people look us and understand that okay this is the go-to person, this is the person if you want to understand about this concept you have to go to this particular person. You have to understand about this working of the machine. Let us say it is a CNC machine. You want the know-how of that particular machine. Okay this is the go-to person. This is the self-enhancement that every individual will strive to achieve. Perceived as being competent, attractive, lucky, ethical and important. This is the attempt of every single individual when it comes to self. That is self-enhancement. I repeat when it comes to every single individual, every single individual the attempt is to be perceived as being competent, attractive, lucky, ethical and important and you are going to do anything for that within the workplace. This is self-enhancement.

Let us look into self-verification. Self-verification on the other hand is the inherent motivation to confirm and maintain his or her existing self-concept. So, I have made a self-concept. I have reflected myself. I have introspected myself. I have understood what am I, what I can do. So based on that self-concept I have understood. Let us say you introspect yourself and you try to understand that yes you are a good leader. You are a very good administrator. Now the moment you look into your organization you see that okay people are not talking like that. They are not so keen in defining you as a very good administrator for various reasons.

Now when in self-verification comes the ability to take unconditional feedback. You are ready to take feedback even if it is negative, even if it is not desirable you are going to take the feedback, accept it, change course or make the necessary course correction and be a better person. So, this is what self-verification is. So, the moment you understand that your concept is of a good administrator but you tend to understand that in practicality in the world of practice this is not what is exactly happening. What do you do? You tend to verify that and you tend to do the course correction, the necessary course correction associated with that. This is self-verification.

So, for that you will try, let us say you are talking about a particular manager, a manager who is not let us say very much known for his timing or let us say for his discipline with the time management. So let us say he starts hearing this, he takes this feedback and he schedules a meeting in such a way that the meeting would start at 10 a.m. and would end at 10.30. So, he is very particular in keeping the deadlines. He is very particular in mentioning the deadlines of the task to be completed and he is very particular if the tasks are not turned out, if it is not submitted, he is going to take punitive actions against the concerned employees. So, in those situations there is self-verification of the self-concept of being a very efficient leader, being a leader who is very particular about time

management that is happening. So basically, self-verification stabilizes individual's self-view.

That particular person was having a self-view that he is a good leader. So that view he is having or he is maintaining that gets stabilized, provides an important anchor that guides their thoughts and actions. If they feel that they are a good leader and the things are not working according to what they thought then there is obviously that course correction you are doing and it stays as an anchor, it stays as a particular mechanism whereby you can actually be a better leader, reflect on yourself.

The third aspect is self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is enshrined or are embellished by three important concepts in OB which is self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control. It is very critical you understand these three particular concepts very critically.

Self-esteem is the extent to which people like, respect and are satisfied with themselves. This is very particular. So many a time there are individuals who like, respect others but how many situations, how many contexts, how many times you try to like, respect and get satisfied with yourself. This is the key for self-esteem. Whatever be the condition, whatever be the criticism, whatever be the objection you are facing, whatever be the hurdles, the barriers you are facing. If you are an individual who is having high self-esteem you know yourself, you know what you are, you know what you are up to or what your strengths are, you have a respect to yourself, you have a satisfaction with what you can do, you have an understanding of what you can do and you always have a satisfaction of what you have achieved over the period. That is the high self-esteem that you are talking about.

The second important concept is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a person's belief that they have the ability, the motivation, correct role perceptions and even favourable situations to complete a task successfully. So, you have to remember that there should be the ability, the motivation, the required motivation, correct role perception, what you are, what you perceive the role as. If you are a manager you have to show the necessary leadership skills associated with that particular role. If you are a workman you have to show the skills or let's say it's a job that demands finger dexterity. So, you have to display that you have the essential finger dexterity associated with that particular job, the favourable situation to complete a task successfully. Self-efficacy comes with lot of self-confidence because it is nothing but the ability in the first place.

It is the ability of the individual. The moment you are seeing that okay this is a job, this is a task which demands these many activities and all these activities I am qualified to do, I am skillful to do, I am able to do. The basic ability triggers the motivation. You are motivated both intrinsically as well as extensively, more intrinsically. Correct role

perceptions, you know what exactly you are supposed to do.

You know exactly what the demands of the job are. Favourable situation to complete the task successfully. Having said everything, you have the ability, you have the right motivation, you have the correct role perception but still you are unable to execute the task successfully then there is no self-efficacy. Self-efficacy comes with a certain result orientation. Self-efficacy gives you the task orientation or the result completion.

The third important aspect is locus of control. This is very critical in organisational behaviour management. A person's general belief about the amount of control they have over personal life events. So, what is the amount of control they have over personal life events? Let's take an example. Again, let's take an example of Akshay. Now Akshay is a person who comes into an organisation with vast experience and he is being given a leadership role the moment he arrives.

But the problem with Akshay is whenever things go unexpected, whenever things happen in a non-desirable way, he tends to put the blame on others. You can contact the higher authority or it was a blunder committed by the subordinate. So, you see all these excuses. So, Akshay is a person who is having more of external locus of control.

Internal locus of control is when people have the belief that they can do it. They are qualified enough to achieve this particular task. They are qualified enough to obtain the desired result. This is locus of control specifically internal locus of control. Many organisations mostly prefer people with larger internal locus of control. I repeat a person's general belief about the amount of control they have over their personal life events is what the locus of control is and the moment you have greater internal locus of control, if the loci of control is more internalized, it is more under your control, you tend to show the authority with the responsibility.

You are given a responsibility. You don't shy away saying that you don't have the authority. People with high internal locus of control, the moment they are given a responsibility, they take the authority associated with that responsibility also in their hand and try to execute the task in a very critical and clear and crisp manner. This is what locus of control is. So, the self-evaluation is embellished by these three concepts. One is self-esteem, another is self-efficacy and the third one is the locus of control.

Now let's come into the social self. The social self is the perception of the individual self-concept exists at individual, relational and collective level. So, these three aspects are very critical to recognize to opposing human motives that influence how individuals view themselves. One is the motivation to be distinctive and different from others. That's the

first and the key motivation.

The second is the motivation for inclusion and assimilation with other people. So, the many a time what you understand is you tend to get into a group, you have two intentions. One is to establish how different you are, how capable you are from the rest of the group, how different but you are more expert, you are more different but technically more qualified, you are different but more articulative. So, all these aspects tend to show that how different you are from the group. But in the same manner you are also having an urge to form an identity with a particular group.

Okay, this is a particular group I am associated. I am associated with XYZ organization. So, this is my identity. This is the social self which we are talking about. Social identity theory has emerged out of this and rides around the background of social self. So social identity says, identity theory says that people define themselves by the groups to which they belong or have an emotional attachment.

Let's understand an individual social identity. Many a time in India you will see that people are telling that they are an Indian citizen. They are an Indian citizen. This is a time where people tend to showcase their identity, showcase their Indian citizen. Some are very proud in saying I am an American citizen, I am an Australian citizen, I am a Canadian citizen.

So this is what the social identity is and there are situations where these identities are questioned. There are situations where some Indians are more Indians than other Indians. There are situations where some Americans are more Americans than other Americans. There are these situations where these are questioned. So, an individual social identity specifically could be one, being an Indian citizen, let's take our case, is an Indian Institute of Technology graduate? That could be again another identity. There could be situation like he is a Tata Steel employee or any organization for that matter where he or she is associated with.

So employees at other firms could be one, citizens of other countries could be another, graduates of other school or any dimension which you can think of which can lead them to associate themselves to that particular identity. This is what is critical in terms of social identity theory. I repeat social identity theory is where people define themselves by the groups to which they belong or have an emotional attachment. So many a time we tend to associate ourselves as an individual who belong to this particular company, who belongs to that particular segment of region or who belong to this particular group, who belong to this particular organization or in general who is a particular graduate from this particular eminent institution or who is product of this eminent school. So many a time you tend to

see that social identities are developed like that and social identities are discriminated also like that.

Let's look into a simple case of self-concept and organizational behavior. Making organization a part of employees' social identity specific to a case of Starbucks. Starbucks coffee company has become a success story in China by making the American coffee house chain an integral part of employees' social identity. It does this in several ways. First employees who are called partners easily connect with Starbucks core values of performance, innovation, respect and belonging.

Second, Starbucks has positioned itself as a premium brand which further elevates employee pride. The company offers competitive pay, comprehensive health insurance and employee ownership plan, housing allowance for full-time staff and ongoing training and career development. Starbucks staff also proudly identify with their employer because of its well-known emphasis on families, an important value of course in Chinese culture. The company holds an annual partner family forum where employees and their parents learn about Starbucks and its future in China. The chain has also recently introduced special critical illness insurance for employees, elderly parents. We have always aspired to create a culture that our employees are proud to belong to, says an executive at Starbucks Asia Pacific.

So, basically when Starbucks ventured into China it understood that there is a whole together different game that has to be played and this is the successful case of creating that perception of Starbucks having a social identity which is related to the Chinese culture which is enshrined in the Chinese culture. So, this is basically how you get attuned, get affiliated, get attached to a particular social identity. Now let us look into perceptual organization and interpretation very quickly.

You have two important concepts coming your way. One is categorical thinking. When you are looking into categorical thinking it is nothing but organizing people and objects into perceived categories that are stored in our long-term memory. For example, people are usually grouped together according to their observable similarity. Many a time you tend to categorize people in terms of gender, age, race etc. So, we had discussed this in detail in module 2 in diversity about categorization which led to a negative aspect of stereotyping, prejudice and thereby discrimination. I am not going into that but when it comes to perception you have to understand that there is a categorical thinking and I have already given examples and the reasons for that.

One could be the energy conservation policy. Second could be to look people in a favorable or unfavorable way as per the requirement of the case. So basically, categorical

thinking is organizing people and objects into perceived categories that are stored in our long-term memory in a great ease. So basically gender, age, race could be examples to that. Then there is existence of something called as mental models.

Mental models are knowledge structures that we develop to describe, explain and predict the world around us. For example, let us look into mental models or roadmaps of guiding our perception. Visual it could be or relational images in our mind. What is in a close workspace, when to greet a colleague, how to talk to an elderly person, how to interact with let us say an office colleague who is senior to you, how to interact with the office colleague who is senior to you but a fellow college mate, how to interact with the person who is senior to you but was junior to you in the college. So, all these different dimensions come in and there are certain mental models you develop within the organization structure.

So just introspect within yourself. The moment you are walking into your company, you see there are let us say there are four, five individuals, there are five individuals. You have a specific way of greeting, talking, interacting with person one which is drastically different from talking, interacting, greeting with person two which could be similar but yet different in talking, greeting and interacting with person three. So, all these communication patterns are established and embellished by the mental models that are there in your mind. So mental models are nothing but knowledge structures that we develop to describe, explain and to predict the world around us.

Let me conclude with the perceptual process model. If you recall the beginning of the class, the theme of the class was to take in all the information, all the information, process the information and interpret the world around us. This is specifically what the perceptual process model is all about. It takes in care of the entire environmental stimuli. It uses all the senses right from feeling, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, all the different senses are being put to use.

There might be situations where there are selective attention and emotional marker response. Selective attention could be situations where you do not want to actually identify a person as a bad person because you have an inherent liking to the particular person. So, you tend to see only good things about a particular person. Vice versa, there are situations where you loathe a particular individual, you hate that particular individual. So, with respect to he or she, you would always try to bring in different negativities or try to bring in complaints or what were the negative points associated with those particular individuals. So, you tend to be selective in taking in the stimuli and when you are taking in the stimuli, you associate an emotional marker response.

There are situations when you tend to associate a person with worry, you tend to associate a person with excitement or you tend to associate a person with danger. These are all what is called as emotional marker response and the reason for that emotional marker response is that brings or pushes these individuals directly to your long-term memory. It stays there in your long-term memory because you have associated that particular stimuli to that emotional marker which in turn is going to stay in your long-term memory for a greater point in time. So, this is the selective attention and emotional marker response which leads to what is called as perceptual organization and interpretation which we all started our lecture with.

This is what gives meaning to the world around us. This is what gives meaning to the person whom we are dealing with. This gives meaning to the person or to the organization in which we are working at. Every single entity gets the meaning because of this perceptual process model and finally all the reactions that are displayed, all the attitudes, all the predisposition towards them in terms of their activities, in terms of their performance are displayed because of these particular reactions. There could be also situations of confirmation bias which is a problem of selective attention. I have already mentioned. Non-conscious tendency of people to screen out information, screen out information that is contrary to the decisions, beliefs, values and assumptions while more readily accepting information that confirms existing perceptions and attitudes.

You might be a person who might not be able to take in a different attitude, a perception about an entity. So, you tend to be very selective in taking the stimuli, taking the inputs, taking the information. This may lead you to confirmation bias. In nutshell you may feel that one individual is good and one individual is bad. Let's say individual A is good and individual B is bad

There is a perception that has happened that individual A is good and individual B is bad. You have got in certain information which has transferred you to different reactions which have transferred you to give you some output. So, all these two behavioral variations, these two behavioral variations specifically lead you to establish that A is good and B is bad. Whatever be the different input you are getting, you might be getting different input that A has done something bad which goes against which is counter purpose to your success in the organization or your career progress. But still you are a victim of confirmation bias. You want to stick to what you know about that particular individual. So, perception is all about gathering the information, gathering the stimuli and giving responses, giving or understanding the world around us in that way.

Thank you for listening to this class. That will be all with this particular lecture. See you in the next lecture. Thank you. Bye bye.