Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week – 05

Lecture – 01

Lecture 21: Understanding self and personality

Hello students. Welcome back to the course on Organizational Behaviour, Individual Dynamics in Organization. Today we move to the module 5, where we look into one of the most critical aspects across this course and across the human life which is personality.

So, the first lecture would be more on understanding the self and the personality.

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So let us look into today's theme, the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. I hope you might be clear on what I am discussing today, nothing other than personality. So, before that let us understand what is or what do you mean by self-concept, the I in the organizational behaviour. This is self-concept.

Now many a time we tend to say that there is no I in organization, it is more about we, it is more about the group but there is certainly an I in organization and that is nothing but self-concept and this is equally relevant if not more. So, self-concept specifically refers to an individual's self-beliefs and self-evaluations.

There are two things, one is self-belief. Self-belief is more in line with the self-efficacy, I can do it, that is my belief or I have a certain belief that this could be a solution to the problem or there are some causes of the particular problem or there might be some reasoning associated with the particular issue. So, all these are self-beliefs and when you actually do a bit of evaluation, self-evaluation, it gives you a firm understanding of what you are talking about or what you are discussing about.

So it is the who am I and how do I feel about myself that people ask themselves and that guide the decisions and actions. Many a time you see in your organization, you go back and see there is a pertinent question and if you trace back to the Indian Vedas and

traditional philosophies you will see that who am I is a basic question that has been asked time and again. But when you go to the organization specifically you come up with a different question, how do I feel about myself.

Now there might be some understanding that who am I because as the experience comes in you might have developed some understanding of the particular problem or what about yourself you might have observed or understood the way you perform because you are always with you. So knowing that you might have obtained or observed a certain level of understanding but when you actually move into the organization and to the hierarchies of the organization you generally get this question how do I feel about myself, some decisions gone wrong, some issues emerging within your team or some problems within the organization, some deadlines not able to meet, some revenue targets not able to meet.

So all these situations will make you ask a question how do you feel about yourself from the point where you are being positioned within the organization. So, people do not have a single unitary self-concept, please understand this, rather they think of themselves in several ways in various situations. I might be looking into as a manager or I might be might be performing as a manager in one situation whereas in the same organization I might be performing as a subordinate to somebody else. Similarly, you have different roles to do within your life, you might be a father or you might be a mother, you might be a teacher elsewhere, you might be let us say a manager elsewhere, you might be let us say a data scientist or you might be let us say an office attendant. So, whatever be the job it does not matter but there are different self-associated with each particular individual. So the three structural dimensions of self-concept hovers around one complexity, two consistency and three clarity.

I repeat complexity, it is not a simple thing that you tend to say that okay this is myself, I am not going to change it, it never happens like that. You tend to evolve; it is more like the experience you gain and it is less like the attitude you have. So, attitude is a relatively permanent learned enduring predisposition whereas when you look into the self-concept it emerges, it evolves, complexity is one aspect or one element that defines the evolving or the emergence of yourself. When you are talking about complexity at one point in time you remain same.

You are a stubborn individual, sometimes you see that let us take a very very general example. Sometimes you feel that a person is very strict, he was a very strict father, sometimes too much harsh in the child rearing practices or let us say in disciplining his children but when it came to his grandkids or grandchildren, he might be very soft. So, there is an evolution that has happened with respect to the change that has happened. So, consistency was there during that period, the initial frame of the reference where he was a parent but then there was a shift and then now there is a consistency in the later point in

time. So more or less there is a consistency that is happening but it does not mean that it is not happening. It means that every time the self remains intact, it might go for a change and this should have a clarity because if you are not having the clarity of what you are specifically, how do you feel about yourself, you might have a difficult time altogether because you might be pretending then to be somebody else. So that is a very dangerous situation which you need not get into.

So, another important aspect when you discuss self is self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is a key ingredient in self-concept, it is a desire to feel valued because many a time you feel that you are not valued then you tend to enhance. It might be through a training program, it might be through watching somebody, observing somebody, imitating somebody, modeling somebody or it might be through maybe you tend to take a leave, you tend to travel around, you gain more experience, gain more wisdom.

So self-enhancement can happen many ways, it is observed in many ways. Individuals tend to rate themselves above average, selectively recall positive feedback. Many a time, in fact most of the human beings are biased in this aspect, they tend to selectively recall, selectively recall positive feedback. There might be some negative feedbacks that have come your way but you do not remember that unfortunately and this is the reason for self-enhancement. While forgetting negative feedback there are individuals, most of us belong to this category where we tend to selectively recall positive feedback and believe that they have a better than average probability of success.

Many a time we call this sometimes as we try to give it a fancy name as fundamental attribution or sometimes. It is not exactly the same thing but there is a bit of connection between this. You tend to see that if something bad is happening or if I am doing something bad it is mainly because of the context but if somebody else is doing that then it is mainly because of you know his or her personality or his or her character that is actually guiding that. So, self-enhancement has both positive and negative consequences in organizational settings. So, it depends on what channel you are going to take in terms of self-enhancement.

 Another important aspect when it comes to self is self-verification. Self-verification is all about being motivated by self-enhancement. People are motivated to verify and maintain the existing self-concept because many a time you tend to believe that this is you and you need to have a verification or validation that this is exactly you. So, you might not be thinking that you have changed but sometimes somebody else in your family or you are your co-worker, your co-employee or somebody who is a close friend or a confidant he might or she might be telling you have changed. So self-verification becomes essentially critical to establish or to understand or to underscore the fact that you are having a

consistent self throughout.

So self-verification stabilizes an individual's self-concept which in turn provides an important anger that guides his or her thoughts and actions. If you tend to believe that you are a changed man, so the way you might be behaving in the previous scenario might be totally against what you are actually behaving in now or there might be a drastic difference in your behavior patterns. There might be a drastic difference in terms of how you are actually trying to approach a task. Sometimes you might be very optimistic, sometimes you suddenly become very pessimistic. So, all these aspects have to be checked or cross checked by self-verification.

Self-verification has several implications for organizational behavior because it is one of the corner stone to actually establish the self-concept because the consistency of self-concept or what you are, the basic understanding has to be clear if you want to perform better in an organizational setup.

Now, when we are talking about self-verification, let us also look into self-evaluation. Self-evaluation almost everyone strives to have a positive self-concept. There is no doubt about it because we tend to believe that yes, I need to have a positive self-concept, I appreciate myself, I can do it and I love this feeling that I am capable to do it rather than the opposite one. But some people have more positive evaluation of themselves than others.

This is dangerous especially when you think that okay, I can do anything. Sometimes there are certain barriers we should acknowledge and appreciate. Sometimes there are certain situations or contexts which are beyond your control and you cannot actually execute it properly or whatever the task assigned to you. In your organization let us say you might be having a demanding manager. You or she might be telling that you have to take up this task.

I just remember one incident here in my previous organization where I was working. I was having a discussion, it was a meeting and there was one technical head, we can call him a technical lead and the manager was quite demanding. He wanted some content from a mail of some employee who has resigned but the password was not given or something like that was happening. So, this particular technical lead was asked to actually get the or fetch the password. So, some other way he was not able to do it.

The manager is just casually telling that okay then please you crack the Gmail. So, this person who should have opposed that because there are certain established protocols and it is not that an easy task that you can just venture into or go into anybody's Gmail and just hack it or something like that. It's not an impossible task but it is relatively a difficult

task and it is not a task which is required. But he being the person who he wants to accept everything, his self-evaluation is so much boosted that he said okay can be done in a week's time and it never happened. The thing is the point I brought this experience out is that sometimes we tend to have an evaluation about ourselves but many a time we tend to overestimate ourselves and this is also wrong. When you have a positive evaluation that is much beyond the reality then it may cause harm to you rather than doing good to you.

Self-evaluation therefore refers to the process of reflecting on and assessing one's own thoughts, feelings, behaviours, strengths, weaknesses, achievements and even areas for improvement. We tend to stop at there. We don't go for the areas of improvement but please note that having understood what you are, what are your grey areas, what are your areas where you need development, you need to find time for that too. You also need to understand self-evaluation and steps to conduct a self-evaluation and those steps to conduct a self-evaluation are one identify strengths and weaknesses, what you are, what you are not, what you can, what you cannot.

All these aspects will give you a clear understanding of where you stand and what you can do and what a self you are actually possessing and that will actually lead you to reflect.

Reflection is another important thing rather than just having a cursory understanding of what you are identifying or doing a SWOT analysis of what you are especially with respect to the strengths and weakness more than that if you are in a position to reflect on all those strengths and weaknesses and especially start working on those weaknesses then you have a better self-evaluation and you have a better self that is going to evolve.

Another important aspect would be goal assessment and you are looking into aspects of goals you tend to see that whether it is achievable. If you are in a position to actually achieve that particular goal then goal assessment becomes very critical, it becomes an easy task for you. feedback please do take the feedback that is coming your way not only the positive ones but also the negative one.

Many a time as I have already clarified we have a tendency to go only to go for only selective positive feedbacks that will not help you to nurture a better self and your self-evaluation will ultimately fail if you are in a mood to take only positive strong positive feedbacks please do not be selective in taking your feedbacks also try to take critical feedbacks that are against you that will enhance you that will allow you to work towards your weakness and mitigate them and be or develop a better self.

Values and beliefs can also enhance the self-evaluation because sometimes you tend to see or overlook some beliefs and then you tend to conduct a self-evaluation which goes wrong. Challenges and challenges should be notable and should be measurable. Many a

time you feel that you tend to sit on the past laurels and you stop working hard. Sometimes there are more challenges then you feel that you are getting undermined or you are getting bogged down you cannot work because you are not capable to rise above the challenges that also will create a problem.

If necessary, seek support for your self-evaluation. Sometimes your friend, your spouse, your family, your parents or the people who are near and dear to you they might be in a position to you know correctly evaluate yourself or sometimes even a stranger who is coming across having a casual conversation might be able to give a hint about yourself.

So please tend to seek support if you are not able to undertake a clear self-evaluation on yourself. Regular assessment is also required because many a time you tend to see that once you do a self-assessment, please note that there is some level of consistency but again as I mentioned it evolves as time goes. So that particular stage where whether it has evolved somebody has to capture it and for that regular assessment is vital.

Now coming to the main critical dimensions of self-evaluation, the self-evaluation is mostly defined by three concepts. One is self-esteem, another is self-efficacy and the third one is locus of control. Very quickly self-esteem is all about the respect you give, all about the respect you have for yourself. You have certain achieve something, you have certain respect about yourself, you had your own constraints, you had your own problems, you overcome them, you had you know a very adverse environment while growing up or something like you had very difficult people to actually navigate through. All these situations you were resilient and that gives a boost to your self-esteem. That defines the self-esteem, the respect you give to yourself.

The second important aspect is the self-efficacy angle. We will have a detailed discussion in module ten when it comes to self-efficacy where I will try to link it with the mindfulness and psychological capital etc. It is more of I can do attitude. It is more of that okay this is the task; it is doable and I will do it. That is the level of the understanding or reflection you need to have about yourself and that is what self-efficacy is all about.

And finally, locus of control. What are the things in your control? Whether there are certain situations where it is beyond your control. So, locus of control if it is within your circle, it is within your zone, within your locus, within the zone where you can control things then that defines that you are a more refined individual. There might be certain environmental factors, there might be certain contextual factors which are beyond your locus of control which you cannot control.

But please try to understand there are always majority of factors or elements that are lying inside the locus of control. Inside your locus of control but still you are not able to

actually deliver it or create an impact or take control over the things which are inside your locus of control. So, these three critical concepts define or act as the pillars of self-evaluation.

Now let us come quickly to personality. Very quickly we will touch personality and we will discuss this in detail.

Personality refers to the unique set of characteristics, traits, behaviours and patterns of thinking that define an individual's distinctive and consistent way of interacting with the world. A lot of important aspects that have come or words that have come your way. One is that it is a unique set of characteristics. So sometimes you have a different personality from others is because it is unique. It might not be similar to others even twins might not have the same personality.

There are studies which have actually shown that. It might be a set of traits so that gives some innate concept into it. But everything is not innate we will come to that. Behaviours and also patterns of thinking that define an individual distinctive and consistent way of interacting with the world. So how a person specifically interacts with the world that is what defines the personality of that particular individual.

It encompasses a wide range of elements including as I already mentioned traits which brings in the nature element, behavioural patterns, cognitive style, emotional patterns and even motivation more into the nurture-based angle. So, this is where or this is what personality is all about. Personality is not simple aspect. Personality is a complex aspect when it comes to understanding of personality because it encompasses a lot of things, traits, behavioural patterns, cognitive styles, emotional patterns and motivations.

Now let us understand very quickly how do you measure personality.

Research has shown personality tests are useful in hiring decisions and help managers to actually forecast who is best for a job. So, there are certain personality tests which can be used for your recruitment and selection purposes, where you actually judge the person on what personality or what type of personality specifically, he or she is. There are also observer rating service. Observer rating service provide an independent assessment of the personality whereby you are actually going for a third-party assessment and he or she actually adjudicates or he or she actually judges the personality of you as an individual.

The most common means of measuring personality is through self-report service. So we have the third party or observer rating service no doubt about it but more impactful would be to ask the same person, bring it out from the person being a latent variable some skills can be used or inventories can be used whereby self-report service can be used whereby we are actually bringing out what personality he or she is with which individuals evaluate

themselves on a series of factors and can finally conclude that this type of personality is what I am or this is not the personality that I am. So, this would be more accurate, this is more used for that purpose and an analysis of large number of observer reported personality studies shows that a combination because we have seen that there are self-report studies also and there are observatory ratings also. So ideally if you want to have a holistic understanding of the personality of the individuals working in an organization or the area under your consideration it could be better to go for a combination of self-report and observer reports which predicts performance better than any other type of input. So, you are trying to mix up the best of the two things in the world and that you are trying to mix up the best two factors which will give you or best two measures which will give you the clear and accurate picture about the personality. And finally, the elephant in the room personality determinants.

We have the nature versus nurture debate we are not venturing into that but please remember personality is both dictated by heredity as well as environment. Please make a note of it, it's not only that the heredity it plays a vital role no doubt about it but environment also significantly plays a role on personality. So, when it comes to organization, when it comes to organization how you define an individual is as important as how others define you and how others define you is more of the way you interact or the way you behave with others and for that reason personality is one of the most vital elements in actually distinguishing you from another individual within the organization. How the people judge you as a good person, how the people judge you as a person who is not good or cannot be approached it all depends on your personality that makes personality all the more relevant. We will discuss more about personality in the coming lectures till then take care bye-bye.