Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week – 09

Lecture – 04

Lecture 44: Theories of learning- 2

Hello students. Welcome back to the course on Organizational Behavior, Individual Dynamics in Organization. We move to the fourth lecture of the module 9 where we look into learning. In the previous lectures we have looked into learning specifically with respect to some of the theories associated with that. We looked into classical conditioning, we looked into operant conditioning but man is always a social animal. So, we look into the social learning today specifically.

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So, today's theme for the lecture is "it is difficult to document or explain in a conversation all the steps necessary to bake professional quality bread".

So this gives an insight into some element of knowledge which is always tacit. Tacit knowledge is what is vital and critical when it comes to an organization and it is always pain point when we look into that how to retrieve that, how to understand that or how to essentially codify that. So, on basis of that we will start with today's lecture where we look into social learning and specifically social cognitive theory. Now social learning as I have already mentioned that man is a social animal. There might be some restrictions or some conditions specifically when we look into let us say classical conditioning or operant conditioning where we are guided by certain stimuli or we respond to a certain stimuli.

There might be situations where we are actually responding to a certain reinforcement. It could be based on a punishment or it could be a reinforcement in a positive manner. That said we have to understand the human element. We cannot undermine the presence of human mind. So, this brings us to social cognitive theory.

Social learning theory specifically states that learning occurs by observing others and then modeling the behaviors, those behaviors which have been observed that lead to favorable outcomes and avoiding behaviors that lead to punishing consequences. Now this is common sense. We look into a particular individual. We observe him within our organization. We see that let us understand this from an example.

We see that an individual is getting awarded or recognized for a certain level of work he or she has done. So, we tend to model that individual. We tend to follow that particular individual and we tend to remodel and basically, we tend to recreate the whole performance of that particular individual. Now that is a positive case. We have also seen instances when let us say one of our teammates within the organization has been reprimanded by the boss or maybe an higher authority for something that he or she has done.

So possibility is that we tend to stay away from that task or that activity. So, this is basically nutshell what you mean by social learning theory. Sort of an observation learning and we should be thankful to Albert Bandura for this bringing in the social element into the learning.

So, when you are looking into learning of this form, it essentially occurs in three ways. One behavior modeling, second learning behavior consequences and third is self-reinforcement.

Specifically when we look into behavior modeling specifically, people learn by observing others behavior no doubt about it as I have already established this in the previous example. It could be a role model who has done or who is doing a critical task, remembering the important elements associated with observed behaviors and then practicing those behaviors.

So let us say when we were observing that particular individual, we found out that the document management system of that particular individual was very immaculate or so efficient. So we tend to actually observe that particular quality or maybe we observe that an individual is able to achieve greater highs within the organization because of behavioral pattern to his subordinates, to the people who does not actually or cannot influence on any of his decision but still he is very courteous and when it comes to any level of support within the organization he is getting in that in plenty because of his behavioral tendency or behavior specific to the people who are below his scatter in the organization that could be one thing. So, there are some aspects when we look into a one particular individual we tend to actually imbibe or we generally tend to learn from him or her.

So this is behavior modeling and it comes to learning behavior consequences as I have already mentioned we will see into we focus into the consequence part. People learn the consequences of behavior through logic and observation not just through direct experience. When a person is being reprimanded, when a person is being rebuked or he is being shouted upon we see or we tend to connect it with a certain logic why this behavioral pattern or why this exchange of interaction has happened is it some flow of him or if it is some temperamental issues of the senior or the boss. So, all these aspects have to be logically connected and that logical connect will guide us towards that learning. So social learning is not just direct experience.

Let us say I am putting two individuals I am putting John and Smith in the same organization, same team, same work and within the team John sees that Smith is being reprimanded by his boss. Now because he was in direct contact or he was in direct experience or he has experienced it directly does not pertain to a learning experience rather most importantly here John will try to connect it with the links that he has obtained he will try to connect the dots why let us say the boss let us say Mr. Peterson has reprimanded Smith. So, all these aspects have to be logically seen or logically understood and that is where that is when learning specifically happens. So, it does not mean that I come into a vicinity of a particular individual and learning happens there it does not happen like that. Rather more than that it is the influence or it is the logical and the observational power of that particular individual that leads to the learning.

Another important aspect when it comes to social learning is self-reinforcement. Self-reinforcement occurs whenever an employee has control over a particular reinforcer but does not take it actually without completing the set goals. So let us understand this with an example. Say you are students and let us say you want to complete an assignment and you have set a goal for yourself that I will not get up from my study table unless and until I complete the assignment and once I get it done the assignment part I can actually read the refrigerator or I can have a cookie or I can have a piece of cake or something like that.

So there is some reinforcer or some reinforcement specifically that you have identified but you are going to take only that when you have a certain level of task accomplishment that is coming to you. This is specifically self-reinforcement. So, you have three aspects when it comes to social learning that is behavioral modeling, learning behavior consequences and self-reinforcement. So, when you are looking into social learning specifically the theoretical approach to learning was the first to combine and integrate both behaviorist as well as cognitive concepts. If you recall the previous lecture, I was very much vociferous articulating about the behaviorist approach.

External elements actually trigger the behavior but when it comes to the second part of

theoretical understanding in learning we should understand that cognitive concepts they are also relevant and it emphasized the interactive reciprocal nature of cognitive behavioral and environmental determinants. So, it is not just environmental determinants it is more of the cognitive element that is coming into picture when it comes to social learning. So, this is something which I mentioned in my previous lecture that it is not correct to say that your behavior, my behavior is actually only guided by external stimuli. There might be some situations where I am looking into a particular person more than looking and observing a particular person more than observing I am actually logically trying to connect his behavioral tendencies with some outcome and based on that some learning is happening. Ladies and gentlemen that is social learning.

Now when we look into social learning, we should also appreciate social cognition. Now social cognition the theory has emerged in recent years to go beyond the social learning theory. Social cognitive theory extends learning and or modifying behavior by giving more attention to self-regulatory mechanisms. Now let us look into the different factors associated with social cognitive theory. It identifies five capabilities specifically that people use to initiate, regulate and sustain their behavior.

So this is a pure form of behavior entirety or how the behavior is being presented or displayed in front of you. How it is initiated, how it is regulated and finally how the behavior is sustained. So, the different elements or different capabilities are one is symbolizing, you tend to symbolize with respect to some individuals, some behavioral representations. There is a forethought given vicarious modeling.

Vicarious modeling is when you are actually trying to model a particular person usually somebody who is more related to you. In one of the lectures in this course I will try to elaborate on this but at this point vicarious modeling for you will be something where I can actually try to model somebody. Now in vicarious modeling you have to understand that if I want to actually let us say be a better cricketer I can see and observe let us say Virat Kohli, I can see and observe Sachin Tendulkar or Brian Lara or any grades of the game within the television parameters and I can see, observe how they make each shot, I can understand how the ballers are bowling all these aspects could be modeled but there is a constraint there with respect to the relatedness.

So, the level of talent I have an inherent understanding that a level of talent I am possessing whatever good cricketer I may be I might not match Virat Kohli, I might not match Sachin Tendulkar for that matter rather if I am trying to observe my friend let us say Ketan, he is playing a shot with such a finesse, such ease then I would try to observe that and understand the very fact that if he can play that I can also do that. So, this is specifically vicarious modeling where you tend to relate the learning or the modeling part with somebody who is close to you rather than very big figure or rather than a celebrity in

that case. So, another important point when it comes to social cognitive theory is self-regulation and finally self-reflection.

There cannot be any learning that can happen without self-regulation. The control in learning is essentially made by self-regulation and when you are actually made or monitored your behavior you tend to reflect on that and that is where self-learning or self-reflection happens and learning happens through self-reflection.

When you look into the different principles of learning specifically, reinforcement and punishment, these are two important keywords reinforcement and punishment play a vital role in the learning process and they provide evidence-based principle for behavioral performance management. Now most learning experts generally agree that reinforcement is more critical than punishment and is the single most important concept and application principle. So when you are looking into any aspects of theory or any theoretical understanding in learning, any principles of learning you have to understand this basic philosophy that most of them agree with one fact that reinforcement is better than punishment.

There are some organizational systems, please take a moment and reflect on your organization, whether your organization categorically depends on or categorically focuses on punishment or is your organization more focused on reinforcement, giving some level of recognition, giving some level of appreciation that would add to reinforcement rather are you always reprimanded, are you always scolded, shouted, and ridiculed then you are in a system which is triggered by more of a punishment based mechanism.

So, the first theoretical treatment given to reinforcement in learning and the framework that still dominates today is the work of the pioneering psychologist Edward Thorndike's classic law of effect. Let's look into law of effect. Behaviors specifically that are followed by favorable or satisfying consequences become more likely to be repeated in the future while behaviors that are followed by unfavorable or unsatisfying consequences become less likely to be repeated. Now when we hear this it seems or it sounds bit complex but trust me it's very simple when you are looking into a behavioral pattern let's say there's a favorable outcome or a consequence then we are more likely to adapt that behavior.

When we are observing a behavior and we see that the consequence related to or associated to that behavior is essentially negative we tend to stay away from that behavior this is common knowledge and this is what is called as a law of effect from a strictly empirical point of view most behavioral scientists specifically even those with a very strict cognitive orientation generally accept the validity of this law.

If you basically understand the weightage of this particular statement you will tend to appreciate that when you are looking into conditioning when you are looking into be it

classical or operant you are actually stating that there is some relevance of behavior that is guided by punishment that is guided by some results associated with either your punishment or with respect to your reinforcement but when it comes to cognitive element essentially the principle or the theoretical hook lies around the very fact that your mind is under application and you are guided by your mind but even most of the cognitive theorists who are related to learning or they work in the platform or in the sphere of learning they even acknowledge the fact that reinforcement and punishment like that is what is said in law of effect has a certain effect or has a certain impact in the learning no doubt about it.

So let us look into some of the key points of the theory the first and important aspect would be consequences shape behavior we do not need any great explanation in actually understanding this. We generally stay away from road rage because we feel or we see that the road rage consequently leads to a particular criminal charge or maybe particular penalty against you. We generally follow traffic rules because we see that if we do not follow there is a negative consequence associated with that.

So this is the learning. Now let us come into organization we generally tend to finish a work within the deadline for the simple reason that either there are chances that you may be a ridicule you may be shouted upon or there are chances that your performance is evaluated in a negative way and possibly you are not going to make the cut when it comes to the next promotion.

So, all these aspects hover around the very fact that consequences shape behavior you can relate it with n number of examples within your organization think for 10 seconds and think of those situations where you have learned and understood that consequences essentially shape behavior. Now let us look into the second aspect which is reinforcement and punishment. Reinforcement and punishment will come into greater detail in reinforcement and punishment specifically.

Reinforcement and punishment play a central role in the learning process and provide essentially evidence-based principles for behavioral performance management. So even which was developed by Skinner reinforcement theory suggests that behavior can be modified through the use of reinforcements which can be either positive or negative.

So, there are certain different positive or negative reinforcement that happens positive reinforcement happens, negative reinforcement happens, punishment happens and even extinction happens. Before going into the reinforcement and punishment because that would be the core discussion with respect to this lecture we also look into other aspects like learning through consequences. So, we will visit back reinforcement and punishment in a short while learning through consequences it is nothing but an extension of consequences shape behavior. Once the consequences shape behavior you tend to behave

in a certain way, I don't see that tomorrow there is a chance that you are going to repeat the same behavior.

So learning happens through these consequences. Another important aspect is context dependent. When you are context dependent, I have categorically mentioned in the beginning of the lecture, in beginning of the course and even in the introduction video that we take the context as one of the most important aspects. So many a time if we generally look into these aspects of consequences shaping behavior or learning through consequences, we should not undermine the very existence of context, the relevance of context in the picture because many a time the consequences could be biased or the consequences would be negative because of a biased intervention of a mediator. Sometimes the consequences would be positive because again there is some favoritism that is playing on or sometimes there could be consequences that may not render into learning the consequences that may not reflect into learning.

So all these aspects you can always relate it with the examples in the organizational scenario. Let's say you are an individual who sees that there is an individual who is the favorite of your boss and many a time you see that even if he or she does something wrong the reaction elicited by the particular boss would be quite milder when compared to the reactions that otherwise others get. So, this should not lead you to understand or learn that my boss is going to reciprocate in a similar way because you have to understand the relevance of context. The context is that he or she as the employer is one of the favorites of your boss and the boss is responding in the manner because of that context. So, if you ignore that context and you tend to try to shape your behavior according to the consequences you are going to end up in big trouble. So that would be context dependent.

And finally operant conditioning we cannot discard the role of Skinner here because when it comes to reinforcement, when it comes to punishment, the role of Skinner is vital. He has established categorically that behavior to a certain extent can be modified by aspects or elements like reinforcement and punishment.

So, let's come back to the big discussion that was pending which is positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment and extinction. Now let's look into positive and negative reinforces. Positive reinforces are specifically those behaviors or those reinforces that strengthens and increases behavior by the presentation of a desirable consequence.

Now this is interesting when you are looking into positive reinforcement essentially you want a desirable consequence that is the big difference when it comes to negative reinforcement. Reinforcement again please understand strengthens because when it

comes to reinforcement one word that is critical is strengthen. Both the positive reinforcement as well as the negative reinforcement is vital in strengthening the behavior. So, it like the positive reinforcement even the negative reinforcement strengthens and increases the behavior by the threat of use of an undesirable consequence or the termination of withdrawal of an undesirable consequence.

Now this is interesting. Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement does not differ in terms of the strengthening part of the behavior. In both the cases the behavior is strengthened and it increases the behavior whereas when you look into the other aspects how it is actually being carried out. There is a presentation of the desirable consequence when it comes to positive reinforcement whereas when it comes to a negative reinforcement there is this threat of use of the undesirable consequence or the termination or withdrawal of an undesirable consequence. We will understand this with an example but before that we will also look into some aspects of negative reinforcement. It is more complex than positive reinforcement even with the definition you must have understood but more than that it is very difficult to actually strengthen the behavior when it comes to negative reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement there is a clear correlation you give something which is a desirable consequence people tend to jump into that there is no doubt about it whereas when you bring some negative consequence or negative reinforcement it is not an easy task to actually reciprocate or bring that behavior out. So negative reinforcement undoubtedly is more complex and positive reinforcement but it should not be equated with punishment. This is a big mistake most of the students make when they come to positive and negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement is not punishment. We will explain that negative reinforcement strengthens and increases behavior whereas punishment weakens and decreases behavior.

Please think about this please ponder on this point. When you are punishing somebody, you are actually making a statement that you are not supposed to undertake that activity. You are not supposed to do that work or you are not supposed to behave in that way that is essentially punishment but when you come to negative reinforcement it is essentially a calling that you have to do that behavior but there if you are not doing it there is an unintended or there is a negative consequence that is happening.

Let us look into this deeper with an example. What is positive reinforcement? Any appraisal in a positive way, any recognition, reward, award, employee of the month or maybe the performer of the year or the best performer or the best learner within the team any sort of recognition that can come in terms of monetary or otherwise they all form under the category of positive reinforcement. They all come under the basket of positive reinforcement.

What is negative reinforcement? Negative reinforcement let us look into something like a day-to-day scenario. You are trying to give way for somebody who is trying to overtake you to prevent the honking or there might be some you are going to have a spicy food so as a precaution you are taking an antacid or maybe another example you are going to play in beach you are putting some sunscreen or some cream which is with high SPF. All these are basically negative reinforcement examples of negative reinforcement. You are trying to make that behaviour but that either that unintended that negative consequence is being reminded of or the very fact that it will be taken back.

So this is negative reinforcement it strengthens and increases the behaviour by the threat or use of an undesirable consequence or the termination or withdrawal of an undesirable consequence. So negative reinforcement when you come to punishment it does not strengthen the behaviour. Punishment is specifically given to curtail the particular behaviour. Let us look into the use of punishment.

Punishment is one of the most used but the least understood and badly and administered aspects of behaviour management. Let us hear from any kids in our family they will definitely vouch for this particular statement that nobody knows how to actually administer punishment. Punishment is commonly thought to be the reverse of replacement but equally effective in altering behaviour. Now when you are actually looking into punishment from a negative side it is generally not considered as desirable but punishment has its own benefit when it comes to behavioural training, behavioural change. Punishment usually consists of the application of an undesirable or let us say noxious consequence but it can also be defined as the withdrawal of a desirable consequence. So, if you look into the previous aspect we had looked into negative reinforcement as the termination or withdrawal of an undesirable consequence. Please don't make a mistake.

This negative reinforcement happens to be the threat of the use of undesirable consequence moreover it is the termination or withdrawal of an undesirable consequence but when you come to punishment specifically punishment consists of application of an undesirable or noxious consequence. This is something which is very important and differentiates punishment from the negative reinforcement. So, it can also be defined as the withdrawal of a desirable consequence which is diametrically opposite to that of a negative reinforcement. So, taking away certain organizational privilege from a manager who has a poor performance record could be thought of or understood as punishment. So that is an example which we can always relate to as part of the punishment.

Now let us look into the contrasting styles which we see from the textbook.

Henry Adams has been a production supervisor for eight years. He came up through the ranks and is known as a tough but hard-working supervisor. Jane Wake has been a

production supervisor for about the same length of time and also came up through the ranks.

Jane is known as nice hard-working boss. Over the past several years these two superiors' sections have been head and shoulders above the other six sections on hard measures of performance. When you are looking at hard measures of performance, we are basically looking at number of units produced. This is true despite the almost opposite approaches the two have taken in handling their workers. Henry explained his approach as follows, the only way to handle workers is to come down hard on them whenever they make a mistake. In fact, I call them together every once in a while, and give them a heck whether they deserve it or not just to keep them on their toes.

If they are doing a good job, I tell them that's what they get paid off. By taking this approach all, I have to do is walk through my area and people start working like mad. Jane explained her approach as follows, you can see a striking you know difference here when it comes to her approach. I don't believe in that human relations stuff of being nice to workers but I do believe that a worker deserves some recognition and attention from me if he or she does a good job.

If people make a mistake, I don't jump on them. I feel that we are all entitled to make some errors. On the other hand, I always do point out what the mistake was and what they should have done and as soon as they do it right, I let them know it. Obviously, I don't have time to give attention to everyone doing things right but deliberately try to get around to people doing a good job every once in a while. Although Henry's section is still right at the top along with Jane's section in units produced personnel records show that there has been three times more turnover in Henry's section. You can obviously see who is at a better performance than in Jane's section.

So we are looking into the turnover and the quality control records show that Henry's section has met quality standards only twice in the last six years while Jane has missed attaining the standards only once. Now this is Jane having missed not attained please remember missed attaining quality standards only once in last six years. So, you have a clear winner there, don't you? So, this is what the importance of learning is all about.

So, in this particular lecture we looked into the theories in a more deeper fashion. We had a clear understanding of where we stood in terms of the conditioning classical operant.

We had a clear understanding of what came in as a stimulus response theory but we cannot undermine the existence of human element. We cannot understand undermine the existence of the cognitive element. So, this is where we are thankful to Albert Bandura in bringing the social learning aspect. Social cognitive aspect took it one step ahead. So, all

these aspects are vital when it comes to organizational learning.

When it comes to learning of an individual within an organization so all these elements have one thing in common that is reinforcement as well as punishment. You cannot take that thing outside. You cannot take that outside the organization. You see that every single organization there is a use of reinforcement every day, every now and then, there is some or the other form of reinforcement that is given to the employee and also there is some or the other form of punishment that is given to the employee. You just need to observe, you just need to understand in your organization what is driving your organization.

Is it the culture of reinforcement that is driving your organization or is it the culture of punishment that is driving your organization? On that note we will end today's lecture. See you in the next class till then take care. Bye bye.