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ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITH EMPHASIS ON FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide an overview of psychology and of the psychological tools available to a psychologist to study, categorise and classify human behaviour; to a human resource manager. To deepen his understanding of employee behaviour and thereby increase ease of facilitation of organizational change. This paper talks about employee behaviour as a subset of human behaviour, from a psychological point of view and should not be confused with Industrial and organizational psychology (which deals with employee performance, job satisfaction, work-life balance-criteria which are all a direct relation of organization policy, in contrast with organization change which bears a direct relationship with employee attitude, behaviour, and perception). Also, a questionnaire to deepen understanding of employee behaviour has been proposed.

KEYWORDS: *human psychology; organizational change questionnaire*

1. INTRODUCTION

Human psychology is an interesting field of science, with wide scope and having a large depth of study. It is a field involving the study of human behavior and characteristics to enable a better understanding of why people act the way they do. The application of human psychology is not limited to-criminology .i.e. study of perpetrator psychology and treatment of trauma, but is also applied by human resource managers to study and categorize human behavior to gain insights on employee behavior. Resistance to change is one of the most common problems faced by human resource managers in facilitating organizational change. This paper aims to present an overview on the practices adopted by psychologists to study human behavior and to enable human resource managers to make use of the same principles to increase the ease of facilitating change. Lastly, making use of the psychological tests, the

paper proposes a questionnaire to classify employee behavior with respect to organizational change.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To create an awareness of the psychological tools used by psychologists to categorize human behavior among human resource managers.
- 2) Enable the use of aforementioned tools to classify employee behavior.
- 3) Enable a better understanding of employee motivations and therefore increase the ease of facilitating organizational change.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily descriptive in nature. The data regarding psychological tests has been collected from reputable sources and listed in the reference

section. The proposed questionnaire is original work of the author.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Psychology

There are primarily four categories of psychological tests, which are as follows-

- 1) Intelligence and achievement tests-These tests are used to determine the cognitive ability of an individual i.e. the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.
- 2) Personality tests-These tests are used to determine the personality of the individual through scientifically proven methodology. They are of two types-objective and projective. Objective measures are based on closed ended questions such as Yes/No, True/False or a rating scale. This is one of the most popular type of measure used in psychological research, as it allows for standardization of questions and provides for comparative analysis of results. It is often used by students pursuing a course in Psychology. The other type-Projective measures-make use of open ended questions, such as seeking description of seemingly indistinguishable images, such as ink blots. Most commonly known as the Rorschach ink blot test, it allows for a deeper insight of the human psyche and is used by experienced psychologists.
- 3) Neuropsychological tests-These tests are a part of medical treatment assessment and are used to test the functioning of neural pathways, often after injuries/trauma, but

also to compare genetic diversities in neural makeup.

- 4) Clinical observation-This method does not entail the use of formal tests, but includes the observations of the behavior of the individual made by the psychologist based on his actions, responses, speech, mood, perception, and cognitive performance. This method is used to determine/pinpoint deviations from normal behavior and carry further tests.

4.2 Psychology Tools

There are various tools available to the psychologist to study human behavior. The tools which concern human resource managers are listed below-

Anxiety

- 1) Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 Item Scale (GAD-7)
- 2) Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)
- 3) Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)
- 4) Panic and Agoraphobia Scale (PAS)
- 5) Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN)

Depression

- 1) Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
- 2) Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)
- 3) Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale - 11-Item (KADS-11)
- 4) Major Depression Inventory (MDI)
- 5) Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS)

Personality

- 1) Big 5 Personality Test (FFM)
- 2) Empathy Quotient (EQ)
- 3) Hare Psychopathy Checklist (Original) (PCL-22)
- 4) Personality Type Indicator (PTI)
- 5) Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ)

As an example, a test from each category has been mentioned below.

Anxiety

- 1) Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 Item Scale (GAD-7)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?	Not At All	Several Days	Over Half The Days	Nearly Everyday
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge				
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying				
3. Worrying too much about different things				
4. Trouble relaxing				
5. Being so restless that it's hard to sit still				
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable				
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen				

Table 1: Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 Item Scale (GAD-7)

Depression

- 1) Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS)

For each item below, please check the column which best describes how often you felt or behaved this way during the past several days.

	A Little Of The Time	Some Of The Time	Good Part Of The Time	Most Of The Time
1. I feel down hearted and blue.				
2. Morning is when I feel the best.				
3. I have crying spells or feel like it.				
4. I have trouble sleeping at night.				
5. I eat as much as I used to.				
6. I still enjoy my hobbies.				
7. I notice that I am losing weight.				

Table 2: Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS)

Personality

1) Big 5 Personality Test (FFM)

The Big Five is named after the five general groupings of traits that make up one’s personality.

Namely Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
1. I am the life of the party.					
2. I feel little concern for others.					
3. I am always prepared.					
4. I get stressed out easily.					
5. I have a rich vocabulary.					
6. I don’t talk a lot.					

Table 3: Big 5 Personality Test (FFM)

Note-The complete questionnaires have not been given, as the given questions are sufficient to gain a basic understanding.

4.3 Methodology of conducting tests

The tests are primarily designed to be self-administered.

4.4 Analysis of responses

Each question is categorized as contributing to a particular trait; it is also ranked and scored accordingly. Therefore, based on the responses, a cumulative score is calculated which gives an idea of the traits of an individual. This score can be compared with normalized scores to determine the personality of an individual.

Although a thorough knowledge of the tests is not required from a human resource manager, a basic understanding is nevertheless crucial. These tests do not directly relate to organizational change, but are only meant to guide the human resource manager to deepen his understanding of human psychology. A description of not only the test itself, but also the methodology adopted and process of analysis has been made to aid the human resource manager in this endeavor. Moreover, a direct usage of these tests/methodologies is not recommended, due to the objective being different-psychological study vs. human behavior.

4.5 Relationship between psychology and human resource management-

The most striking similarity between psychological tests administered by psychologists and studies conducted by human resource managers is the use of the Likert Scale. The scale is named after its inventor, psychologist Rensis Likert.

Moreover human resource management is inextricably linked to psychology, as the main task of human resource managers is to ensure the psychological wellbeing of the employee through organization policies. The job of a human resource manager also entails the study of employee behavior to determine their preferences-pay, job challenges, level of satisfaction, and also characteristics such as-integrity, honesty. This can only be done if the human resource manager has a basic understanding of human behavior and is able to quantitatively determine the same.

4.6 Use of psychology to facilitate organizational change by categorizing employee behavior-

Based on the study of psychological tests, the following questionnaire is proposed to categorize employee behavior-

1) Age				
2) Gender				
3) Marital Status				
4) Total Work Experience				
5) Number of years worked for current organization				
6) Number of previous employers				
7) Job Title/Designation				
8) Job Level- Top Management/Middle Management/Bottom Management/Employee				
9) Do you think it is urgent for the organization to change?				
-10		0		10
No, not at all				Yes, it is extremely urgent
Please elaborate-				
10) Do you think the organization should go for “X” (change)				
-10		0		10
No, it should not				Yes, it should
Please elaborate-				
11) Do you think the organization is changing the right thing?				
-10		0		10
No, it is changing the wrong thing				Yes, it is changing the right thing
Please elaborate-				
12) Do you think the organization is doing enough to improve itself?				
-10		0		10
No, it is damaging itself		No, it is not doing enough		Yes, it is doing enough
Please elaborate-				
13) Do you think the change “X” is-				
-10		0		10
Harmful to organization				Beneficial to organization
Please elaborate-				
14) Do you think the change “X” is-				
-10		0		10
Harmful to employees				Beneficial to employees
Please elaborate-				
15) Do you think the change “X” is-				
-10		0		10
Harmful to both organization and employees		Beneficial to both organization and employees		
Please elaborate-				
16) Are you personally impacted by “X”-				
-10		0		10
Yes, negatively		No	Yes, positively	
Please elaborate-				
17) Are any of your close colleagues impacted by “X”-				
-10		0		10

Yes, negatively	No	Yes, positively
Please elaborate-		
18) In your opinion -		
a) Change “X” is unnecessary and should be discontinued		
b) Change “X” is harmful and should be discontinued		
c) Change “X” is inadequate and should be expanded		
d) Change “X” should be discontinued, instead change “Y” should be undertaken.		
Please elaborate-		

Table 4: Employee categorization questionnaire

4.6.1 Analysis of questionnaire

The questionnaire makes use of rating scale to calculate the degree of resistance/enabling behavior exhibited by an employee. Based on the responses to questions seeking elaboration, behavior can be classified as active/passive.

Questions are designed to classify employee motivation as-Organizational or personal. Moreover, questions such as number of previous organizations

worked at have been used to provide an idea about the capacity of the employee to accept change.

Lastly, it is suggested to make use of ‘Big 5 Personality Test,’ to gain a better understanding.

5. RESULT

Categorization of employee behavior-

Based on the results of the questionnaire, employee behavior, with respect to organizational change, is said to represent one of the following-

Passively Resisting	Actively Resisting
Passively Enabling	Actively Enabling

Table 5: Employee behavior categorization

6. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) It is suggested that the questionnaire be self-administered, to prevent any undue influence.
- 2) It is prudent to note that the text of the questionnaire needs to be adapted to individual change process.
- 3) The categorization of employee behavior should be used to gauge the perception of employees towards the change process.
- 4) It is suggested to use the questionnaire for planning the change process.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper provides an understanding of psychology and demonstrates the relationship between psychological tests and questionnaires designed to study employee behavior. Further, this paper also proposes a questionnaire to categorize employee behavior. This seeks to facilitate a clearer understanding of employee behavior in organizational change processes and aids in management of change.

8. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research can be carried out to test the validity of the questionnaire and improvements can

be done on it. Also, the questionnaire can be tested to measure its effectiveness in categorizing employee behavior.

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