

# TOUR OF THE BOOK

## Learning Outcomes

A set of learning outcomes are identified at the start of each chapter. After you have studied the chapter, completed the activities and answered the review questions, you should be able to achieve each of the objectives.

## Key Terms

Each chapter contains an on-page explanation of a number of important words, phrases and concepts that you need to know in order to understand OB, its theoretical basis and its related areas.

## Making Links

To allow you to see the interconnected nature of the topics in the field of OB, areas that link to topics and concepts in other chapters are identified.

## POWER IN ORGANISATIONS

Power is everywhere in organisations and people are concerned with it – those who have it want to keep it and those who don't have it often want to get it. Yet power is a difficult concept to identify and is often confused with other concepts such as authority and leadership. For example, a manager may find it difficult to get employees to do what he wants them to do, even though he is in a position of authority. Someone else in the organisation may easily persuade others to do as she wants, but is not 'the boss'. So, who has more power in these two situations? Where does power come from and why are some people in organisations powerful, whereas others aren't? How do people in organisations use their power? To answer these questions, we must first understand what power is.

### DEFINING POWER

Dahls (1957) famous definition of power asserts that it exists where person A can get person B to do something that B would not otherwise do. A closely related concept is influence. Power often refers to the potential of one person to cause another to act in accordance with their wishes, whereas influence refers to the actual behaviour of that person (Sornich and Cruch-Zahary, 2011). Definitions of power typically assume that the person with power and the person subject to it have incompatible objectives; influence, however, can be exerted collaboratively where goals are not mutually exclusive (Tippold et al., 1992). The essence of power therefore may be control over the behaviour of others or the ability to influence others. This may be achieved by bringing about change in others' beliefs or attitudes or by having the capacity to reward or punish others. In an organisational context, power can stem from those who have control over resources and the ability to make decisions around the allocation of those resources to others. Power can come in many different forms, but importantly, power is not absolute.

The extent of power is dependent on the amount of resistance to it. In other words, person A has more power over person B if he can get B to do something without B 'putting up a fight' or resisting doing it. The extent to which people will resist power or succumb to influence depends on a number of factors including personality (Chapter 14) and culture. The cultural values of a society have a tremendous impact on the extent to which people readily accept others in positions of power. Hofstede's (1991) well-known model of culture identified power distance (Chapter 13) as reflecting the extent to which employees welcome the idea that people in higher positions rightfully have power. Japan typically has a high level of power distance; people readily accept the role of management as power holders. Western cultures tend to have lower power distance, meaning that they do not accept management power as readily and value individuality and diversity. This makes them less susceptible to power influence. Dependency is also very important when examining power relationships. The more dependent one party is on another, the more they may be influenced by them.

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## 3 PERCEPTION

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Define perception.
- Discuss how the perceptual process works.
- Understand the concept of selective attention in an organisational context.
- Identify common perceptual distortions that can occur during a work activity.
- Explain how attribution theory assists us in explaining behaviour at work.



### THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES:

What is perception? 51 | How perception works 52 | The perceptual process 52 | Perceptual distortions 61 | Perceptual defence and confirmation bias 64 | Attribution theory 65

Jennifer Hennessy

## In Reality

These short vignettes demonstrate that OB is not merely 'common sense', but based on rigorous research and evidence which often contradicts our assumptions.

## IN REALITY

Have you ever heard the old adage 'what you see is what you get'? We tend to think that our perceptions are relatively stable and unchanging and that what we perceive closely matches the real world. However, in fact, our perception can often be manipulated to change what we experience. Many companies invest significant marketing and advertising resources to try and create a certain perception of their product. In a study conducted by researchers at Columbia University and MIT, participants in a pub were asked to evaluate regular beer and an 'MIT beer' to which a few drops of balsamic vinegar had been added (Lee et al., 2006). The researchers discovered that disclosure of the additional ingredient of the balsamic vinegar significantly reduced people's preference for the MIT beer only when the disclosure took place prior to tasting. This suggests that participants' perceptions changed enough to influence how they experienced the subsequent tasting of the beer. What is also interesting is the fact that the addition of the balsamic vinegar can actually enhance the flavour of the beer, yet people's perception of the taste of vinegar produced a negative connection to its taste in the beer. This connection was strong enough to alter subjects' perception of what the beer would taste like!

This experiment demonstrates how our perception can be influenced to such a degree that it can change our subsequent experience of an event. Our perception of an event or experience is therefore subject to various influences and is not as objective as the old adage would lead us to believe.

## Consider This ...

This feature is designed to stimulate critical thinking about a specific issue, idea or perspective related to the chapter topic.

### CONSIDER THIS...

Ashkan-Jones and Ashkan-Jones (2008) showed how specific discrete emotions have different effects on our behaviour and actions. Consider the impact of the following emotions in these work-related contexts:

- If moral emotions (for example, guilt, shame) have the effect of making us less likely to engage in unethical behaviour and setting on immoral decisions, why do people still engage in unethical and immoral acts?
- If an employee has an angry exchange with his manager, how might this impact his trust of that manager? Are there other factors that this depends on?
- What is the effect of fear versus anger during organisational change (Chapter 13)?



employee's very satisfied with his job, they have no reason to change or to try anything differently. Researchers have suggested that managers want engaged workers, rather than satisfied workers (Bakker and Coolsma, 2011). Work engagement is associated with active positive emotions and so provides this motivational drive to strive for higher effort and performance. Emotions can also help us to learn. By providing feedback, emotions may stimulate retrospective appraisal of actions, and in this way, conscious emotional states can promote learning and alter guidelines for future behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2007b). Furthermore, emotions amplify the nature of consequences and outcomes in terms of reward and punishment (Tice, 2009). Finally, emotions stimulate counterfactual thinking, which can enhance the prospect of improving behaviour by considering alternatives to events that have already occurred (Tice, 2009). Hence, emotions can lead to adaptive improvements in behaviour by improving learning. For example, Keith and Frese (2005) demonstrated that emotion control contributed to more effective learning when individuals were encouraged to make errors during training.

## OB in the News

Each chapter contains an example of coverage of its main topic in the media. The aim here is to highlight how you can apply the constructs and concepts in the chapter to the management of people in the real world of the workplace. A set of questions accompanies each feature to assist with this application to a practical situation.

## OB IN THE NEWS

### ASDA's Planned Strategic Change in Northern Ireland

In 2005, Britain's second highest supermarket, ASDA, announced a major strategic change in Northern Ireland from its existing Northern Irish product range to ASDA's main UK product range. ASDA's executives believed that, for change implementation and significant investment in Northern Ireland through job creation which initially resulted in the loss of 100 jobs.

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## Building Your Skills

This feature asks you to place yourself in the position of a line manager and to think about what you would do in the situation that has been presented to you.

**BUILDING YOUR SKILLS**

You have to make a presentation to Senior Management on behalf of your team. The thought of this makes you nervous. Many speakers lack the skills and confidence to deliver effective presentations. The last time you presented you knew the report and you had written down your ideas, but the presentation still didn't go well. This time you have to convince management that the company needs to take an innovative approach to hiring new staff because you need more digital marketing experience in the team. Taking into account key features of a successful presentation, plan a strategy. How are you going to engage your audience? How will you deliver the speech? How will you convince them that the financial outlay will be worth it?



**PERSONALITY 45**

**Brewella**

Michael O'Brien has recently been appointed HR manager of Brewella, a new and promising online brewery based in the UK. While completing his undergraduate degree in business, Michael did part-time bar work and was also actively involved in clubs and societies. He was Chairperson of the Gaming Society, which won numerous awards including Best Eventness, and was also Public Relations Officer for the Chinese Franchise Club. After graduating, Michael worked as the Assistant Manager for a local bar and restaurant for 3 years then completed a Master's degree in HRM.

Michael is looking forward to the many challenges he knows he will face at this young and growing company. He is the first person they have ever hired to work in the area of HR and he wonders if he has the experience needed to be successful. He's recently learned that it is his responsibility for innovation, which he demonstrated recently through his leadership role in the clubs and societies, that inspired Brewella's interest in hiring him.

One of the first challenges Michael will face is devising a plan for a recruitment drive. Brewella is expanding into new markets and needs to hire people for several positions from Sales Reps to Accountants. He has not been given a lot of guidance from the Senior Manager at Brewella about how to do this, except from Jonathan Grey who is Brewella's co-founder.

"You want people who are as passionate about our craft as we are, and that craft is creating innovative beer and keeping them and working them and working them in the process. The same words we teach the staff."

Brewella projects an image of a modern, non-conventional organisation with a glass rock star, top-down culture. Jonathan Grey leads the influential Culture Management Team whose job it is to ensure that Brewella stays true to its vision and its culture. Jonathan Grey is a strong advocate of the experience in management and with the online brewery industry, it has become clear to him that this organisational structure and culture are not what he has needed with in the past. Despite this, he is determined to do a good job and make a good impression. He recognises the importance of working with the Culture Management Team to develop the recruitment plan, but also sees that a powerful and influential group, but they have a good point about not wanting to dilute Brewella's values and culture as the company grows. When employees at share the same assumptions about "how things are done around here", things run more smoothly. It's easy to see that someone who doesn't fit into the organisation's culture would struggle to be effective. They would probably not be quite happy and would therefore leave. These are things that Jonathan wants to avoid. However, he also recognises the importance of hiring people with the right experience, skills and attitudes to do the job they are hired to do. He knows that the Culture Management Team might want him to recruit people who fit more than actual job requirements. There is a second reason Brewella has recruited a lot of publicity lately and the organisation is highly attractive.

(Continued)



## Active Case Study

Short case studies at the end of each chapter provide the opportunity for you to link the material covered in that chapter to a real-life situation. Questions are posed at the end of the case studies, which can be answered either in class or as part of an assignment. Longer cases appear at the end of each section and demonstrate how multiple concepts, such as personality, perception and motivation, come together in practice.

## Chapter Review Questions

Each chapter ends with questions that can be used as class exercises or for self-testing and evaluating your knowledge about the chapter topic.

## Multiple Choice Questions:

In the interactive ebook these multiple choice questions test your understanding of the key points in each chapter.

## Further Reading

The aim of these lists is to highlight a few specific texts and journal articles we believe can assist you in developing your understanding and furthering your knowledge of the many areas introduced in this book.

## Useful Websites

An abundance of websites exist on topics related to OB. At the end of each chapter we have identified those we believe you will find most useful in furthering your knowledge and understanding of the discipline.

**EMOTIONS AND THE WORKPLACE**

**CHAPTER REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1 What is the distinction between mood and emotion?
- 2 What functions do emotions serve for us as human beings?
- 3 In what ways can emotions be beneficial for achieving our goals?
- 4 In what ways can emotions help or hurt when we make decisions?
- 5 Describe the ways in which emotional labour could be considered an affective event.
- 6 Are the concepts of deep acting and surface acting similar or different from reappraisal and suppression? In what way?
- 7 Explain what is meant by the concept of emotional labour. Have you any experience of this type of work?
- 8 Do you believe in the concept of emotional intelligence? Why or why not?

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Go online to take a multiple choice quiz to test your understanding of this chapter.

**FURTHER READING**

Barsade, S.G. and Gibson, D.E. (2007). Why does affect matter in organizations? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21(1), 36–59.

Brown, K. (1999). The neglect and importance of emotions at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 4(3), 323–346.

Geary, L., Gavin, M. and Ashkanasy, N.M. (2009). Emotions research in OB: The challenges that lie ahead. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(6), 833–838.

Jarman, J.D., Mendon, W.B. and Mack, M.A. (2013). Improving acute stress responses: The power of reappraisal. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 51–56.

Niedenthal, P.M., Krauth Gruber, S. and Ric, C. (2006). *The Psychology of Emotion: Interpersonal, Experiential and Cognitive Approaches*. New York: Psychology Press.

Totterdell, P. and Niven, K. (2012). *Should I stop a battery to my heart? (And other questions about emotion)*. Self-published.

**USEFUL WEBSITES**

[www.cbeeb.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=54&Itemid=82](http://www.cbeeb.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=54&Itemid=82)

This is the website of the Academy of Management: Scholars of Organizational Behaviour. Listen to the interview with Neal Ashkanasy on studying emotions in the workplace. Neal is one of the world's leading scholars on emotions. In the podcast he provides a very interesting overview of his work, and answers some key questions on why emotions are important to consider in the workplace.

## Spotlight on Skills: text and video feature

This feature aims to encourage you to develop your skills in OB by asking you to consider specific questions and activities. This gives you the opportunity to identify and diagnose problems and formulate possible solutions or actions in relation to the chapter topic. Each of these features is accompanied by a video interview with a professional that plays in your interactive ebook. The skills-related questions posed in the text feature are addressed by the practitioner in the video. To maximise this resource, you should first attempt to answer the questions in the book and then watch the video.


**SPOTLIGHT ON SKILLS**

You are the HR manager in a small call centre. The work is repetitive and monotonous. Labour turnover is high. In fact less than 50 per cent of your staff have more than one year's service with the firm. Starting salary for operators is €22,000 per annum.

What can you do to ensure operators hold positive attitudes towards their work?

How important is job design in shaping an individual's work-related attitudes?

To help you answer these questions, in your ebook click the play button to watch the video of Melissa Challinor at Which? talking about attitudes.



## Companion Website

The book's companion website at [www.palgrave.com/carberry-ob](http://www.palgrave.com/carberry-ob) offers a number of resources for both lecturers and students, including PowerPoint slides, a comprehensive testbank of multiple choice questions and solutions to the Active Case Study questions.