

UNIT - II

Subject Name	Subject Code	Semester	Prepared by
Organizational Behaviour	18BBA36S	III	Dr Prabhu R Assistant Professor

Perception

What is perception?

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. Perception could be explained in various ways.

- It is the process of receiving information about and making sense of the world around people.
- It is also the process of deciding which information to notice, how to categorize the noticed information, and how to interpret it within the framework of one's existing knowledge.
- In simple terms, perception is how one looks at the world (*e.g.*) An American couple visits India for the first time. Both of them notice the open filthy gutters, beggars/lepers, narrow roads with pot holes, rickety autorickshaws, cheating cab-drivers as well as the beautiful Taj Mahal , the enchanting Mohal gardens, the magnificent Fateh-Pur-Sikhri, the quiet Santhi Niketan etc., That is, both of them see the unpleasant as well as the pleasant things. The wife is more affected by the unpleasant things and she perceives that India is not a pleasant country, whereas the husband, who is more influenced by the pleasant things, perceives that India is a beautiful country. This shows that perception differs.

Similarly, while many in a firm may view it as a great place to work, favorable working conditions, interesting job assignments, good pay, excellent benefits and understanding and responsible management, there will be people who may feel frustrated because of the target, time schedule *etc.* That is, the same organization is perceived as good by some and as bad by some others.

It is important to note that people's behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself.

Factors that influence perception

Individuals look at the same thing yet, perceive it differently. A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. The factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object or target being perceived and in the context of the situation in which the perception is made.

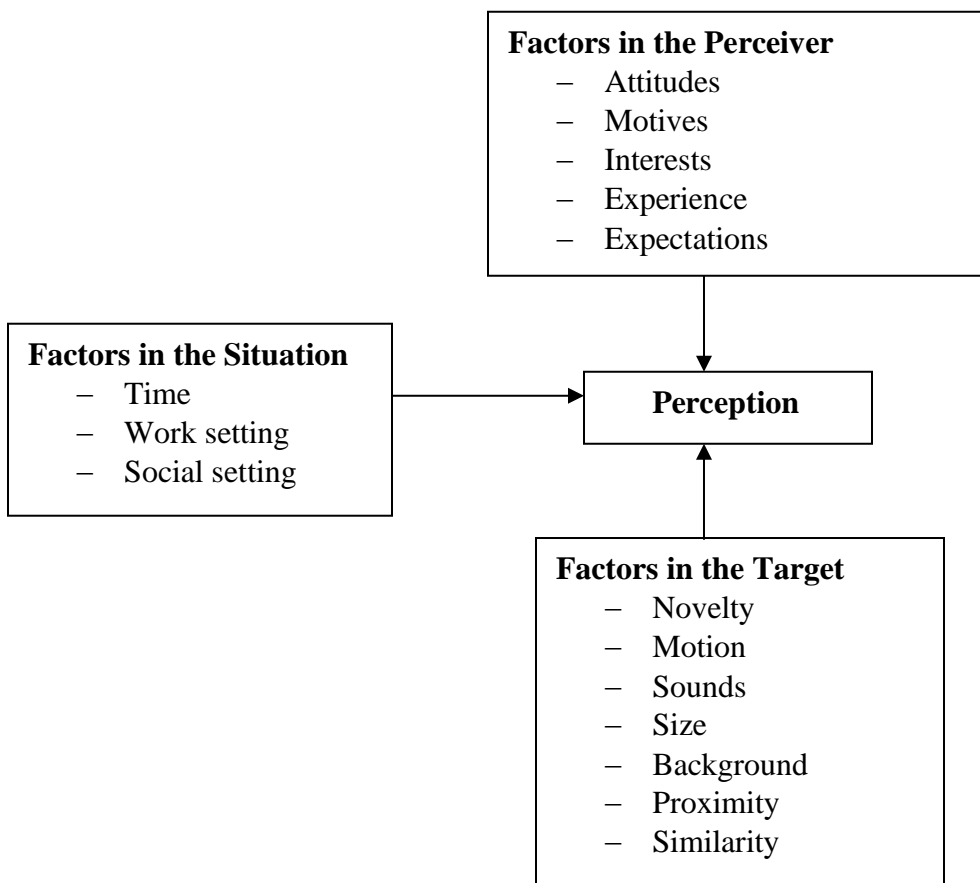


Fig: Factors that influence perception

Perceptual process

Perceptual process consists of several sub-processes. It is an input-output process. Here, the stimuli, namely, the environment, subject, events or people can be considered as inputs. These inputs are ‘processed’ through selection, organization, and interpretation. The outcomes are opinions, feeling and attitudes etc. which ultimately decide the behaviour of the people.

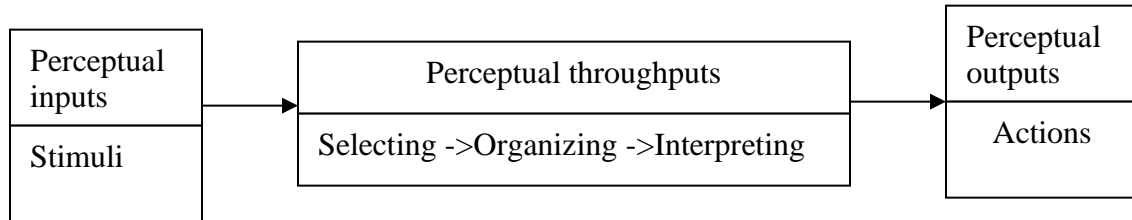


Fig 24a: Simplified Process of Perception

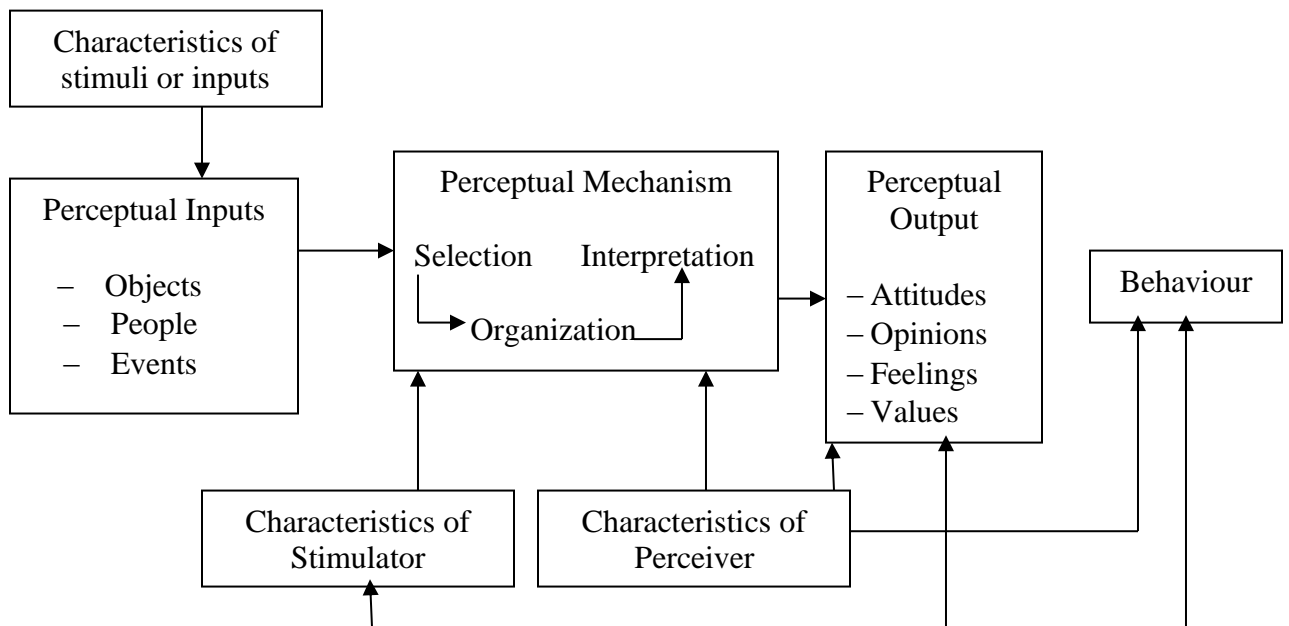


Fig: Complex Process of Perception

Perceptual inputs: Stimuli may be in the form of objects, events or people. [Taj Mahal, filthy gutters, cheating by cab drivers, beggars or Santhi Niketon as mentioned in the example]. Every thing in the environment where events occur or which contribute to the occurrence of events can be termed as perceptual inputs. Characteristics of stimuli are

important as these affect the perceiver. When the perceiver interacts with a stimulus, sensation takes place which starts perception process.

Perceptual mechanism: It involves three elements viz. selection of stimuli, organisation of stimuli and interpretation of stimuli.

Selection of stimuli: As it is not possible for a person to use all the stimuli which he sees in the environment, only some are selected for further processing while others are screened out [As the wife of the American visitor in the example who sees only the unpleasant things and the American who sees only the pleasant things] . These stimuli are classified as internal and external factors.

Organization of stimuli: The stimuli are organized in some form to make sense out of that.

Interpretation of stimuli: People interpret the meaning of what they have selectively perceived and organized in terms of their own assumptions of people, things and situations. They become judgemental and tend to interpret the things as good / bad, pleasant / unpleasant etc, in relative terms. Interpretation is affected by characteristics of stimuli, situations under which perception takes place and characteristics of the perceiver.

Perceptual outputs: Perceptual outputs emerge based on perceptual mechanism which ends with interpretation of stimuli. These outputs may be in the form of attitudes, opinions, beliefs or impression. These outputs along with other factors result in actual behaviour. As in the example of American couple visiting India, the wife interprets that India is not a pleasant country and may not visit again. She may even tell her relatives / friends not to visit India. But the husband who has interpreted that India is a beautiful country is likely to visit again and may recommend to his people to visit India.

Though perceptual outputs are important to affect behaviour, perception alone is not adequate. For example, when a person is impressed with the advertisement of a product and also recommend by his friends [stimuli], he may perceive that the product is good, but this perception alone may not be enough to make him purchase the product [behaviour] because purchasing depends on his capacity to spend, availability of the product and the need for the product.

Factors influencing perceptual selectivity

Perception is a selective process as people can select only a limited amount of information in the environment. Through selection, certain aspects of stimuli which are admitted /accepted remain in the minds of people for interpretation. For example, when people read newspapers, they do not read all the columns; they concentrate on the items in which they are interested. Perceptual selectivity is caused by two categories *i.e.* external and internal

External factors in perceptual selectivity:

Size: Size affects attraction of the perceiver. Generally bigger the size, higher is the probability of getting attracted. Bigger letters in the newspapers, large screens, tall and hefty people, big buildings etc, attract people's attention easily. Many a time miniatures such as replicas of buildings, books etc also get noticed by people.

Intensity: The intensity principle of attention suggests that higher the intensity of the external stimulus, the more likely it is to be perceived. A loud voice, strong odour or bright light is noticed more as compared to feeble voice, weak odour or dim light.

Repetition: Repeated external stimulus is more likely to get noticed. Repetition increases people's sensitivity or alertness to the stimulus. Advertisers use this principle to attract consumers' attention. In organizations also repeated instructions will have more effect than one-time instruction.

Familiarity: Familiar situation or events in familiar situation, familiar jargons or familiar people draw attention. *E.g.* Same sales-persons in a departmental store draw the attention of the customers. Familiar or known faces in a crowd or a foreign land certainly attract one's attention.

Novelty: Novel events and situations attract attention. People who do things differently such as sculpturing on rice granules, preparing the smallest bible, "fire eaters", people with long hairs or long moustache definitely draw the attention of people. In organizational context, job rotation draws the attention of people because of the new jobs.

Contrast: When someone looks different from others, such as a tall man in a crowd or a dwarf among the tall, draws attention. When the entire crowd is in white and white, the only man in black suit certainly draws other's attention.

Motion: A moving object draws more attention as compared to a stationary object. People look curiously at a bullet train when it speeds at 500 km / hr rather than when it idles in the station. A fountain or waterfall draws more people than a calm water body. Signboards with flickering lights are easily noticed than normal signboards.

Internal factors in perceptual selectivity:

While external factors are related to environmental stimuli, internal factors are concerned with the mental makeup of individuals. Generally, people select those stimuli from the environment which appeal to their personality and compatible with their thinking. There are many internal factors which influence selection of stimuli.

Self-concept: The way a person looks at the world is influenced by, to a large extent, his self-concept or self-image. It can be considered as an internal form of getting attention and is largely based on an individual's psychology. Knowing oneself makes it easier to understand characteristics which they are likely to see in others. People select only those aspects in others which match their characteristics.

Beliefs: An individual's beliefs have profound impact on his perception. Thus, a fact is understood not on what actually it is but what a person believes it to be. The individual normally avoids the stimuli inputs which are likely to disturb his existing beliefs. According to psychologists, an individual indulges in self-censorship of communication or inputs to protect his own beliefs and practices and seeks out information which supports his beliefs and practices.

Expectations: Perception is influenced by individual's expectations. Generally, people opine that University rank-holders are sincere, studious and hardworking. The managers perceive that these people would do well in their jobs also and give them responsible jobs.

Inner needs: Need is a feeling of tension or discomfort. Need arises when a person feels that he is not possessing certain things. Hence, to fulfill their needs people select stimuli to suit their needs.

Response disposition: It refers to a person's tendency to perceive familiar stimuli rather than unfamiliar ones. Thus a person will select the stimuli which are familiar to them. In an experiment persons having more orientation towards religion were able to recognize 'priest' 'prayer' etc compared to the terms such as 'cost' 'price' etc.,

Response salience: It is the set of preconceived ideas which are not determined by the familiarity of the situations but by the person's mental makeup. In an organization, the effectiveness of functioning or profit may be viewed by the marketing people as a result of marketing strategy while the HR personnel may feel that it is because of good HR management practices such as training, incentive etc., This happens because people are accustomed to think only in a particular angle of their interest.

Perceptual defense: It refers to the filtering out of those elements which are expected to create conflict or threatening situation in people. It is done by denying the existence / importance of the stimuli, distorting the additional information to match their views or treating the disturbing stimuli as non-representative.

Perceptual organization:

Perceptual organization deals with the manner in which the selected stimuli are organized in order to make a sense out of them. While coming to a conclusion, people do not look into the stimuli individually or in groups; they look at the whole picture to draw any conclusion. They try to compare the available stimuli. People organize the stimuli based on several principles.

Figure – Ground: This is a tendency to keep one or two stimuli as the main focus and other stimuli in the background. That is, concentrating on a particular stimulus in relation to other stimuli. The stimulus which receives the maximum attention is called 'figure' and the other stimuli which form the background are known as 'ground'. In a text book the printed letters are the 'figure' and the pages on which the letters are printed are taken as the 'ground'. The effect of 'figure' depends on the 'ground'. That is, if the pages are light in colour and the letters are darker, the letters look prominent. Suppose the pages are also dark in colour, the letters lose their importance. Similarly, a lady standing among a crowd of men gets noticed easily whereas the same lady in a crowd of ladies does not get noticed easily.

Grouping: People tend to group many stimuli into recognizable category based on similarity or proximity. For example, the opinions of workers about the management are grouped together irrespective of individual differences as workers appear to be similar in their general attitude. Similarly, a group of stimuli that are close together is seen as one.

The employees in a particular department, which is not showing adequate progress, may be termed as ineffective though there are a few intelligent and hardworking people because all are working together in the same department which is not making any perceptible progress.

Simplification: When people are overloaded with stimuli, they try to simplify them by selecting the important ones and ignoring the rest. Simplification makes things easier for meaningful interpretation. For example, when there are many customers complaining regarding a particular product/service, the customer relationship manager tends to pay more attention to the few customers who are more likely to cause damage to the brand image than the other customers.

Close-up: When the available information is inadequate people tend fill up the gaps by themselves to create meaningful information. They may fill the gaps based on their knowledge, past experience or hunches. In a simple example, the customers will be able to read the signboard of a particular firm or product even if a few letters are missing. In organizational context promotions are based on certain important criteria. Many a time all information is not considered due to paucity of time or unavailability of the information.

Selective attention

The five senses of human beings are constantly bombarded with stimuli. While some are noticed many are ignored. The process of attending to some information received by the senses and ignoring other information is called selective attention.

For example, a nurse working in a post-operative care unit might ignore the strong smell of the disinfectant or the loud chat of her co-workers but the small flashing light in the nurse station console signaling that the patient's vital organs are failing will be immediately noticed by her.

Selective attention is influenced by two sets of factors *viz.* characteristics of the person / object being perceived and the characteristics of the perceiver.

What is learning?

Learning can be defined as any relatively permanent change in behaviour or behavioural tendency that occurs as a result of practice, prior experience or a person's interaction with environment. The definition explains that:

- Learning is a change in behaviour for better or worse
- It is relatively permanent; it excludes those changes in behaviour that result from temporary conditions such as fatigue, influence of drugs etc.,
- It is a change through practice / experience. Changes due to growth / maturation, disease/ physical damage are excluded.
- Learning must be reinforced. If reinforcement does not accompany the practice, behaviour will disappear.

Learning vs Maturation:

Though maturation is almost equated with learning, learning differs from maturation in many ways.

Learning	Maturation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efforts are needed - Changes are seen only in person - Practice is necessary - A person can learn through out his life - Learning is possible only in favourable conditions. - It is affected by motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is natural - It is seen in the entire race - Not necessary as it is natural - Generally maturation takes place upto 25 years. - Irrespective of condition maturation takes place - It does not require motivation as maturation is natural.

Influence of learning on behaviour

Learning influences behaviour in many ways

- People acquire skills and knowledge through learning opportunities which give them the competencies to perform tasks more effectively.
- Learning clarifies role perceptions. Employees develop a better understanding of their tasks and relative importance of work activities.
- Learning occurs through feedback. Employees get motivated when they come to know that they are accomplishing their tasks.

Components of learning process

Learning process involves many components:

Drive: It is a strong stimulus that impels action. While motive is directed towards specific goals, drive refers to an increased probability of activity without specificity. There are two types of drive viz. primary/physiological and secondary / psychological.

Cue stimuli: It is any object/person or activity perceived by an individual which increases the probability of eliciting a specific response. Stimuli lead to generalization as well as discrimination. Generalization occurs when a response is elicited by a similar but new stimulus. If two stimuli are exactly alike, they will have the same probability of evoking a specified response (e.g. Stereotyping, Halo effect). Discrimination is a process whereby an organism learns to emit a response to a stimulus but avoids making the same response to a similar but some what different stimulus.

Responses: Stimulus results in responses, in the physical form or in terms of attitudes, familiarity, perception etc.

Reinforcement: It is a fundamental condition of learning. Without reinforcement no measurable modification of behaviour takes place.

Retention: It is the stability of learned behaviour over time. The converse is forgetting.

Extinction: It is loss of memory. Extinction of a well learned response is usually difficult to achieve because once something is learned it is never truly unlearned. Extinction merely means that the response has been repressed or replaced by learning of incompatibles. Under repeated conditions of non-reinforcement, there is a tendency for the conditioned response to decrease or disappear.

Spontaneous recovery: It is the return of response strength after extinction, without intervening reinforcement.

Factors affecting learning:

Motivation: There must be some motives to learn. In the absence of motivation learning becomes ineffective.

Mental setup / Preparation for learning: People must be mentally prepared to learn. There must be an urge to learn. Compulsory learning is a futile exercise.

Nature of learning materials: Materials used for learning must be interesting and informative. Easy and familiar ones are learned faster. Serial position, shape and meaningfulness of learning materials affect learning.

Practice: Only geniuses can learn in one shot. Ordinary people have to repeat several times to learn well.

Environment: A conducive environment is essential for meaningful learning to a great extent.

Types of Misbehavior in Organizations

How people misbehave depends on individual character as well as situation.

Workplace deviance: Voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well being of the organization and/or its members.

Organizational misbehavior: It is any intentional action by members of organizations that violates core organizational and/or societal norms.

Antisocial behavior: Any behavior that damages or is intended to bring harm to the organization, its employees or its stakeholders.

Dysfunctional behavior: Any motivated behavior by an employee or group of employees that has negative consequences for an individual within the organization or group.

Property deviance: This focuses upon those instances where employees acquire or damage the tangible property or assets of the organization without authorization. (eg. The theft of tools, equipment or money from the workplace).

Production deviance: It is not concerned about physical property of the organization, but behaviors which violate the formally prescribed norms delineating the quality and quantity of work to be accomplished. (Eg., tardiness, sloppy or slow workmanship or the use of alcohol and drugs at work).

Political deviance: This category defines behavior as engaging in social interaction that puts other individuals at a personal or political disadvantage. Showing favoritism, gossiping about co-workers, blaming co-workers and competing nonbeneficially are some of the defiant behaviors that fall within this category.

Personal aggression: Individuals engaged in this kind of behavior are said to behave in an aggressive or hostile manner towards other individuals. Among deviant behaviors included in this category are sexual harassment, verbal abuse, stealing from co-workers and endangering co-workers.

Organizational Behaviour Modification [OB Mod]:

Modification of organizational behavior, called OB Mod, is a programme where managers identify performance-related employee behaviours and then implement an intervention strategy to strengthen desirable behaviours and weaken undesirable behaviours. It is also a theory that explains learning in terms of the antecedents and consequences of behavior. Some authors call it operant conditioning or reinforcement theory. It takes an extreme view that learning is completely dependent on the environment. It views human thoughts as unimportant intermediate stages between behaviour and

environment. According to OB Mod theory people alter their behaviours so that they maximize positive consequences and minimize adverse consequences.

ABCs of Behaviour Modification

The central objective of behaviour modification is to change behaviour (B) by managing its antecedents (A) and consequences (C). This is A.B.C Model of OB Mod.

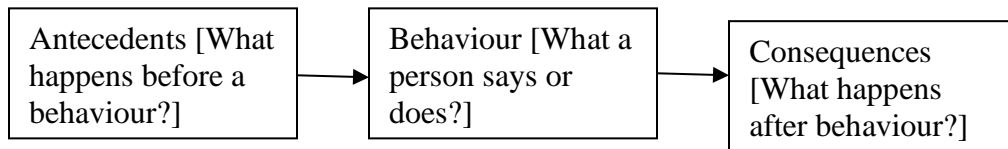


Fig: A-B-C Model of OB Mod.

Antecedents are events preceding the behaviour informing employee that certain behaviour will have particular consequences. The antecedents let employees know that a particular action will produce specific consequences [e.g. Employees who generally question the authority of the managers are ignored for promotions]

Consequences are events following a particular behaviour that influences its future occurrence [e.g. As questioning of manager's authority results in denial of promotions the workers stop questioning the manager]

Steps in O.B. Mod:

Behaviour cannot be modified in one shot. It is a slow process involving many steps.

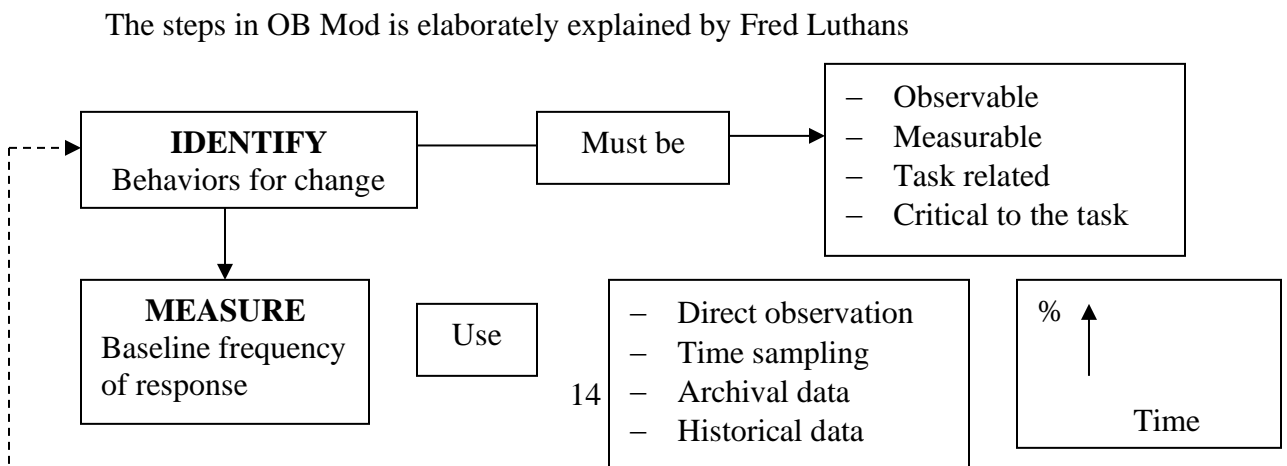
Step 1: Identify: Performance-related behavioural events must be observed. Usually these are related to quality / quantity of products or delivering service by the operating employees.

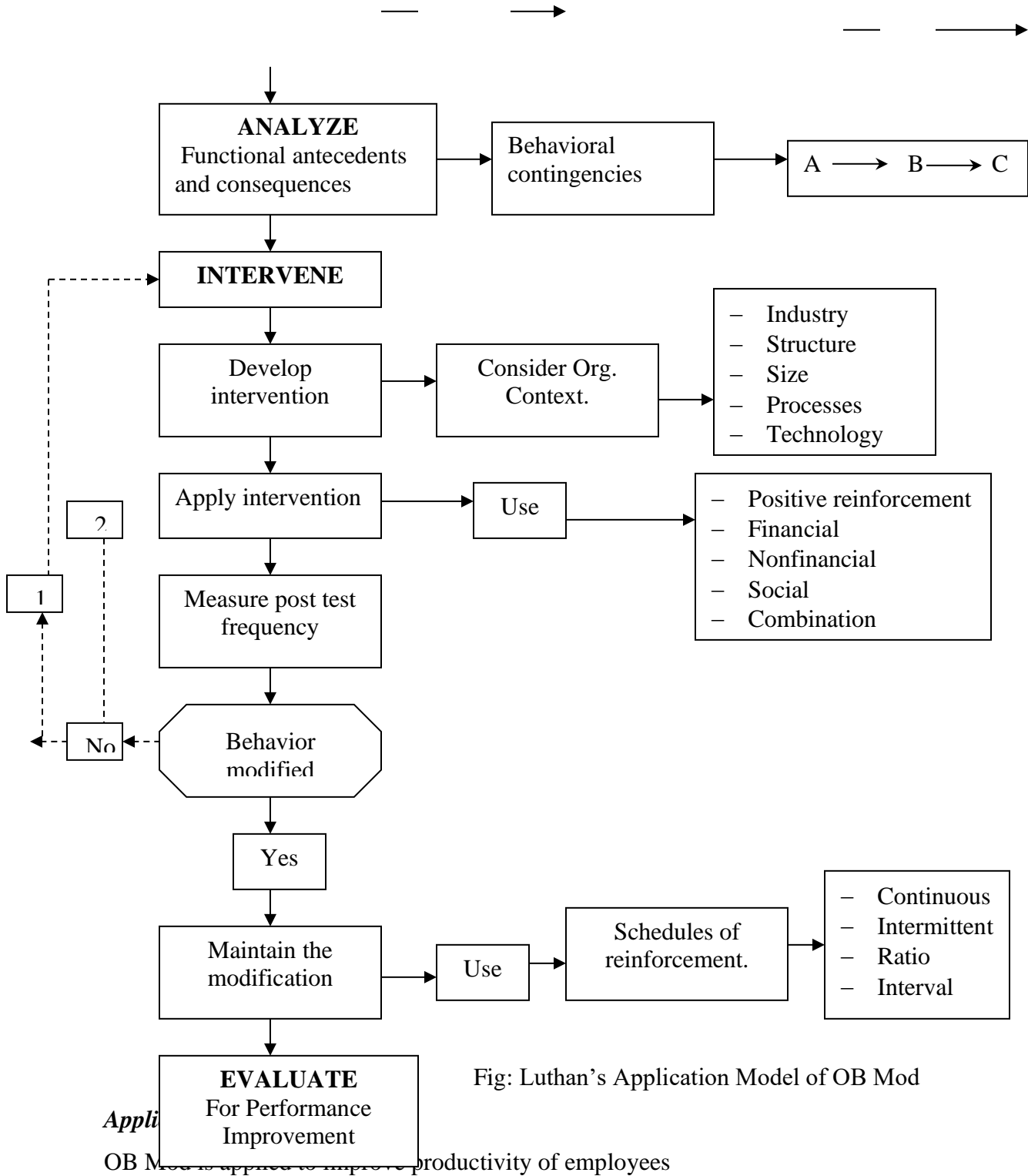
Step 2 – Measure: How often the performance behaviours identified in step 1 occurring under existing conditions are noted. It is the baseline measure.

Step 3 – Analyze: The antecedent (A) cues of the performance behaviour (B) and the contingent consequences (C) are noted. This A.B.C analysis is a necessary prerequisite to develop an effective intervention strategy.

Step 4 – Intervene: This is the action step of O.B Mod. The goal is to increase functional performance behaviour and reduce the dysfunctional behaviours. Here, positive reinforcement strategies involving financial benefits, social recognition / attention and feedback are used.

Step 5 – Evaluate: This step evaluates to make sure the intervention leads to performance improvement. If there is no improvement, then another analysis/intervention is made.





Employee productivity: Employee productivity or task completion is positively affected by behavioural management techniques.

Absenteeism and tardiness: Monetary incentives for attendance / promptness and / or punishment for absenteeism / tardiness were found to improve employees' behaviour.

Safety and accident prevention: Research data showed that behavioural management techniques considerably reduced accidents.

Sales performance: In many cases, even though sales people had probably acquired effective selling skills during their training, the environment would not have supported the use of those skills. A behavioural performance management approach in which important selling behaviour such as customer approach, suggestive statements and closing statements are identified, measured, analyzed, intervened in and evaluated would be an alternative to the motivation – skill – teaching approach.

Limitations of O.B Mod:

OB Mod is beset with certain limitations.

- One problem is 'reward inflation' in which the reinforcement (reward) is eventually considered as an entitlement.
- Some people revolt against the lottery–style variable ratio schedule as they consider it a gambling.
- O.B Mod's radical 'behaviourist' philosophy [human thinking processes are unimportant] has lost favour because it is now evident that people can learn through mental processes
- Some think that O.B Mod amounts to manipulation of behaviour and deprives freedom (individuality)

The Contents in this E-Material has been taken from the text and reference book as given in the syllabus