Introduction to Business Psychology

Business psychology is the study of how an understanding of the psychology of human behaviour can be applied within organisations to achieve more effective management practice. This module aims to provide students with know-how in the skills and understanding of business and management, in parallel with an insightful grounding into the psychology of individual and group behaviour at work. The module will equip future leaders and managers with the foundations of theoretical and practical skills to manage people effectively and to understand the dynamics of human interaction in the workplace.

Aims
The aims of this module are:

1. To provide a broad introduction to the discipline of psychology and introduce a range of paradigms in psychology, as well as to help students develop an understanding of psychological concepts that can be applied to management issues within a business psychology framework.
2. To prepare students to be effective members and managers of workplace teams; particularly through understanding the nature of work performance, and by having an awareness of the behavioural levers which managers can apply to improve the performance and job satisfaction of the individual (incl. with relation to the team).
3. To help students to develop abilities in the finding of practical solutions to people-related problems within organisations, examine the moral issues of work, learn the importance of team and group dynamics, including how to organise and manage effective teams, and explore developing areas in management and psychology. At the same time, students will also acquire the communication and thinking skills demanded by employers.

On completing this course successfully students will be able to:
- Understand and have knowledge of the nature of management and its role in enhancing performance;
- Understand and have knowledge of the nature of performance and its relationship to job satisfaction;
- Appreciate the differences between individuals which can affect performance;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of motivation and of theories which aim to predict how people will behave in the workplace;
- Explain how intrinsic and extrinsic rewards effect and enhance performance;
- Be familiar with the variety of formal processes for monitoring and assessing work performance, such as appraisal;
- Be familiar with the variety of processes for predicting the future performance of individuals such as psychometric testing;
- Understand tools for improving performance such as job redesign, job enrichment, empowerment, flexible working;
- Be informed on the importance of understanding factors which affect quality of working life;
- Begin to develop an understanding of the ethical responsibilities of management in relation to the motivation of their staff teams.

Learning outcomes
On successful completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Discriminate between different psychological paradigms (and research traditions), and utilise such in what is perceived to be appropriate to the conditions in which they are working.
2. Differentiate between approaches used to assess individual differences in mental ability, cognitive styles and personality.
3. Understand the various processes that underpin cognition, development and social interaction.
4. Understand how psychological theory and evidence relates to and can underpin practices and problem-solving in business and organisational contexts.

Indicative content from:
- The nature of management and its role in enhancing performance, incl. developing, building, organising and managing teams.
- Management and how it relates to the nature of performance and its relationship to job satisfaction.
- Definitions of what is good and bad performance.
- The dimensions of job satisfaction and how job satisfaction affects performance.
- The differences between individuals which can affect performance, individual personality, intelligence, emotional intelligence and learning and working styles.
- The nature of motivation, and of theories which aim to predict how people will behave in the workplace, incl. content and process approaches to understanding motivation.
- Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and their effectiveness in enhancing performance, such as translating theories into practical reward based management; e.g. performance related pay.
- Formal processes for monitoring and assessing work performance, such as appraisal, and processes for predicting the future performance of individuals.
- Individual differences (intelligence testing and IQ, theories of personality and different methods of personality assessment).
- Cognitive and behavioural psychology (processes including thinking, memory, attention, perceiving, learning).
- Social psychology (social behaviour, beliefs and attitudes, individual differences, social interaction and influences, the importance of cultural and intercultural perspectives).

Teaching and learning activities (1)
In addition to weekly lectures, which will expose students to discussion on key debates and contemporary events, students will also participate in seminar-tutorial-activity sessions where they will be encouraged to link concepts, apply theory to real-life examples (for example, through case studies and multimedia expositions) and engage in group discussions, problem solving exercises, and a variety of creative activities (see 2). The overarching goal, here, is to expose students not only to a grounding in psychological theory and business practice, but also to be able to be proactive in:

1. Thinking independently, analytically and creatively, so as to engage imaginatively with new areas of investigation.
2. Appreciation of disciplines and forms of professional practice beyond their own, and draw connections between them.
3. Being intellectually curious, responsive to challenges, and able to demonstrate initiative and resilience.
4. Creativity and enterprise: Recognising and creating opportunities, and in doing so respond effectively to unfamiliar or unprecedented situations or problems - generate new ideas and develop creative solutions or syntheses.
5. A willingness to communicate clearly and effectively, in a range of forms, taking account of different audiences, cross-cultural and international awareness and diverse backgrounds; as required and necessary.
Teaching and learning activity (2)
During and outside of class time, in order to achieve the focus of the course (see 1), learners will (also) engage in a variety of participative activities which will involve pair and small group work, including from:

- Creative brainstorms
- Poster-creating sessions
- Role-plays
- Article evaluation
- Team building exercises
- Quizzes
- Presentations (mini and extended)
- Question-and-answer sessions
- Case studies
- Video discussions
- Sharing personal experiences
- Cognitive ability tests
- Debates
- Participative experiments
- Self-assessment
- Peer review and assessment
- Critical evaluation and feedback

Participation

Students will be required to actively participate both in the classroom and externally. For such, all skill areas of English at a minimum of a B2 (CEFR) level of produceable ability is required. Lower level abilities will not be able to cope with the level of speaking, reading or writing needs.

Students will not require a prior knowledge of psychology, but should have a definite interest in the subject; specifically for its use and implementation in the workplace.

For all classes, students should have access to an internet-capable device: e.g. laptops or tablets; mobile phones will not be enough.

Assessment

Module assessment will be via a final presentation 50% (group, pair or individual, dependant on course numbers, and including a written summary of no more than 500 words to be handed-in at least three days prior to the presentation date), course work 25% (one major case study to completed and handed-in two weeks prior to the end of the semester), and exam 25% (multiple-choice and short answer questions).

Teaching

Lessons will begin in the first week of the Faculty of Business’ semester plan.

Required reading will be issued throughout the semester.