
Organization Behaviour for Leisure Services

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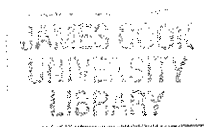
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Introduction

- 
- understand hospitality, leisure and tourism services
 - recognize the similarities and differences faced by leisure service providers
 - show how the study of organizational behaviour (OB) is shaped by the nature of leisure services
 - understand the structure of this book and the approach taken to the study of organizational behaviour in leisure services.

Understanding leisure

Leisure is an increasingly important economic activity in mature service economies. Leisure, is described by the *Collins English Dictionary* as, 'an opportunity for ease and relaxation', and therefore implies non-work time. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines leisure as 'The state of having time at one's disposal, free unoccupied time'. Indeed, the origin of the word is rooted in the Latin word *licere*, 'to be allowed'. In its broadest sense leisure encompasses all those waking activities that are not work activities. Leisure services, however, describe services provided by various organizations to occupy leisure time. For the purposes of this book these leisure services are usually experienced out of the home, though there are some overlaps. Typically we include:

- eating and drinking out
- staying away from home
- travel involving visits to leisure locations
- visiting places involving travel from home
- participating in and watching sporting activities
- attending theatrical and other cultural occasions
- shopping as a leisure activity.

These activities are a major aspect of the global economy. The International Labour Organization's (ILO's) report for 2001 in its survey of global provision, referred collectively to some of these sectors as 'Hotel, Catering and Tourism Sector'. It defined the sector as incorporating a full array of establishments providing food, drink and accommodation, at work and in an array of institutions, travel and tourism, as well as conference and exhibition activities (ILO, 2001: 5). The report estimated the world value of these industries to be US\$3.575 billion, and employment internationally to be over 100 million people. Though it varies between countries and regions, the overall picture is one of 2–3 per cent annual growth across the globe. This text recognizes the key similarity and differences between the organizations supplying leisure services and will provide insights into some problems specific to the sector.

Leisure services are difficult to define because of the overlapping nature of the activities under discussion. There are many disagreements about how leisure, hospitality and tourism activities relate to each other. Nationally and internationally there is evidence of academics, industrialists and policy-makers using the same terms to describe these activities in ways that lack precision and often contradict each other. This text provides a working model that assists understanding of how the activities relate to each other, though the authors do recognize that there are some difficulties and problems. Figure 11.1 suggests that one way of bringing them together through leisure services as a starting point.

If leisure time is defined as non-work time spent following an interest or activity, then we describe *leisure services* as 'services provided by leisure service organizations to occupy leisure time'. We do, however, recognize that hospitality, leisure and tourism services describe slightly different uses of leisure time and organizations providing these services display both similarities and differences. The following will attempt to draw on these similarities where appropriate. It is also important to recognize that, although our text is chiefly concerned with *leisure service organizations*, leisure activities also take place in the home.



LEISURE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS		
Hospitality Hotels, timeshare, serviced and non-serviced accommodation Restaurants and cafés Bars, pubs and nightclubs	Recreational leisure Museums, theatre, cinema, family entertainment centre, and concert activities Gaming, bingo, tenpin bowling, sports, recreational, golf, spas and health activities Arcades and retail shopping	Tourism Travel agencies and tour operators Airlines, bus companies and train companies Attractions and theme parks, resorts Conference and event venues

Figure 11.1 Leisure retail services

Customers' expectations of leisure service organizations are frequently shaped by their experiences in the home. Expectations of host and guest relationships in restaurants, bars and hotels are an example here.

Figure 11.1 suggests that hospitality activities – eating and/or drinking and/or staying away from home are a significant element of leisure activities. That said, hospitality is not tourism. People who go out to drink in bars and eat in restaurants are not all tourists. Yet travel away from home, and tourism, will frequently involve eating and drinking and staying away from home; tourism involves more activities than eating away from home. Similarly, tourists often travel for leisure and recreational purposes to visit museums, sports venues or shopping venues. Organizations in the sector are increasingly overlapping in the service they offer customers. Many hotels now offer health and leisure facilities. Pubs and bars offer increasingly sophisticated food menus. Most leisure facilities and museums have restaurants and bars, and tour operators package hotel accommodation with visits to museums, galleries and other recreational interests.

In this book we therefore define leisure services as services associated with provision that is linked with leisure time activity and recreation. However, some of the activities that involve hospitality and tourism overlap with work-motivated activities. Business lunches, business trips and conference attendance all may involve organizations providing food and/or drink and/or accommodation away from the workplace, but are associated with work activities. They also use these leisure venues as a recreational device for improving work effectiveness and business relationships.

To some extent these tensions and inconsistencies in our definition are explained through the recognition that the organizations concerned are largely providing services with some common features that give them a coherence of similarity. In particular we can say that:



- these are all service organizations
- frequently these organizations are managing tensions between different stakeholders
- frontline staff play a key role in delivering the service to customers
- customers receive the service by attending the service provider's premises
- frequently production and consumption of service occur on the provider's premises
- premises mostly are located close to customers or where customers want to be
- a growing number of these service organizations supply services through many hundreds or thousands of premises.

Services and service organizations

Leisure service organizations are those organizations providing hospitality, leisure and tourism services as outlined above. They face some difficulties and problems that make the study of organization behaviour a key requirement. Services in general are said to involve four distinctive features that distinguish them from manufacturing, mining or farming. These are defined as follows:

- 1 *Intangibility* Successful service encounters will be based on employee performance and abilities to generate an emotional response in customers; for example, hotel, restaurant and bar customers want to feel welcome and wanted. Often the impacts cannot be defined and measured in material terms.
- 2 *Heterogeneity* Every service encounter is produced by the personal behaviour of the service provider and meets unique responses from the customer. In these circumstances services are said to be heterogeneous. Each service encounter is said to be a unique encounter. A receptionist in a leisure club, or a cast in a theatre, may appear to give the same performance each time. It is, in fact, different each time because they themselves enter each new encounter informed by the experience of previous encounters. Customers, also, are different from each other, as they too are shaped by past experiences.
- 3 *Perishability* Service encounters occur once and are time specific. Thus it may be possible to replace a physical drink in a bar if the customer is not satisfied, but the smile and greeting cannot be reworked if the customer feels unwelcome. As service interactions are mostly time specific, it is not possible to rework service defects, and in leisure service organizations service has to be 'right first time'.
- 4 *Inseparability* The service worker producing, and the service customer consuming, the service have to be present. This inseparability means that leisure service organizations need to be located where customers want to receive the service, and there are limits to the amount of centralization of service production.

These features present customers with some real dilemmas when faced with decisions to purchase a service. The significance of the intangibles, the potential uniqueness of each service encounter and the perishability of the service, in particular, make it difficult for customers to predict what they are going to get. A response to these problems of prediction has been the growing reliance on 'branded' leisure services. Here the leisure service organization claims to produce a particular service experience. Hotel, bar, restaurant, leisure club and tour operating chains are, in one way or another,



making attempts to provide predictability to the customer. Customers have responded by using branded leisure service organizations. In most mature service economies big multi-unit service organizations dominate the leisure service market. Firms like McDonald's Restaurants, Marriott Hotels, Thomson Travel and David Lloyd Leisure communicate clear messages to customers about the service they will provide.

This book focuses on the organizational experiences, particularly the difficulties and dilemmas these leisure organizations face when attempting to provide reliable services across hundreds or thousands of units. The performance of unit managers and staff has an immediate impact on each customer's experience. If customers experience service that does not match their expectations, or if staff do not respond favourably to their requests, customers become dissatisfied and may decide not to use that organization again. In fact, service organizations reflect a number of tensions between the three key stakeholders – customers as recipients, and managers as agents of owners and employees, both of whom are both service providers. Figure 11.2 reproduces Bateson's representation of these tensions.

The centrality of the control issue in the successful management of services should not be underestimated and has been well documented by Bateson (1985). He suggests that the successful delivery of most services requires that both the customers and employees surrender some control to comply with management's chosen service delivery system. Thus it is likely that customer satisfaction (both internal and external) will be influenced by the extent to which each party perceives that they maintain some control over the service encounter. This makes leisure organizations interesting to study because relations between customers, owners/managers and staff will always be based on tensions and conflicting needs that can never be completely reconciled, only recognized and negotiated.

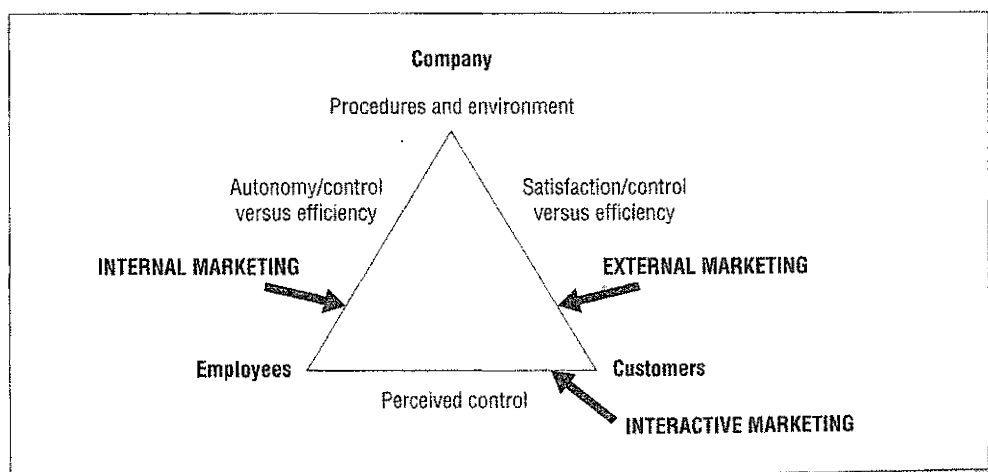


Figure 11.2 The perceived behavioural control conflicts in the service encounter
Source: Bateson (1985).

Organizational behaviour

The term 'organizational behaviour' is a convenient way of referring to the multiplicity of interrelated influences on, and patterns of, behaviour of people within organizations. This book is an advanced introduction to the fundamental issues involved and relies on the interdisciplinary perspectives of psychology, sociology and anthropology.

A central aim of this book is to provide the reader with the conceptual tools necessary for analysing organizational behaviour in the context of hospitality, leisure and tourism provision, and understanding events in order to take appropriate management action. Although many more issues are worthy of inclusion, the framework adopted discusses and questions a number of key elements including:

- organizational structures and behaviour
- commercial hospitality, leisure and tourism in a service context
- the individual and the organization
- groups in the organization
- management within the organization.

Chapters 1 to 3 of the book deal with the characteristics of leisure service organizations and the impact that these have on organizational behaviour, organizational management and organizational design. The high significance of employee performance in matching customer expectations in organizations operating in many sites has driven many leisure service organization managers to explore forms of organizational structure that move away from the traditional command and control structures developed for armies and the 'warfare' of capitalism.

Layered structures and learning organizations are some of the metaphors used to describe organizations designs needed in multi-unit, branded leisure service organizations. These structural metaphors are often shaped by the recognition that individual performance at a micro level may make or break the service event. The reaction of organization members to customer complaints and 'out of brand' unusual requests depend on individuals being able to provide both the physical behaviour and emotional responses required of the 'brand'. Hence individual commitment, motivation, reward and performance have a key significance.

Chapters 4 to 8 explore issues related to the individual and some of the social and psychological impacts of organizations on individual behaviour and performance. The impact of other individuals is dealt with on two levels. The first explores the social psychology of group membership on individual performance, and shows how work groups and teams are used as management techniques within organizations. The second level explores organizational culture as a form of macro group culture that again shapes the organizational context in which individual organization members operate.

Chapters 9 to 12 deal with issues related to the management of people in a leisure services context. Empowerment has been a recent metaphor advocated as a way of creating the flexibility and responsiveness needed in leisure service organizations. Empowerment, when thoughtfully applied, can represent techniques for managing both frontline staff and managers in a way that replaces external control of behaviour with internal forms, whereby individuals are encouraged to control themselves within set limits. Following from this, Chapter 10 deals with communication issues



– a particular problem when dealing with multi-unit organizations operating across international boundaries. Leisure service organization members frequently represent diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture and religions, and the management of diversity requires some special attention. Finally the role of managers, management and managerialism requires discussion as one, albeit a dominant one, of a number of metaphors of leisure service organizations.

Reflective practitioners

Throughout the book we invite you to reflect and consider issues that have been discussed earlier. This process of reflection is designed to aid your understanding and to help you remember the concepts under discussion. In addition, the book aims to help develop 'reflective practitioners', that is, people who are able to think and do. The concepts being developed throughout the book are not included merely as an intellectual exercise; they assist those interested in leisure organizations to better understand the behaviour of organization members. Reflective practice represents a process of thinking that is helpful both for the study of organizations and for those for those who will manage them.

The text is also informed by recent research on learning styles preferences of students on programmes aimed at the study of leisure services (Lashley, 1999; Lashley, 2001; Lashley and Shaw, 2002). The research uses an adapted version of Honey and Mumford's eighty-questions instrument based on the original by Kolb (1985). Kolb's work originally developed four-quadrant learning styles based on two continua. Honey and Mumford relabelled these as learning by experience and learning by conceptualization; and learning by experimentation and learning by reflection. Figure 11.3 reproduces these two quadrants and the four learning styles positions that they produce.

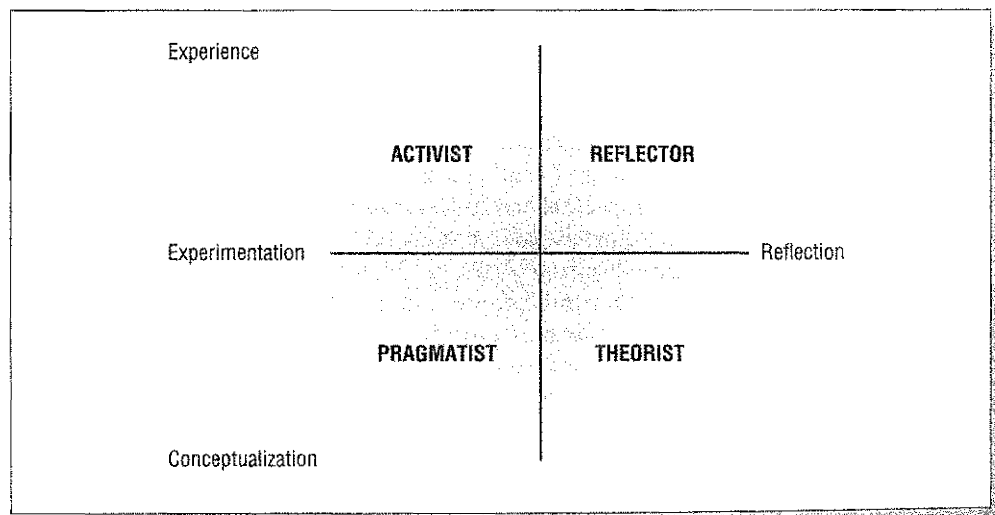


Figure 11.3 Honey and Mumford's four learning styles
Source: Honey and Mumford (1986).

In each case the learning style inclines the student to learn with certain preferences. Going back to Kolb's original work (1985) each of these preferences is formed by personality and brain side preference. Figure 11.4 reproduces the basis of the Kolb approach. Again there are two continua on relates to introversion and extroversion, and the other on the proneness to use either left or right hand side of the brain.

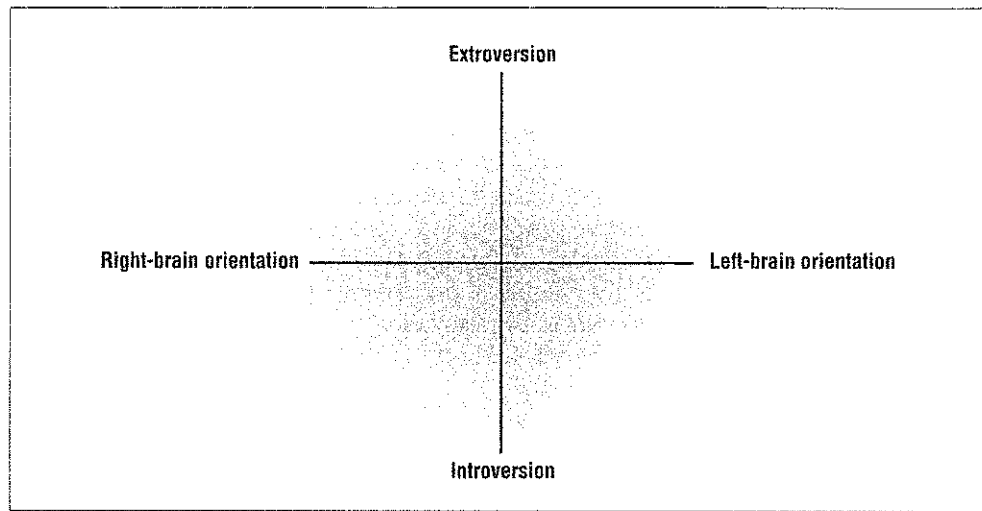


Figure 11.4 Kolb's model underlying learning style preferences
Source: Kolb (1983).

Hence, these personality factors create an approach to learning that may or not be compatible with the way that teaching and learning are organized. The results suggest that most of our students enter leisure service programmes with a strong learning style preference that needs to be understood and addressed.

The results highlight a strong preference for Activist learning styles across most programmes. Given the nature of the research instrument, a student could potentially register strong preferences for all learning styles. In the sample, few students register strong or very strong preference for learning in other styles. More importantly, substantial minorities register low or very low preference for learning in Reflector, Theorist or Pragmatist styles.

Without wishing to run through the whole model, it is worth reiterating that Activist learners learn best by doing and feeling, and talking with others. They rely more on intuition than on analysis. They need to see the practical application of knowledge. They enjoy here and now activities, such as business games, teamwork tasks and role-playing. They are particularly keen to learn by 'doing', and typically find theoretical approaches difficult. They are attracted to 'people' industries and like active involvement. They work well with others. They will try new ideas. They like variety and excitement. However, they experience difficulties that many experienced educators will recognize. They rarely plan their actions. They rush into answers, and in examination situations may run out of time because they spend too much time on



the early questions. They tend not to put effort into topics that are not of interest and they often leave things to the last minute.

Kolb states that the most effective learning involves all aspects of the learning styles. They must reflect on actions undertaken – seeing how these reflections fit with theories – consider how they might need to alter future actions, and then act. Figure I1.5 reproduces these stages involving both collective and individual reflection.

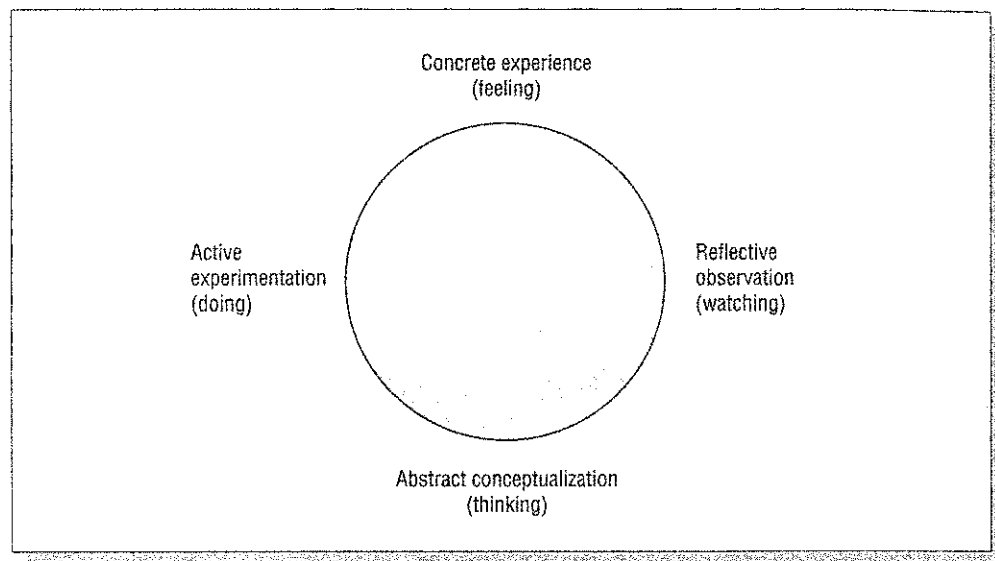


Figure I1.5 Kolb's learning cycle (1985)
Source: Lashley (1995).

For the purposes of this book, and for future activities, we suggest that the process of learning needs to move through the stages outlined on Kolb's model. Active experience need to be followed by reflection, including the critical evaluation of the experience, and consideration of how these experiences inform or adapt theoretical understanding and how this might inform future actions. Traditionally this is shown as a cycle, as in Figure I1.5; however, it is more accurately a series of spirals where the process of acting, reflecting, theorizing and deciding on future actions leads from the past to new learning situations. Figure I1.6, in our view, expresses this process more accurately.

So what does all this mean for the book? Well, if we are dealing with readers who are mostly reflective practitioners, we will set learning in practical and active situations. Case studies and active learning exercises are designed to engage the activist learner, but in a way that demonstrates the importance of theories and concepts. At various points in the text and at the end of each chapter you will be invited to reflect on issues that have been discussed earlier. We urge you to undertake these exercises because they are an important part of the process of developing reflective practitioners.

We hope you enjoy the book. Good luck!



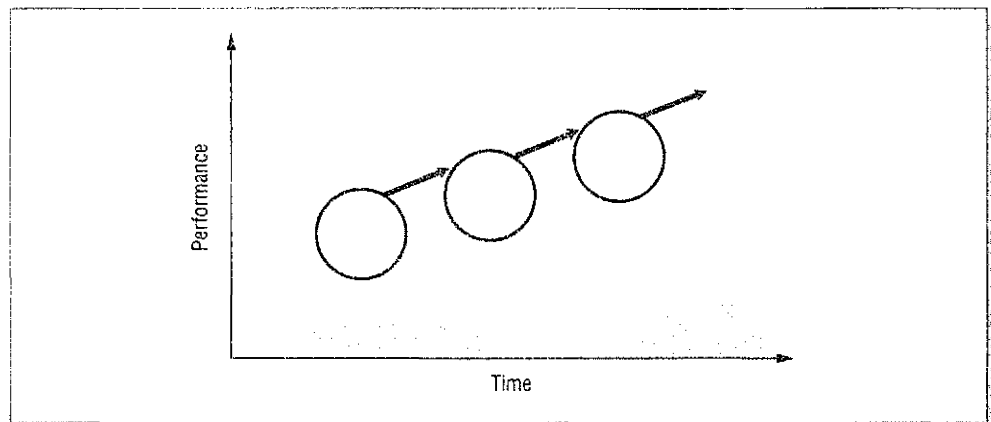


Figure I1.6 A model of reflective practice

Reflective practice

- 1 Define hospitality, recreational leisure and tourism services. Critically discuss these definitions in a way that shows how there are ambiguities in many current definitions.
- 2 Analyse the similarities and differences of organizations that make up the leisure service sector. Comment on the extent to which these organizations have similar tensions and inconsistencies to manage.
- 3 Evaluate the importance of the behaviour of people who make up leisure service organizations. Discuss the importance and conflicting needs of the key stakeholders in hospitality organizations.
- 4 Discuss the reflective practitioner and the approach needed to get the most out of this text.

