

OB SIMULATION: A HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This demonstration will provide the participants with an opportunity to experience a simulation in the area of Organizational Behavior (OB). Participants, either individually or in teams, will play the role of a retail store manager who faces a series of managerial issues based on the main topics in an OB course. The demonstration will provide a complete picture of the simulation from both the perspective of a student perspective and from the perspective of an instructor.

BACKGROUND

Organizational Behavior is generally taught as a survey course at the undergraduate level. Most OB textbooks have between 15-22 chapters with each chapter covering some OB topic, like leadership, motivation, communications, corporate culture, etc. Instructors often note that students finish the course without getting a comprehensive picture of how the various topics are integrated and interrelated. Some instructors have commented that the treatment of the topics is sometimes abstract and removed from the actual experience of most undergraduates. To deal with this, many textbooks provide one or more 'integrated' cases at the end of the textbook. However, as one publisher's representative put it, "the cases are not used and the instructors bemoan that something better needs to be developed for the course." Based on comments such as these, as well as our own experience in teaching OB, the authors believe that a "hands-on" simulation is necessary in order to deal with the issues raised above.

As far as the authors know, this is the first comprehensive simulation in the OB area directed toward undergraduates. The simulation has a series of interconnected situations, each covering an OB topic and each having a decision focus. Each situation presents the student, in the role of the manager, with a series of choices

(called decision options) related to the OB topic at hand. During the demonstration, you will make a series of OB decisions within the context of a small organization. When the students use the actual simulation, they must make a choice and justify it, usually by doing some additional research. The justification by students can take several forms (i.e., in the classroom as formal or informal presentations or as homework assignments in the form of submitted journals). If the latter is utilized, the journal is sent to the instructor, who then grades it.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

From the perspective of a student, the participants will learn to:

1. Make decisions;
2. Rationalize the decisions made;
3. Understand the impact of the decisions made;
4. Appreciate how the major topics in OB are covered;
5. Be exposed to a realistic setting;
6. Understand the nature and issues of managing an organization;
7. Interact with colleagues, employees and corporate staff.

From the perspective of an instructor, the participants will learn:

1. How the simulation works;
2. How to grade the student's work;
3. How to manipulate and use the simulation grading rubric;
4. How to incorporate the OB dependent variables into the simulation;
5. How to use the simulation as the main andragogy in the classroom;
6. How to use the simulation as a supplement to the classroom format;
7. How to use MOODLE, the platform for the simulation.

TIME

1 ½ to 2 hours

MATERIALS

1. Laptop computer per participant
2. Overhead projector

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR SIMULATION

Undergraduate majors or minors in Business
Administration