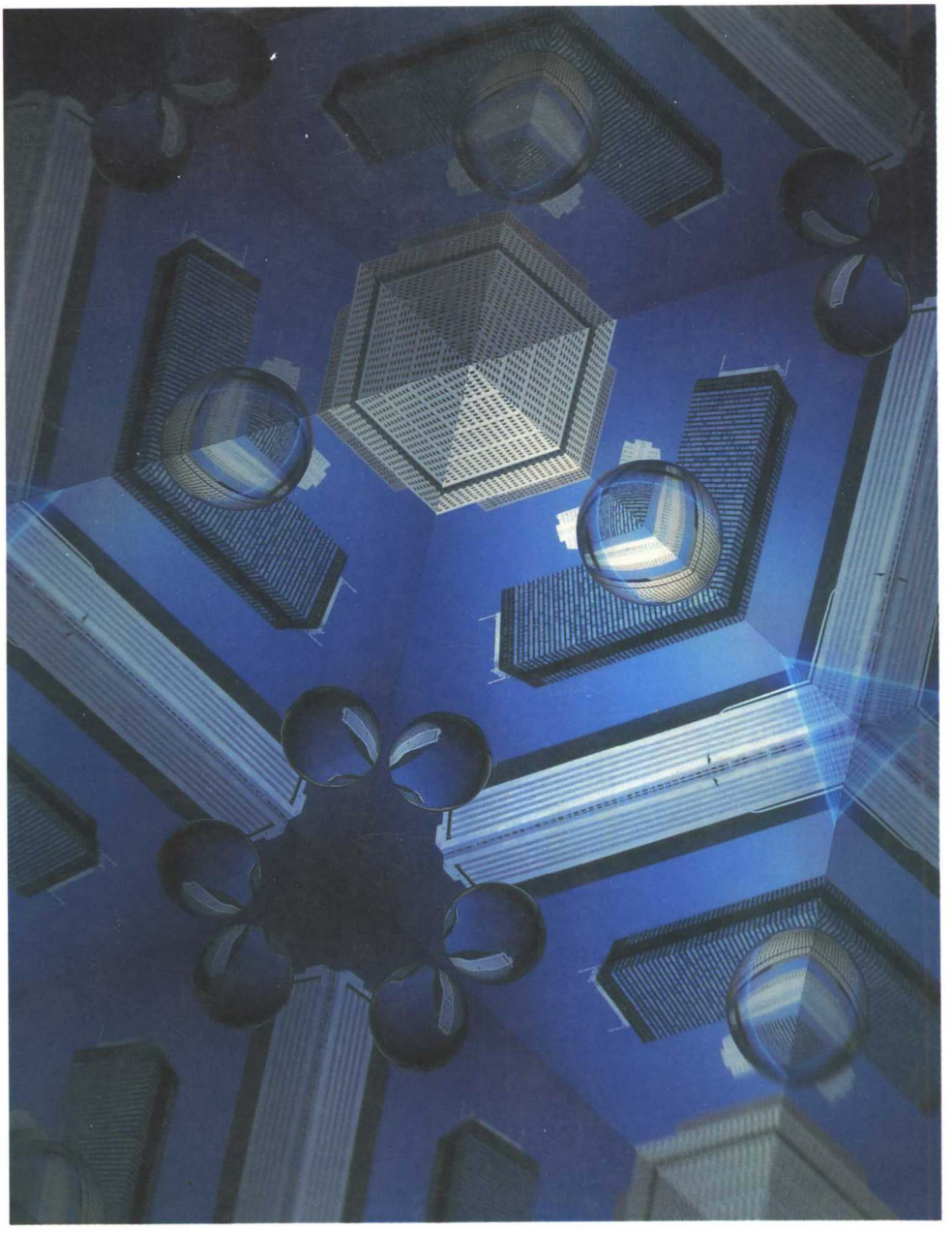
FIFTH EDITION

BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS

An Experiential Approach



LAU • SHANI

BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS
An Experiential Approach

Fifth Edition

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James B. Lau
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Introduction

The first edition of this book was originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when there were few textbooks in organizational behavior (OB), and only a handful of educators recognized the need to teach OB experientially. Twenty years later, as we complete the fifth edition of this book, the Organizational Behavior Division of the Academy of Management is the largest division, the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society has 500 active members, some scholarly journals have incorporated the term *organizational behavior* into their titles, and many basic textbooks are available on this subject. The original textbook launched what has become a continuing enterprise, the essence of which was to learn about organizational behavior in an experiential way and to go beyond trying to summarize the existing and growing body of knowledge.

We have used the OB approach in this text by first focusing on design and secondly on classroom management practices. A current OB emphasis is to influence behavior and outcome through use of design (the subject of Chapter 12), whether it be architectural, organization, work, or job design. In our case we have designed a management workshop for this OB course to achieve our learning objectives. We have selected certain learning methods and sequences to implement the design. And we provide guidance for classroom management practices that creates a learning community in which behavioral and intellectual change occurs. In this sense, the instructors are managers of the educational design, the learning processes, the classroom, and the learning community, using the OB methods in which they are instructing the students. As managers, instructors are models of their own OB instruction.

As with the four preceding editions, this fifth edition of *Behavior in Organizations* is designed first and foremost to meet needs we have not found satisfied in other texts. There are many continuities with prior editions, but there are some important changes to freshen and update the text. We strived to improve the balance between experiential activities, cases, and theoretical knowledge for each part and chapter; we have merged or deleted five chapters; we have added chapters to cover the important topics of creativity, innovation, technology, quality improvements, and career planning and development; we have emphasized the international dimension of organizational behavior; and we have increased considerably the number of exercises and case studies by adding some fine original contributions from colleagues.

Major continuities with previous editions include our basic approach, aims, and emphasis. As before, the text is intended for use in an experiential learning course for undergraduate or graduate students of business administration in a required organizational behavior core course. Thus, we provide basic coverage of essential OB topics. These topics are often taught solely by lectures and readings, a *cognitive* approach primarily emphasizing *content*. Content-based approaches do not deal adequately with the need for student involvement, nor do they assist students to acquire behavioral skills. In

contrast, *Behavior in Organizations* emphasizes involvement exercises to help students quickly and effectively enter the *process* of thinking about behavior, applying concepts, and developing their own expertise. Lectures and readings are intended to bolster this process orientation.

Experiential methods provide a powerful stimulus for learning, growth, and change by helping participants focus on their own behaviors and reactions as data. For this very reason, some students may at first be uncomfortable about encountering experiential methods in a required course. (In contrast, students who have elected such courses are often eager and excited by experiential learning, or if they find it threatening, they can quickly drop the course.) To help students deal with this problem, we begin with more structured, less personal exercises that are readily recognized as relevant to human effectiveness in organizational settings. Personal growth and self-understanding exercises are introduced later in the text, after students have had enough experience to become more comfortable and ready for them.

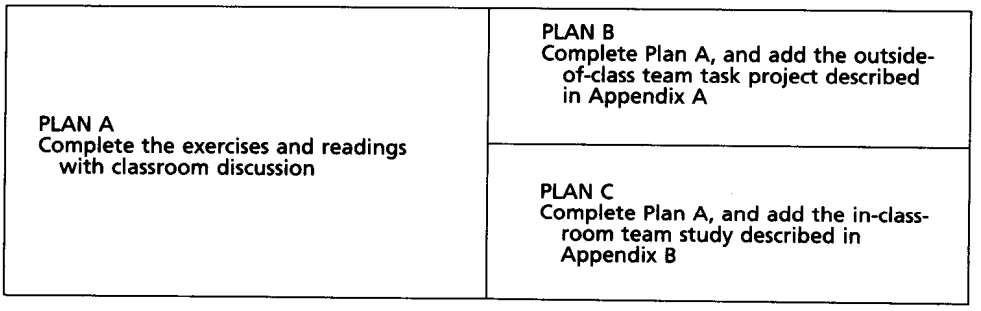
This edition also retains its emphasis on bringing to the university classroom the type of training that supervisors, managers, and executives experience in management development programs. It includes methods of adult education such as team activities, role playing, case studies, in-baskets, and other simulation exercises. Managers generally will not sit through many lectures, nor do they find time for long reading assignments. But action-oriented exercises that provide a new conceptual input and permit them to apply their experience and share it with others are undertaken with great energy and involvement. The exercises in this text, or others similar to them, have all been used successfully with supervisors, managers, and executives in education programs in our major industries and government agencies.

Since one of our objectives is to bring what is being done in management education into the university classroom in a basic course, there has been no attempt to be highly original in content or exercises. Many exercises have been written by the authors but are similar to others already in use. In this edition we have been fortunate to be able to include fresh exercises and case studies written by creative colleagues. The theoretical and conceptual writings that integrate the exercises are basic organizational behavior theory. Both theory and exercises are intended to present an eclectic approach, and no attempt is made to take a position of advocacy, except for the experiential approach.

Alternate Plans for Using the Text

The design of the text allows instructors to adapt the course to the conditions under which they are teaching and the type of students with whom they work. It can be used in classes with time blocks of one, one and a half, two, three, or four hours by planning the exercises and readings accordingly. The workload can also be adjusted for desired depth of coverage by following one of the three plans suggested in the following diagram.

Figure 1
Alternate Course Designs for Using this Text



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Plan A can be used when no homework is required other than the chapters, articles, and case studies in the text. A basic supervisory or management course is frequently conducted in this manner. Plan B can provide the richest and most challenging approach: the teams complete an outside-of-class task project lasting throughout the course, which allows for the skills development and the application of course concepts to team members' own behavior. Plan C has the same objectives, but no task project; team activities are limited to classroom exercises and several outside preparatory meetings. The time requirements of plan B make it more appropriate for a semester course, while plan C can be readily completed in a quarter course.

The Course Topics

The sequence of the topics in this text is depicted in Figure 2. The chapters have been arranged to utilize the appropriate learning methods and to provide a generally logical development of the theory and concepts. Several considerations were important in the design.

1. Involvement learning proceeds best when it starts with the first class session and continues with growing intensity, particularly early in the course. Because students come with the expectation that the classroom is a lecture-listener, chairs-in-a-row environment, they will quickly lapse into that mode if the course structure does not avoid it. Thus, there are class exercises in the introductory chapters: the students use their own experience to define organizational behavior (Chapter 1), and the classroom climate is established through dialoguing (Chapter 2).

2. Reinforcement and opportunities to apply learning are provided for by introducing major concepts early and studying their various aspects throughout the course. Thus the small group, a primary focus of the text, is introduced in Chapter 6 and returned to at intervals throughout the course. Group processes and group skills are integrated toward the end in team building (Chapter 19), and in organizational development (Chapter 20). In courses that adopt plans B and C, which require group projects, student groups can apply new theory and concepts to their own project teams throughout the course. Three pervasive core concepts—communication, motivation, and perception (see the right-hand columns of the figure)—are discussed throughout the text in conjunction with other topics as the course progresses. This learning is integrated when the topics are addressed directly in later chapters (Chapter 9 for motivation, Chapter 10 for perception, and Chapter 11 for communication).

3. The general logical sequence of material after the introduction proceeds through increasingly inclusive organizational levels, from individual behavior (leadership style, Chapter 3), to small group and intergroup behavior in the middle of the course (for example, small group dynamics, Chapter 8) to effectiveness of the organization as a whole in Chapters 14 and 20. However, materials on interpersonal relations, personal growth, and team building are placed mainly in the later chapters of the text, where students will reach them after having become more comfortable with experiential learning and personal topics.

The text has been divided into five parts. Statements at the beginning of each part provide previews of the coming chapters and, in Parts 2 through 5, a review of material already covered. A more complete understanding of the subject areas and the learning method of the entire text can be achieved by reading through these statements at the beginning of Parts 1 through 5.

Human behavior in organizations is both fascinating and important to understand. It surrounds and concerns us all, and affects every aspect of our lives. Moreover, it is the heart of effective management. Students respond with great eagerness to organizational behavior concepts in a properly designed course. Their enthusiasm offers the quickest route to the working skills they will find essential in the organizational world. This text's main aim is helping them succeed.

Figure 2
Sequence of Learning Areas in Course

Text Chapter	Area of Focus				Core Concepts		
	Individual or Interpersonal	Small Group	Intergroup or Interface	Organization	Communication	Motivation	Perception
1	Defining Organizational Behavior				X	X	X
2	Learning Styles	Team Style	Organizational Dialoguing	Organizational Learning	X	X	X
3	Leadership Styles	Team Skills		Organizational Style	X	X	X
4	Behavioral Sciences and Knowledge					X	
5	The Organizational Boundaries: Formal versus Human Organization						
6		Problem Solving-Team Skills		Formal	X		
7		Decision Making-Team Skills		Organization Influence	X	X	X
8		Small Group Dynamics			X		X
9	Motivation	Group Influence on Motivation				X	X
10	Perception				X	X	X
11	Communication Interpersonal	Small Group Communication	Intergroup Conflict		X	X	X
12	Job Design for the Individual	Group Work Design	Organization Design		X	X	X
13	System Approach at All Levels			Organizational Planning and Control	X	X	X
14	Creativity	Group and Organizational Influence		Innovation	X	X	X
15	System Approach at All Levels			Technology and Quality	X	X	X
16	Personal Growth			Formal Organization Influence	X	X	X
17	Career Planning and Development				X	X	X
18	Managing Stress				X	X	X
19	Manager Effectiveness	Team Building			X	X	X
20	System Approach at All Levels			Organizational Culture, Development and Change	X	X	X

This figure illustrates how the major and secondary topics covered in the text chapters are integrated into the four levels of behavior studied in the course. The core concept columns on the right indicate where communication, motivation, and perception are applied to the topic analysis.

Note to Participants

Please do not read ahead in this book unless the assignment at the end of the chapter or the instructor specifically instructs you to do so. The format of this book is to start many chapters with an exercise, then to develop the concepts and theories using your experience as data. If you look at the exercise ahead of time, some of the spontaneity of participation will be lost. You will miss out on the enjoyment, and on an important part of the learning as well.

PART 1 THE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR CONTEXT AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course is concerned with the exploration of behavioral issues in the context of the work organization. Individual and organizational learning are the dual objectives of the course. As such we are concerned with *how* you learn as well as *what* you learn about human behavior in organizations. The *how* and the *what* are closely connected in this course, because so much of what you will learn is a process: a different way of looking at your own experience, a deeper way of understanding the power of attitudes or expectations, or a new awareness of how people experience work organizations. Management education strives to provide viewpoints and learn-by-doing methods that help participants "walk through" new learning. We use experience in this way. Your own experiences in this course will be the basic data to build your understanding. The activities of this course are structured to help you understand the behavior of people in organizations.

Management and executive workshops often spend the first hours or days developing a sense of community and deciding how to use experience and the interactions of participants for maximum learning. The workshop becomes a *learning community*—a community in this sense refers to a group of people with common interests, values, and purposes who meet regularly; it suggests supportiveness; it implies exchange of information as a primary process of community integration. Workshop participants find out about one another and about faculty, they become part of a team, and they learn more effective ways of interacting.

The climate that best promotes learning is one in which participants support one another, are open with one another about their responses, and are willing to confront or compare different responses, insights, and experiences. Learning to learn is important enough (and difficult enough) for managers to spend time building such a climate systematically. We, too, will spend time learning to learn and creating an appropriate climate. A key aspect of this sort of learning environment involves learning how to effectively utilize our own experiences and those of others. Part 1 of this book is designed to accomplish these ends.

Preview of Part 1

The learning climate of the classroom is developed in the first two chapters. In Chapter 1 and Exercise 1, class members participate in a triad exercise in which each tells of an experience from his or her work. A number of participants then relate their experiences to the entire class. From these experiences, the topic areas of

organizational behavior are constructed for the class by the professor to demonstrate that the behavioral study of the course has immediate relevance to everyone.

In Chapter 2 and Exercise 2, an open communication dialogue is practiced to examine the assumptions of the students and the professor that are relevant to the course and its learning goals. Content and process learning are discussed, and the first two exercises are used as illustrations to enhance understanding of process (experiential) learning. Special emphasis is given to the role of the participant as a coach and contributor to the learning of others. The values of the learning community model are also discussed.

Once the classroom learning climate is established, participants are assigned to working teams. The first substantive area, that of contrasting managerial and leadership styles, is introduced in Chapter 3. Exercise 6 provides a questionnaire through which participants can examine their own and fellow team members' assumptions about leadership. The five leadership styles examined in the book are then explored, and the professional-transformational manager style is highlighted as the one that systematically incorporates behavioral science findings and methods into management practices. The first case study is introduced as an important learning tool for facilitating the exploration of the organizational behavior topic—leadership and managerial challenges at the workplace.

The professional-transformational manager style is the vehicle for leading participants into other topic areas of behavioral science. In Chapter 4, the behavioral science approach to effectiveness in organizations is discussed, along with the reasons it has become of great interest to business and government. The traditional and behavioral models of organizational effectiveness are illustrated in Figure 4–1 to emphasize the need for integration of both in professional management.

Chapter 5 concludes this section by providing a conceptual framework and analytical tools to begin the investigation of the organizational context in which human behavior takes place. The characteristics of the human and formal organizations are explored, and two conceptual tools, the "Operational Blueprint" (Figure 5–1) and "Actors Playing Their Roles" (Figure 5–2), are provided for the analysis of the work organization. A classic case, "The Electronics Stock Control Group" (Chapter 4 and Appendix H) was selected for the first application of the newly acquired analytical tools.

The establishment of the learning method and climate through interaction exercises and the introduction of the framework of the content areas to be studied should satisfactorily prepare course participants for Part 2, which deals with various aspects of small group dynamics.

1 Organizational Behavior: A Working Definition

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter you should be able to:

1. Explain why is it important to study organizational behavior.
2. Identify the relevant course topics.
3. Briefly describe the systems approach to understanding, managing, and directing people in organizations.
4. State the four levels of improving organizational effectiveness.
5. Explain some of the issues associated with rationality and irrationality in management.
6. Describe the objectives of the course.
7. Gain initial insight into the dynamics of involvement learning and learning community.

List of Key Concepts

Organizational behavior
Effectiveness
Management
Rationality
System
Social technology
Learning community

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