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工商管理精要系列·影印版

组织行为学

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

肖恩·泰森 著
托尼·杰克逊

Shaun Tyson
Tony Jackson



中国人民大学出版社



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组织行为学

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出版说明

《工商管理精要系列·影印版》是中国人民大学出版社和西蒙与舒斯特国际出版公司继《工商管理经典译丛》之后，共同合作出版的一套大型工商管理精品影印丛书。

本丛书由欧洲著名管理学院和管理咨询公司的教授和专家撰写，它将90年代以来国际上工商管理各专业的最新研究成果，分门别类加以精练浓缩，由享誉世界的最大教育图书出版商 Prentice Hall 出版公司出版。每一本书都给出了该专业学生应掌握的理论框架和知识信息，并对该专业的核心问题和关键理论作了全面而精当的阐述。本丛书虽然篇幅不长，但内容充实，信息量大，语言精练，易于操作且系统性强。因此，自90年代初陆续出版以来，受到欧洲、北美及世界各地管理教育界和工商企业界读者的普遍欢迎，累计发行量已达数百万册，是当今国际工商管理方面最优秀的精品图书之一。

这套影印版的出版发行，旨在推动我国工商管理教育和 MBA 事业的发展，为广大师生和工商企业界读者，提供一套原汁原味反映国外管理科学研究成果的浓缩精品图书。有助于读者尽快提高专业外语水平，扩大知识面，掌握工商管理各专业的核心理论和管理技巧。

本丛书可作为管理院校的专业外语教材和各类企业的培训教材，对于那些接受短期培训的企业管理者、MBA 学生，以及想迅

速了解工商管理各专业核心领域的师生来说，本丛书更是极具价值的藏书和参考资料。

为了能及时反映国际上工商管理的研究成果，中国人民大学出版社今后将与 Prentice Hall 出版公司同步出版本丛书的其他最新内容并更新版本，使中国读者能借助本丛书，跟踪了解国际管理科学发展的最新动态。

1997 年 8 月

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1

Introduction to the study of organizational behaviour

"What is the use of a book", thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

Lewis Carol, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

This book is a comprehensive organizational behaviour text. However, Alice is right: life is too exciting, people are too colourful to be easily represented in a text. In this book we seek to describe the organizational terrain where people live out most of their active existence: the work organization is a source of identity, a forum for emotional expression, a place apparently rational, serving economic purposes, but which is a human construct. Offices, factories, hospitals, schools and shops are places of triumph and disaster, of alienation or fulfilment, where people often find their most vivid social experiences. Our book portrays the essential themes in organizational life, which are, like Alice's adventures, frequently paradoxical.

The study of organizational behaviour analyses and interprets behaviour in work organizations. This requires the application of sociology and psychology to the understanding of behaviour at work – the 'human side of enterprise' in McGregor's words. Sociology is the study of social action – that is, action which is directed towards others – whilst psychology is the study of personality and of individual and group behaviour.

There are, of course, common-sense theories which all people apply when interpreting their everyday existence. These theories require us to make assumptions about others and the situations in which we find ourselves. The study of organizational behaviour

seeks to test these assumptions and common-sense theories in order to build up a store of knowledge about people at work. In this way, common-sense theorizing itself becomes the subject of research: the process by which we come to understand others as having 'typical' motives, the recipes for success we use in our everyday lives, in short, what is 'common' in our common-sense views therefore becomes the subject to be studied (Schutz 1970).

Organizational behaviour as a subject

Organizational behaviour is concerned to integrate the disciplines of psychology, social psychology, political science, sociology and anthropology in so far as they relate to people at work. What is sought is a shift from an intuitive approach towards a systematic approach to the study of behaviour which should enable managers to improve their capacities to explain and predict behaviour.

By and large, behaviour is not random; on the contrary, it is directed towards an end. Moreover, there are differences between people: in similar situations we do not necessarily act in similar ways. But there are fundamental consistencies which allow predictability, even across cultures, and by systematic study we can view relationships, in an attempt to attribute cause and effect, and draw conclusions based on evidence.

This is not to argue that intuition is outmoded. Rather, the argument is to base that intuition in a systematic procedure which allows for a greater awareness of where and to what extent chance may take over. There are no absolutes in organizational behaviour. People are complex, and some will act differently in different situations. Therefore, concepts must reflect situational conditions.

The study of organizational behaviour is based on the importance we all attach to understanding what happens to people in organizations, and to the causes of their behaviour. It is a scientific enquiry as much as a search for practical solutions to management problems in which knowledge has a value for its own sake. The behavioural sciences are still at the early stages of development, and do not yet offer 'universal laws' or golden rules; nor are research findings accepted at their face value. The science of organizational behaviour, as with many other sciences is founded on disagreement, controversy and alternative viewpoints: 'The key is to be able to decipher under what conditions each argument may be right or wrong' (Robbins 1989, p. 11).

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One of our principal problems is that 'objectivity' in this science is impossible to achieve. We must consider research in relation to the values espoused by those engaged, because the standards of objectivity or independence between the scientist and the phenomenon under study do not exist in the same way in the study of organizational behaviour as in the natural sciences.

Indeed, even in the natural sciences, the processes of rationality although defensible in themselves are dependent on human observation and interpretation. Mathematics is a human invention in which all theories depend on 'givens' or theoretical assumptions. In the real world of human behaviour there is 'bounded rationality', that is, there are limitations on the person's world-view. There is always a reason for behaviour, but this reason is dependent upon the values, the experience and the intentions of the person. Emotional and intuitive reasoning is also an important causal agent, as when we marry, decide to have children, and perhaps even when we choose a career.

Simplistic models of decision-making which make assumptions about the motives of the actors in the organization, do not capture the complexity of the process. For example, this can be illustrated by subjective expected utility theory, in which it is assumed that the decision-maker has a well-defined utility function, that there is a well-defined set of alternatives from which to select, that a consistent probability distribution can be assigned to all future events and finally that the alternative chosen will maximize the expected value (Simon 1983). Each of these conditions would be difficult to meet in the everyday life of managers whose bounded rationality and personal situation condition the amount and the quality of information received and processed, even if we ignore other factors, such as the boss's opinion, the time frame in which the decision must be made, the pressure of other events and so on. This is one reason why economists such as Pareto and Simon found themselves drawn more into sociological and psychological explanations of behaviour.

The application of organizational behaviour

The questions we wish to explore in this book include the following:

- What are the significant differences between people at work?
- How does personality affect performance?

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- How are employees motivated?
- How do we create effective work groups?
- What are the attributes of successful leaders?
- What are the effects of different organization structures?
- How can we manage change successfully?
- How can we design efficient and effective organizations?
- How does culture and international marketing influence organizations?

The benefit of our text for the reader will be dependent upon our facility in answering these questions. One can find many examples to show how the richness of organizational life can only be interpreted fully by an understanding of the major disciplines in the study of organizational behaviour. If anyone doubts, for example, the significance of personality and human emotions on behaviour at work the autobiography of Lee Iacocca is worth consulting. Iacocca started work for Ford in 1946. He was fired by Henry Ford, in 1978, after rising to become Company President. He recounts the interview in which his employment was terminated:

‘What’s this all about?’ I asked.

But Henry couldn’t give me a reason. ‘It’s personal’, he said, ‘and I can’t tell you any more. It’s just one of those things.’

Iacocca goes on to explain to Henry Ford how much he has done for the company and to try to discover the reason.

‘Your timing stinks’, I said. ‘We’ve just made a billion eight for the second year in a row. That’s three and a half billion in the past two years. But mark my words, Henry. You may never see a billion eight again. And do you know why? Because you don’t know how the . . . we made it in the first place.’ (Iacocca and Novak 1986, p. 134)

Thus the conflict which emerges when two giant egos clash has a major impact on one of the world’s largest businesses. At a more local level, we can see how language and conversation can be analysed to explain the deeper social structures and strategic interactions which are taking place.

In a major research study which examines interactions between doctors and child patients with Down’s syndrome, and their parents,

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Silverman analyses conversations and communications in order to reveal the social nature of medical discourse:

After the normal exchange of greetings, this is how the consultant gets down to business:

Doctor: 'Well, how is she? Dr X has written to me and has also sent the catheter films that were done in Othertown. Um, can I ask you a few questions? How is she in herself?'

Mother: 'Well, I've been pleasantly surprised to be quite honest.' (She goes on to relate details of colds, chest infections and episodes of breathlessness.)

Notice the format of the doctor's question: he does not ask 'Is she well?' but 'How is she in herself?' As a discourse of 'wellness' is avoided, so the ground is prepared for other, non-medical formulations of children. 'Parents of Down's syndrome children usually conspire with doctors to avoid reference to "wellness"' (Silverman 1987, p. 143)

This is part of a strategically important set of conversations which serve to lower the parents' expectations for Down's syndrome children's life expectation, and to help the parents gradually to give up the idea of having a normal child. This is a 'demedicalization' process, this being the pressure in which decisions about possible operations take place. The purpose of such studies is not to argue for more medical treatment, but to examine and understand the situational contexts of social discourse.

Organizational occurrences are only explicable by reference to a mixture of psychological and sociological causes. For example, such complex events as strikes have multiple causes. The case of the strike at Pilkingtons which started on 3 April 1970 in the Flat Drawn department of the Glass Works, when a group of employees walked out over a wage miscalculation, illustrates this (Lane and Roberts 1971). The simple clerical error which occasioned the unofficial strike was put right immediately, but the strike lasted seven weeks and drew in the remainder of the plants. Within forty-eight hours, it had become a major dispute with strikers demanding a £10 increase on base pay.

The features of this strike were not unusual: there was an explosion of pent-up emotion behind the ostensible reason for the walk out at first, but morale in most of the plants was good, there were good employee relations, low labour turnover and there was no special increase in grievances. The only explanation seems to be that a

combination of causes – the conditions in one department, opportunities to exploit the situation felt by the workers, a bureaucratic and non-responsive trade union which allowed unofficial action to gain momentum, the reliance by Pilkington on a paternalistic management style and the 'instrumental' attachment to work of the employees who felt underpaid and who wanted a better living standard – is the main reason.

Lane and Roberts go on to suggest that strikes are 'normal'. They are a natural expression by employees of their wishes, or desires, which may not be well articulated, a protest, a feeling against authority, and against control, rather than for anything in particular. There are many other aspects, of course, which contributed to the events – for example, the formation of an 'unofficial strike committee', the role of the media, the negotiating machinery and the organization's structure could all be included in the web of causes.

What matters here is that we go behind simplistic explanations which seek to 'blame' managers, trade unionists or militants, when there are clearly more social structural reasons. In order to determine causes, we may have to separate out issues for the purposes of analysis. In our book we divide the subject under particular headings. We do recognize, however, that causes interact and that problems present themselves to management without neat labels saying 'this is a motivation problem' or 'this is an organization design problem'.

As we move towards the end of the twentieth century, large organizations are considering what management structures, competencies, motivation, job design and organization structure they should adopt. They want to know how to become flexible and competitive. The move towards more flexible, *ad hoc* flatter structures, with devolved management systems and federal approaches to business organization is growing. Companies such as BP, Ericsson, SAS, IBM and British Airways have been going through these internal reviews, often in response to business needs, but especially in the spirit of long-term survival. What organizational theorists are now seeing as a connection with a post-modernist movement against rational explanations, is found in looser, network-based modular corporations.

The challenge for organizational development is to assist top teams to achieve these changes because leadership requirements for managers in the future seem likely to be even more challenging than in the past. Organizational behaviour studies are essential not just for those who aspire to the top, but they also offer insights for the

increasing number of organizational roles where group working and influencing without direct authority are expected.

How to use this book

This book is intended for all students of organizations and is aimed at a postgraduate audience, with the MBA student particularly in mind. It is divided into seven main chapters covering individual differences and personality, motivation, group behaviour and leadership, careers, power and politics, organization theory and design and organization change and development. We have added a final chapter on the international dimensions to the study of organizational behaviour. As Figure 1.1 shows, we have followed a logical route through three levels of analysis.

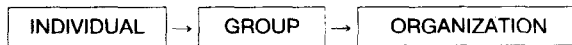


Figure 1.1 Levels of analysis

We have set out the main theories and concepts with reference to the well-known authorities. Our intention is to satisfy the needs of prospective managers, although those who wish to follow up with further study in this field will find our guide comprehensive. In addition to placing the main theoretical precepts in context, we have also included new material drawn from our own research and MBA teaching.

At the end of some chapters, there are exercises or mini case studies which we suggest our readers undertake, to consolidate the learning and to provide a basis for discussion. Our book contains, we hope, a sufficiency of diagrams and conversations to meet the requirements implied by Alice. However, its usefulness will depend on how well we can engage the reader with an internal dialogue about the study of people at work.

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