

Organizational Behavior

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INTRODUCTION

As organizations adapt to the challenges of technology an understanding of organizational behavior (OB) theories supports the development of new management and leadership behaviors, but OB is a dynamic multifaceted field with ambiguous definitions and conflicting articulated structures (Borkowski, 2015; Cummings, 1976; Vasu, Stewart, & Garson, 2017). According to Kaifi and Noori (2011), OB is an applied discipline, but its study requires a basic understanding of sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and axiology. Studies in organizational leadership, organizational culture, organizational development, organizational theory, organizational management, and change management are also constructs of OB (Otaghsara & Hamzehzadeh, 2017; Schaerer et al., 2018; Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018). OB applied in organizations uses scientific methods and practical experience to recognize, explain, and influence the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and teams in the organization (Kafi & Noori, 2011; Otaghsara & Hamzehzadeh, 2017; Schaerer et al., 2018; Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018).

With the expansion of global business and rapid changes in technology there has been a paradigm shift in management, calling for the use of positivity rather than negativity, expansion of collaboration across departments, and a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion to support innovation. This shift promotes positive organizational policies and procedures while maximizing resources (Otaghsara & Hamzehzadeh, 2017). According to Bakker (2008), negative approach-based terms influenced organizational culture undesirably, and Luthans and Avolio (2007) claim developing a positive organizational behavior framework is a source of an organization's competitive advantage. This article will discuss the evolving theories of organizational behavior addressing the challenges of technology and change, as well as placing the discussion within the context of seminal theories.

BACKGROUND

The practice of OB is multifaceted, based on multiple organizational theories, management theories, organizational disciplines, and the intersection of research and practice (Cummings, 1976; Frederick, 2014; Vasu, Stewart, & Garson, 2017). Moorhead and Griffin (1995, pg. 4) defined OB as "the study of human behavior in organizational settings, the interface between human behavior and the organization, and the organization itself." Frederick (2014, pg. 564) discusses it as "...an applied behavioral science that involves integration of studies undertaken in behavioral disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and political science." Kafi and Noori (2011, pg. 89) describe OB as "a field of study devoted to recognizing, explaining, and eventually developing the attitudes and behaviors of people (individual and group) with organizations." Kafi and Noori further state OB is based on "scientific knowledge and applied practice."

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The goal of OB is to provide tools through theories and concepts, to aid in understanding, measuring, analyzing, describing, and managing attitudes of individuals, groups, and the organization itself. OB allows managers to make effective use of resources to meet organizational goals. Various definitions of OB reflect the multiple perspectives, disciplines, and uses of the evolving discipline. The following review of disciplines and theories applied in OB focuses on creating an understanding of the foundational constructs of the various facets supporting OB, contributing to an understanding of the evolution of OB to the current positive focus.

Organizational Behavior (OB) literature references multiple constructs, including Organizational Theories, Organizational Development, and Leadership Theories. OB tools appear in strategic decision-making, communication strategies, organizational learning, managing change, driving innovation, and accomplishing the goals of the organization through understanding and influencing individual and group behaviors within the organization. A review of a sampling of the classic theories OB evolved from follows.

The development of classical organizational theories at the beginning of the 20th Century leaned heavily on Frederick Taylor's *scientific management theory* (Hatch, 1997; Taylor, 1911). "Taylorism" included 4 basic principles: 1) find the 'best way' to perform each task, 2) match each work to the 'best fit' task, 3) use transactional leadership, closely monitoring works and motivate through reward and punishment, 4) management's duty is planning and control. While Taylor improved production in the simple industrialized organizations, it proved too limited to respond to the major challenges and changes of the 21st century (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2007).

Max Weber, expanding on the scientific management theory to install even more authority and control, reducing diversity and ambiguity in organizations, developed the *bureaucratic theory*. Weber (1947) focused on the hierarchy structure of power, division of labor and specialization, and creating stability and uniformity. He also discussed the idea that organizational behavior is a network of human interactions, where all behavior might be understood by looking at cause and effect. Mooney and Reiley (1931) continued in this vein, emphasizing the establishment of a universal set of management principles that applied to all organizations (Walonick, 1993). During this same time, Henri Fayol (1949) created a management theory called *Fayolism* emphasizing staffing, recruitment, strategic planning, and policies and procedures to support efficiency. Sometimes referred to as the father of operational theory, Fayol focused on management, as opposed to Taylor's focus on the task (Ott, 1989).

Classical management theory was limited, rigid, transactional, and framed all motivation within the context of economic reward. During the early manufacturing era, as society moved toward the urban industrial base it served as a transition tool. However, individuals did not respond well to the transactional, mechanistic approach that ignored their basic humanity and throttled individual creativity and innovation (Carroll & Gillen, 1987; Ott, 1989). According to Scott (1961) "...classical organization theory has relevant insights into the nature of organization, but the value of this theory is limited by its narrow concentration on the formal anatomy of organization." (pg. 10).

As research continued in the field of maximizing workers' efforts, the Hawthorne Experiment, 1929-1932, applied the clinical methods of Jean Piaget, a noted psychologist, to the field of business research (Hsueh, 2002). These studies influenced organizations as management began to understand the importance of interactions of groups and individuals, social relationships in the workplace, and people-management skills (Carroll & Gillen, 1987; Hatch, 1997; Hsueh, 2002). Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs was introduced in the 1940s, and integrated into the business lexicon as a motivational tool, explaining how individuals' inborn needs motivate them and influence their actions (Hatch, 1997; Maslow, 1954). The acceptance of the behavioral sciences in business developed into the Neoclassical Organization Theory.

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