

Organizational Behaviour



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Organizational Behaviour



Edition

David A. Buchanan Sample provided via Pearson.com Andrzej A. Huczynski



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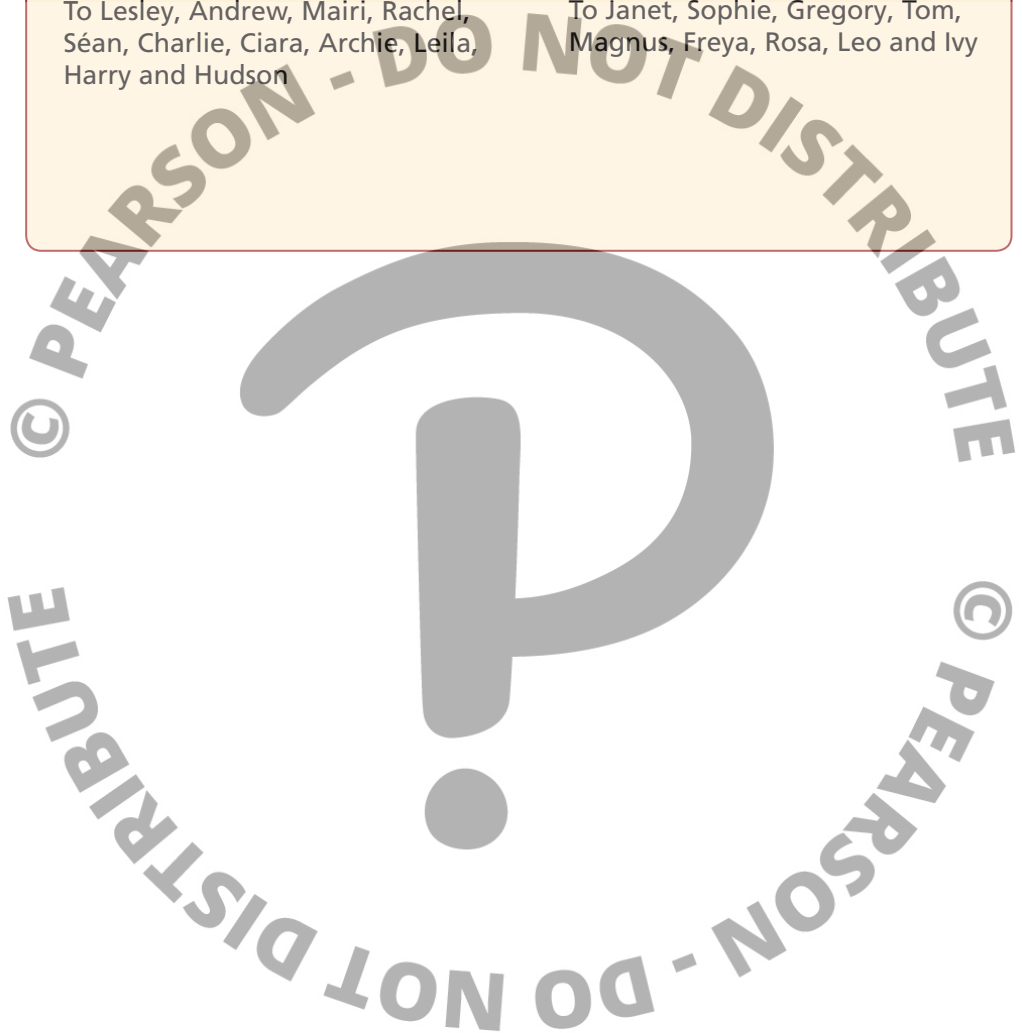
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From David

To Lesley, Andrew, Mairi, Rachel,
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Harry and Hudson

From Andrzej

To Janet, Sophie, Gregory, Tom,
Magnus, Freya, Rosa, Leo and Ivy



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Preface

Why study organizational behaviour?

Let's put it this way: if you have a limited understanding of organizational behaviour (OB), then you have a limited understanding of one of the main sets of forces that affect you personally, that affect the society and the culture in which you live, and which shape the world around you. Think about it: organizations are involved in everything that you do – sleeping, waking, dressing, eating, travelling, working, relaxing, studying – everything. This book explores how organizations influence our views and our actions, and how we can explain the behaviour of people in organizations.

What is our approach?

Our target readers are students who are new to the social sciences and to the study of organizational behaviour. This is a core subject on most business and management degree, diploma and masters programmes. Accountants, architects, bankers, computer scientists, doctors, engineers, hoteliers, nurses, surveyors, teachers and other specialists, who have no background in social science, may find themselves studying organizational behaviour as part of their professional examination schemes.

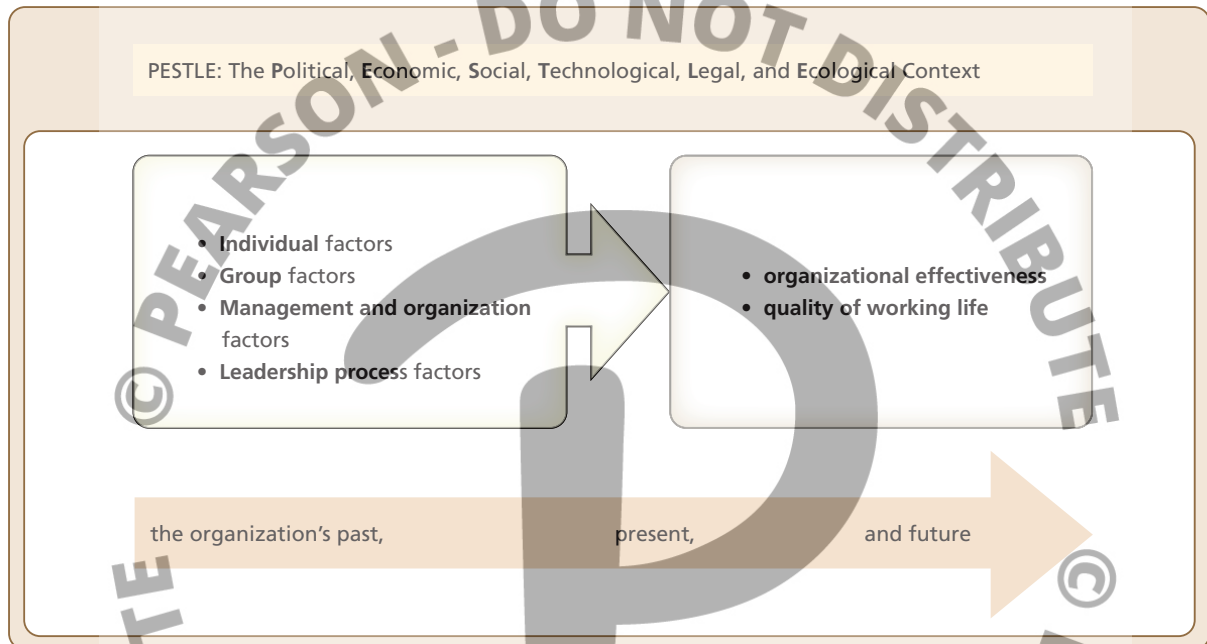
Social science perspective We draw on a range of social science disciplines. Other texts adopt managerial, psychological or sociological perspectives.

Critical approach Many OB issues are controversial. But we don't identify the 'correct answers' or 'best practices'. We want to challenge assumptions, and to stimulate critical thinking. In a world flooded with information, some of which is 'fake news', critical thinking is critically important.

Self-contained chapters The understanding of one chapter does not rely on others. You can study the chapters in any sequence. Designed for introductory-level courses, our *Springboard* feature suggests advanced reading. Many chapters are also relevant to courses in human resource management.

Let's pull it together

If you are new to OB, the subject can seem to be wide ranging and fragmented. To show how it all fits together, here is our 'field map'. First, organizations function over time and in a context. Second, individual, group, management and leadership factors influence organizational effectiveness, and quality of working life. You can easily locate the book's parts and chapters on this map.



What's new in this edition?

New features

Critical thinking	Invitations to question, challenge assumptions, consider other options
Cutting edge	Summaries of recent key research findings
What did they find?	Descriptions of research studies, asking you to predict the results
Employability check	Relating chapter content to employability competencies
Audio box	Short podcasts exploring topical issues
Video box	Brief videos exploring chapter themes in more depth
Stop and search	Suggestions for YouTube content exploring key topics

New content (a selection)

Big data and human capital analytics: How will the human resource management function be operating in 2030?

Multigenerational workforce: Why are age-diverse teams more satisfied and productive?

Ageing workforce: What are the benefits of employing older 'unretired' people?

Agile working and holacracy: Who needs managers, leaders, and hierarchies?

Artificial intelligence: Will it steal your job?

Future-proof your career: Skills that are still going to be in demand in a digital world

Gastronomic bonding: Team building by members preparing and eating food together

Learning to learn: An indispensable skill in a rapidly changing world

Neurodiversity: The extraordinarily valuable, but underutilized skills of employees with autism spectrum disorders, dyspraxia, and dyslexia

Neuroplasticity: How we are able to go on learning throughout our lives

Multicultural brokers: Their role in making diverse team members effective

Tattoo or not tattoo: How attitudes towards body art are changing

Social networks: How they affect team creativity and company performance

Do women make better leaders than men? Do women have the right personality traits?

Cybervetting: How potential employers now screen you without your knowledge

Dark personality traits: How these can damage your career

HEXACO: The Big Six model of personality

Introverts: Can they become effective and successful senior leaders?

Self-determination theory (SDT): A new way to understand, and manage, work motivation

We need to talk about organizational change: Why do 75 per cent of programmes fail?

Detroit, Estée Lauder, McDonald's, Thai Union: Case studies of successful organizational change

Political skill: Why are politically skilled women more successful in male-dominated organizations?

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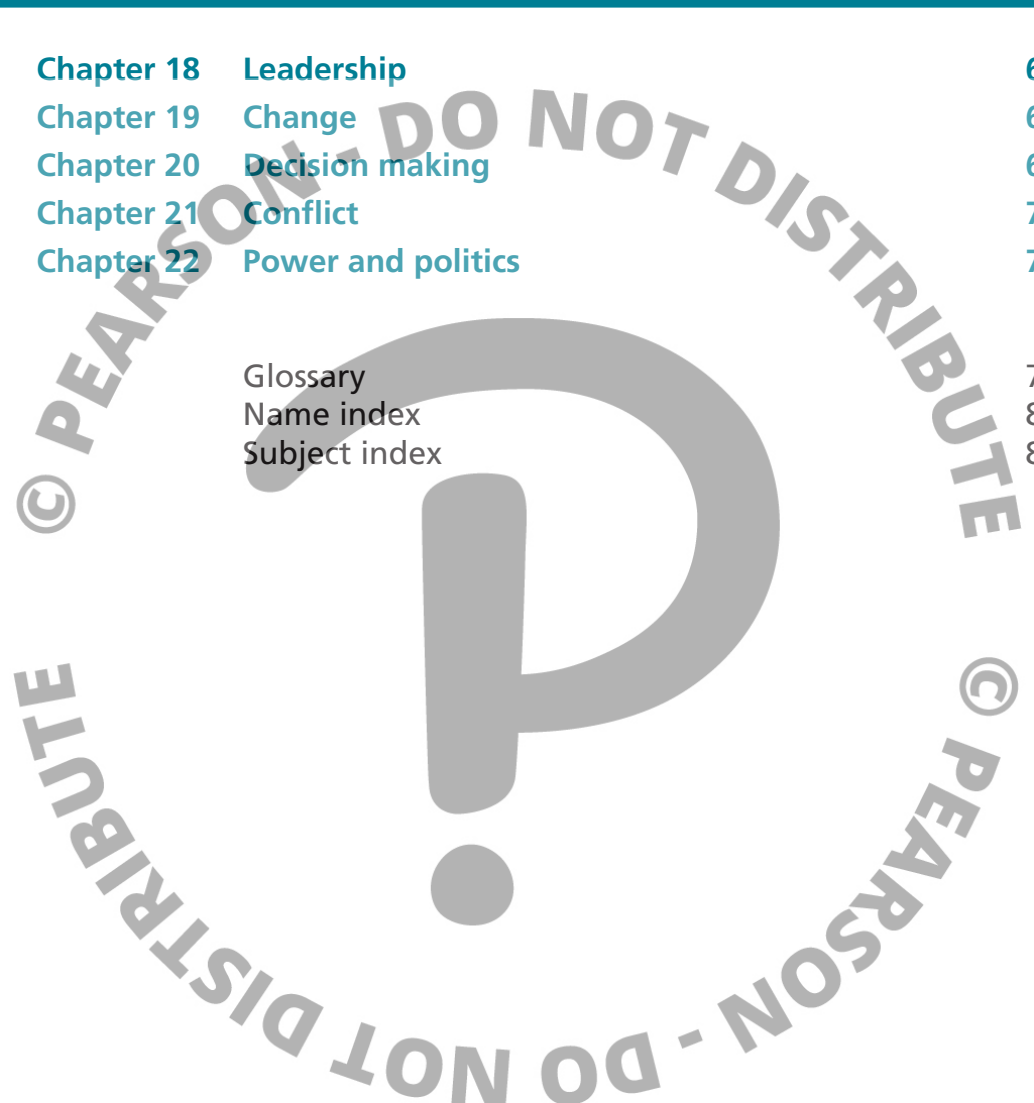
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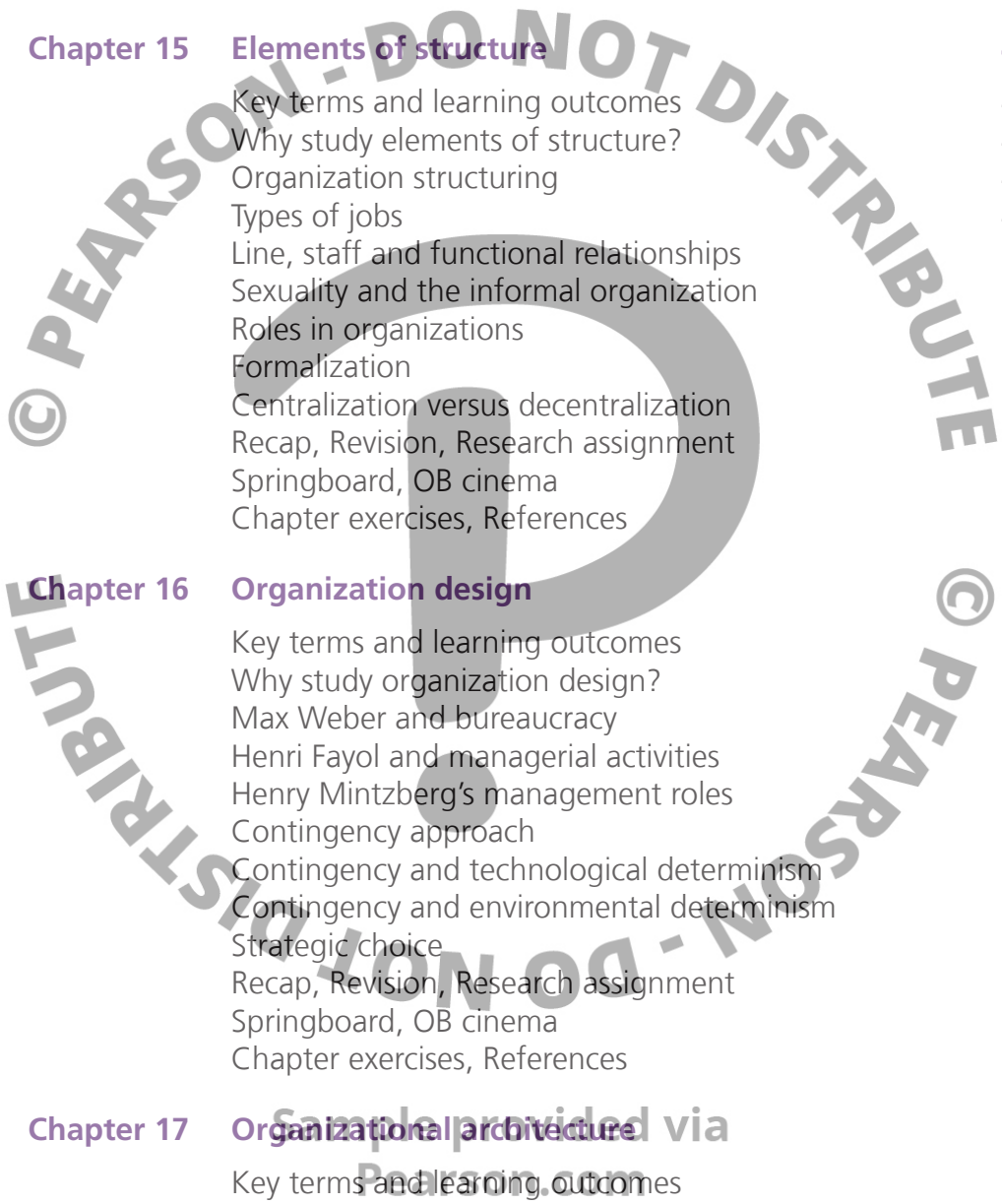
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Introductory briefing

The aims of this text are to:

Introduce the subject	To bring the study of behaviour in organizations to undergraduate and postgraduate students who have little or no social science background.
Stimulate debate	To encourage a critical perspective, observing that the 'correct' answers to organizational questions, and solutions to problems, rely on values, judgements and ideology, as well as on evidence.
Link to practice	To show how organizational behaviour concepts, theories and techniques can be applied in practice.
Recognize diversity	To raise awareness of the variety of social and cultural factors that affect behaviour in organizations.

Too many theories?

Students who are new to OB often complain about the number of different theories. You will see this, for example, in our discussion of motivation, culture, leadership and power. Does this mean that the field is immature? How can all of these theories be 'right'? It does not help that many organizational behaviour theories were first developed decades in the past.

Marc Anderson (2007) argues that different theories are valuable because they help us to fill our 'conceptual toolbox'. We live in a complex world, and we need a variety of tools and perspectives to deal with the many, and changing, issues and problems that we face. This means

that one theory could be helpful in one context, but a different perspective could be useful in another setting. An idea that appears to be of limited value today may help us to deal with tomorrow's challenges.

There are no 'right or wrong' theories, or 'one best way'. There are only theories that are more or less useful in helping us to deal with different issues in different settings at different times. We benefit from having 'too many theories'. This is not a problem.

Anderson, M.H. (2007) 'Why are there so many theories?', *Journal of Management Education*, 31(6): 757–76.

Aids to learning and critical understanding

We use the following features to encourage an *active and questioning approach* to the subject. We want to challenge you, by inviting you to confront real, practical and theoretical problems and issues for yourselves. You are invited regularly to stop reading and to consider controversial points, on your own, or in group discussion. We want to alert you to the significance of organizational behaviour in everyday life. The study of this subject is not confined to the lecture theatre and library. Eating a pizza in a restaurant, joining a queue at a cinema, returning a faulty product to a store, purchasing a train ticket, arguing with a colleague at work, taking a holiday job in a hotel, reading a novel – are all experiences related to aspects of organizational behaviour.

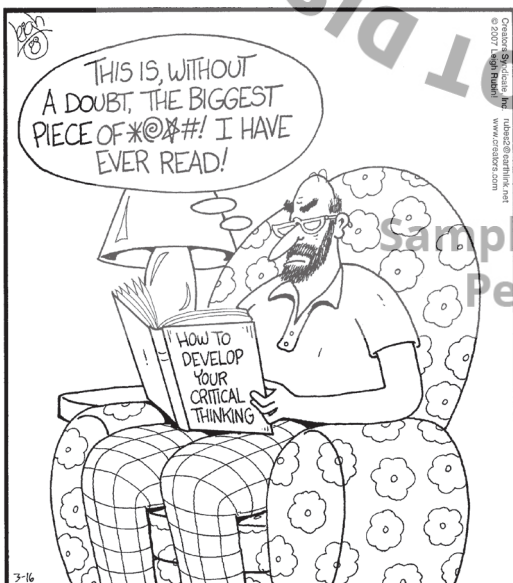
In-chapter features

Learning outcomes	Chapters open with clear learning outcomes
Key terms	Chapters open with a list of key terms, which are also in the glossary
Critical thinking	Invitations to question, challenge assumptions, consider other options
Cutting edge	Summarizing recent key research findings (with researcher portraits)
What did they find?	Describing research projects, asking you to predict the results
Employability check	Relating chapter content to employability competencies
Audio box	Short podcast exploring topical issues
Video box	Brief video exploring chapter themes in more depth
Home viewing	Movies which illustrate topics in graphic and memorable ways
Stop and search	Suggestions for YouTube content exploring key topics
Cartoons	To make the subject memorable, to change the pace, rhythm, and appearance of the text

End-of-chapter features

OB Cinema	Recommended movie clips for classroom use
Exercises	Chapters have two learning exercises for tutorial and seminar use
Revision	Sample examination questions, for personal study and tutorial use
Research assignment	A focused information-gathering project involving either a website search, library exercise, or interviewing, or a combination of methods
Recap	Summaries linked to learning outcomes

Critical thinking, critical questioning



In his own mind, Jerry quickly mastered the art.

A perspective that encourages criticism, debate and challenge means asking these kinds of questions, when presented with a theory, an argument, evidence, or with a recommendation for action:

- Does this make sense, do I understand it, or is it confused and confusing?
- Is the supporting evidence compelling, or is it weak?
- Does a claim to 'novelty' survive comparison with previous thinking?
- Is the argument logical and coherent, or are there gaps and flaws?
- What biases and prejudices are revealed in this line of argument?
- Is a claim to 'neutrality' realistic, or does it conceal a hidden agenda?
- Are the arguments and judgements based convincingly on the evidence?

- Whose interests are served by this argument, and whose are damaged?
- Is the language of this argument designed to make it more appealing?

Employability and OB

Understanding OB will improve your employability and career prospects. What do employers look for, and what can you offer them? A qualification alone is not enough. Organizations are looking for qualities, skills and attributes that they think will help you to perform well. The following table lists these competencies: *personal qualities*, *leadership qualities*, *practical skills* and *other key attributes*. What are your strengths and limitations as far as potential employers are concerned? To help you to increase your value to employers, we will ask you to pause occasionally, for an **Employability check**. These checks will relate to the chapter content, and will ask you to assess your competencies in a specific area, and to consider how you can improve and demonstrate those competencies.

Competencies that will improve your employability

Personal qualities	Leadership qualities
Self-management	Leadership
Work ethic/results orientation	People management
Appetite for learning	Leading and managing change
Interpersonal skills	Project management
Creativity and innovation	General management skills
Practical skills	Other key attributes
Commercial/business acumen	Critical thinking
Customer service skills	Political awareness
Communication skills	Understand cross-cultural issues
Problem-solving skills	Understand how organizations work
Teamworking skills	Prioritizing, decision making

Sample provided via
Pearson.com

The New Smart



Ed Hess

Ed Hess (2018), from the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, argues that career success in the future will depend on what he calls 'the new smart'. This is defined by the quality of one's skills and attributes in the following areas: thinking, learning, curiosity, open-mindedness, problem solving, emotional intelligence, collaboration.

Quantity – how much you know – is less important, because machines already know more. Your most

important skill is *iterative learning*: constantly unlearning and relearning, and adapting quickly as technology advances. Students, he suggests, should consider taking courses in various disciplines – psychology, philosophy, creative arts, systems engineering, design thinking – in order to learn different modes of thinking.

Hess, E. (2018) 'An MBA student's toolkit for the smart machine age', *Financial Times*, 16 January, <https://www.ft.com/content/9d9f76c0-422e-11e7-82b6-896b95f30f58>



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context

Part 1 The organizational context

- Chapter 1 Explaining organizational behaviour
- Chapter 2 Environment
- Chapter 3 Technology
- Chapter 4 Culture

PESTLE: The Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Ecological context

- Individual factors
- Group factors
- Management and organization factors
- Leadership process factors

- Organizational effectiveness
- Quality of working life

The organization's past,

present,

and future

CHAPTER

1

Explaining organizational behaviour

Key terms and learning outcomes **2**

What is organizational behaviour? **3**

If we destroy this planet? **7**

The organizational behaviour field map **11**

The problem with social science **14**

Explaining organizational behaviour **19**

Research and practice: evidence-based management **22**

Human resource management: OB in action **25**

Recap, Revision, Research assignment **31**

Springboard, OB cinema **33**

Chapter exercises, References **34**

Key terms

organizational behaviour

organization

controlled performance

organizational dilemma

fundamental attribution error

organizational effectiveness

balanced scorecard

quality of working life

positivism

operational definition

variance theory

constructivism

process theory

evidence-based management

human resource management

employment cycle

discretionary behaviour

big data

data analytics

human capital analytics

Learning outcomes

When you have read this chapter, you should be able to define those key terms in your own words, and you should also be able to:

1. Explain the importance of understanding organizational behaviour.
2. Explain and illustrate the central dilemma of organizational design.
3. Understand the need for explanations of behaviour in organizations that take account of relationships between factors at different levels of analysis (individual, group, organization, context).
4. Understand the difference between positivist and constructivist perspectives on organizational behaviour.
5. Understand the difference between variance and process theories of organizational behaviour.
6. Explain the development and limitations of evidence-based management.
7. Recognize the range of applications of organizational behaviour theory, and contributions to human resource management policy and practice.
8. Assess how the human resource management function can use big data and human capital analytics to improve individual and team performance, and organizational effectiveness

What is organizational behaviour?

Why did that happen?

It was a bad experience. You ordered a soft drink and a sandwich. The person who served you was abrupt and unpleasant. They didn't smile or make eye contact, and continued their conversation with colleagues, instead of asking if you wanted anything else. They slapped your change on the counter rather than put it in your hand,

then turned away. You have used this café before, but you have never been treated so badly. You leave feeling angry, deciding never to return.

How can you explain the unusual behaviour of the person who served you?

Let's put it this way: if you have a limited understanding of organizational behaviour, then you have a limited understanding of one of the main sets of forces that affect you personally, that influence the society and culture in which you live, and which shape the world around you. Through the products and services that they provide, organizations affect everything you do – sleeping, waking, dressing, eating, travelling, working, relaxing, studying – everything. We live in an organized world.

This chapter explores how we can explain the behaviour of people in organizations. First, let's define what **organizational behaviour** means. The definition of a field of study sets out the issues, questions, and problems that it explores. Organizational behaviour covers environmental (macro) issues, organizational and group (meso) issues, and individual (micro) factors.

Some organizations are big and powerful. Table 1.1 lists the ten largest private sector employers in the world in 2017 (www.Wikipedia.org). Half of these organizations are Chinese. Some non-corporate organizations are also big employers. For example, in 2017, the US Department of Defense had 3.2 million employees; the Chinese People's Liberation Army 2.3 million; the UK National Health Service and the Indian Railways 1.4 million each. The study of organizational behaviour thus has practical implications for those who work in, manage,

Organizational behaviour the study of the structure and management of organizations, their environments, and the actions and interactions of their individual members and groups.

Table 1.1: The ten largest private sector employers in 2017

Organization	Country	Number of employees (million)
Walmart	USA	2.30
China National Petroleum	China	1.51
China Post Group	China	0.94
State Grid	China	0.93
Hon Hai Precision Industry	Taiwan	0.73
Sinopec Group	China	0.71
Volkswagen	Germany	0.63
United States Postal Service	USA	0.57
Compass Group	UK	0.53
Agricultural Bank of China	China	0.50

seek to subvert, or interact in other ways with organizations, whether they are small and local, or large and international.

As a subject, organizational behaviour is quite new, dating from the mid-twentieth century. The term was first used in an article in the *American Sociological Review* by Philip Selznick (1948, p.25). The Labor and Management Center at Yale University began publishing its *Studies in Organizational Behaviour* series in 1954. In the late 1950s, Fritz Roethlisberger used the term because it suggested a wider scope than 'human relations' (Wood, 1995). In 1957 the Human Relations Group at Harvard became the Organizational Behaviour Group. Organizational behaviour was recognized as a subject at Harvard in 1962, with Roethlisberger as the first area head (Roethlisberger, 1977).

How can we explain your experience in the café? Was it because of the personality and skills of the individual who served you? Perhaps, but there are other explanations:

- Poor staff training
- Staff absences leading to increased work pressure
- Long hours, fatigue, poor work–life balance
- Equipment not working properly
- Anxiety about organizational changes
- Domestic difficulties – family arguments, poor health
- Low motivation due to low pay
- An autocratic supervisor
- A dispute with colleagues creating an uncomfortable atmosphere
- Timing – you came in at the wrong moment.

Blaming the individual is often wrong. Your experience could also be explained by contextual, group, structural and managerial process factors, in and beyond the workplace. The explanation could come from any one of those factors. In many cases, a combination of factors explains the behaviour in question. The customer walks away. As a member of the organization, you have to live with those issues. As a manager, you have to solve the problem.



EMPLOYABILITY CHECK (problem-solving skills)

In a job interview, you are asked about the following problem:

You are supervising a team of six people. The performance of one of your more experienced and long-serving team members has started to fall sharply: poor timekeeping, slow responses to requests for assistance, careless work, not sharing information. You can see no obvious reason for this. How will you approach this problem in order to find a solution?

The relationship between organizational behaviour and management practice is controversial. Are we studying this subject in order to understand, or to advise, or both? And who do we want to advise? Most American and many British texts adopt a managerialist perspective. However, the focus on management is seen by some commentators as unhelpful, for at least four reasons, concerning power inequalities, the subject agenda, multiple stakeholders, and fashion victims.

- *Power inequalities*: Management is an elite group, with privileged access to information and resources. The Equality Trust found that, in 2017, chief executives in the UK's largest 100 companies had earnings 386 times that of a worker on the National Living Wage, 312 times more than a care worker, and 165 times more than a nurse (equalitytrust.org.uk). The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development found that, in 2018, the average employee would have to work for 167 years to earn the annual salary of a chief executive of a FTSE 100 company (Kirton, 2018). Should academic research support only the affluent and powerful?

- *The agenda:* A managerialist perspective focuses on issues of importance to managers, concerning control and performance. Issues that are significant to individuals and groups, theories that have limited practical use, and criticisms of the managerial role are pushed aside.
- *Multiple stakeholders:* Management is only one group with a stake in organizational behaviour. An understanding of this subject is of value to employees, trade unions, customers, suppliers, investors, and the wider community. Organizational behaviour is a subject of individual, social and economic significance.
- *Fashion victims:* Managers follow the latest trends in thinking and technique, to improve personal and organizational effectiveness. A managerialist perspective encourages a focus on fashion. Some fashions survive while others fade. As some fads are old ideas with new packaging, we can only make an informed assessment if we understand the history of the subject.

We adopt a 'multiple-stakeholders-inclusive-agenda' view of organizational behaviour, with a broad social science perspective. This does not mean that practical applications are ignored, but readers are encouraged to adopt a critical, challenging approach to research, theory and practice, rather than to accept a managerial or a social scientific point of view without question.

Organizations do not 'behave'. Only people can be said to behave. Organizational behaviour is shorthand for the activities and interactions of people in organizations. Organizations populate our physical, social, cultural, political and economic environment, offering jobs, providing goods and services, creating our built environment, and contributing to the existence and fabric of communities. However, we tend to take organizations for granted precisely because they affect everything that we do. Familiarity can lead us to underestimate their impact. Through their products and services, with how many organizations have you interacted in some way *today*?

CRITICAL THINKING

Why should the term 'organization' be difficult to define? Which of the following are organizations, and which are not? Explain your decision in each case.

- A chemicals processing company
- A WhatsApp group
- King's College Hospital
- The local street corner gang
- Clan Buchanan
- Your local football club
- A terrorist cell
- A famine relief charity
- The Azande tribe
- The Jamieson family next door

Organization a social arrangement for achieving controlled performance in pursuit of collective goals.

What is an **organization**? Why are you uncomfortable about calling some of the items on that list 'organizations'? Perhaps you considered size as a deciding factor? Or the sale of goods and services? Or the offer of paid employment? Our margin definition is *one* way to define an organization, but this should explain why you found it awkward to describe a street corner gang as an organization, but not a hospital, a company, or a club. Let us examine this definition more closely.

Social arrangement

To say that organizations are social arrangements is simply to observe that they are groups of people who interact with each other because of their membership. However, all of the items on our list are social arrangements. This is not a distinctive feature.



Controlled performance setting standards, measuring performance, comparing actual with standard, and taking corrective action if necessary.

not sufficient to meet all of our desires. We have to make the most efficient use of those scarce resources. Levels of performance, of individuals, departments and organizations are therefore tied to standards which determine what counts as inadequate, satisfactory, or good.

Performance has to be controlled, to ensure that it is good enough, or that action is taken to improve it. An organization's members have to perform these control functions as well as the operating tasks required to fulfil their collective purpose. The need for controlled performance leads to a deliberate and ordered allocation of functions, or division of labour, between an organization's members.

Membership of organizations is controlled, usually with reference to standards of performance: will the person be able to do the job? Failure to perform to standard means loss of membership. The need for controlled performance leads to the creation of authority relationships. The controls only work where members comply with the orders of those responsible for performing the control functions.

To what extent are a family, a Azande tribe, a street gang, or a WhatsApp group concerned with performance standards? To what extent does their existence depend on their ability to meet targets? To what extent do they allocate control functions to their members, programme their activities, and control their relationships with other members? The way in which you answer these questions may explain your readiness or reluctance to describe them as organizations.

It can be argued, therefore, that it is the *preoccupation with performance* and the *need for control* which distinguish organizations from other social arrangements.

CRITICAL THINKING

In what ways could the Jamieson family be concerned with performance and control?

How is membership of a street gang determined? What do you have to do to become a member? What behaviours lead to exclusion from gang membership?

Are organizations different from other social arrangements in degree only, and not different in kind? Are *all* social groupings not concerned with setting, monitoring and correcting standards of behaviour and performance, just defined in different ways?

How you define something affects how you look at it. Organizational behaviour takes the view that organizations should be studied from different perspectives. In other words, it is not worth arguing about which is the 'correct' definition. One author who has popularized this view is the Canadian academic Gareth Morgan. In his book *Images of Organization* (2006), he offers eight metaphors which invite us to see organizations through a series of different lenses. These are:

- Machines
- Biological organisms
- Human brains

Collective goals

Common membership implies shared objectives. Organizations are helpful where individuals acting alone cannot achieve outcomes that are considered worthwhile pursuing. All of the items on our list are social arrangements for the pursuit of collective goals, so this is not a distinctive feature either.

Controlled performance

Organizations are concerned with **controlled performance** in the pursuit of goals. The performance of an organization as a whole determines its survival. The performance of a department determines the resources allocated to it. The performance of individuals determines pay and promotion prospects. Not any level of performance will do, however. We live in a world in which the resources available to us are

- Cultures or subcultures
- Political systems
- Psychic prisons
- Systems of change and transformation
- Instruments of domination.

Metaphors are ways of thinking about, 'reading', and evaluating organizations. The 'machine' metaphor suggests an analysis of how component parts interact. The 'psychic prison' metaphor suggests looking at how an organization shapes the thinking and intellectual growth of its members. Morgan argues that by using different metaphors we can identify new ways in which to design and manage organizations.

If we destroy this planet

If we eventually destroy this planet, the underlying cause will not be technology or weaponry. We will have destroyed it with ineffective organizations. The main limitation to human aspiration lies not with intellect or equipment, but in our ability to work together. The main cause of most man-made disasters (Bhopal, Three Mile Island, Challenger, Columbia, Chernobyl, Deepwater Horizon) has been traced to organization and management factors.

Groups can achieve more than individuals acting alone. Human beings are social animals. We achieve psychological satisfaction and material gain from organized activity. Organizations, in their recruitment and publicity materials, want you to think that they are 'one big happy family'. Everyone is a team player, shooting at the same goal. Organizations, of course, do not have goals. People have goals. Collectively, the members of an organization may be making biscuits, treating patients, or educating students, but individual members also have personal goals. Senior managers may decide on objectives and try to get others to agree by calling them the 'organization's mission' or 'corporate strategy', but they are still the goals of the people who determined them in the first place.

The Macondo Well blowout

On 20 April 2010, when the blowout preventer failed a mile under water, the explosion and fire on the 33,000-ton *Deepwater Horizon* drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico killed 11 of the 126 crew members (their bodies were never found), and seriously injured 17 others. Oil poured from the well-head on the sea bed, drifting towards the Louisiana coast 50 miles away, threatening wildlife, and local fishing and tourism industries. Around 230 million gallons of crude oil spilled into the Gulf before the flow stopped on 15 July. This was the biggest environmental disaster in the US since the Exxon Valdez spilled 750,000 barrels of crude oil in Prince William Sound in 1989. The rig's operator BP has paid over US\$60 billion in fines, clean-up costs and compensation.

Was this disaster the result of a technology failure? No. A National Commission on the oil spill found that it was due to organization and management failures (*Deep Water*, and *Macondo: The Gulf Oil Disaster*, both reports published in 2011).

The rig's 'responsible operator' was BP, whose partners Anadarko Petroleum and MOEX Offshore were to share costs and profits. BP leased *Deepwater Horizon* from Transocean, whose staff operated the rig. Another company, Halliburton, was contracted to cement the pipe from the well to the rig. So the rig was manned by BP site leaders, Transocean managers, engineers, supervisors, drillers and toolpushers, and Halliburton cementers and mudloggers. BP paid US\$34 million in 2008 for the lease to drill in Mississippi Canyon Block 252. Macondo was its first well on the MC 252 lease, estimated to produce at least 50 million barrels of oil.

By April 2010, drilling at Macondo was six weeks behind schedule and \$58 million over budget, costing BP \$1 million a day to run; it was known as 'the well from hell'. Drilling for oil is risky. Since 2001, the Gulf workforce of 35,000 people, on 90 drilling rigs and 3,500 production platforms, had already suffered 1,550 injuries, 60 deaths, and 948 fires and explosions.

The cement that Halliburton pumped to the bottom of the Macondo Well did not seal it. Test results indicating problems with the cement formula were ignored. But as





the cementing went smoothly, a planned evaluation was skipped. The following pressure test results were misinterpreted, and signs that the well had a major oil leak (or 'kick') were missed. Kicks must be detected and controlled in order to prevent blowouts. By the time the *Deepwater Horizon* crew realized that they were dealing with a kick, it was too late for the blowout preventer to stop an explosion. Oil was already in the riser pipe, and heading for the surface.

To create this disaster, eight factors had combined, all involving aspects of management.

1. Leadership

There was conflict between managers and confusion about responsibilities. After a BP reorganization in April 2010, engineering and operations had separate reporting structures. This replaced a project-based approach in which all well staff reported to the same manager.

2. Communication

Those making decisions about one aspect of the well did not always communicate critical information to others making related decisions. The different companies on the rig did not share information with each other. The BP engineering team was aware of the technical risks, but did not communicate these fully to their own employees or to contractor personnel.

3. Procedures

BP did not have clear procedures for handling the problems that arose. The last-minute redesign of procedures in

response to events caused confusion on the rig. It would have been more appropriate to stop operations temporarily to catch up.

4. Training and supervision

BP and Transocean had inadequate personnel training, supervision and support. Some staff were posted to the rig without prior assessment of their capabilities. Individuals made critical decisions without supervisory checks. BP did not train staff to conduct and interpret pressure test results. Transocean did not train staff in kick monitoring and emergency response.

5. Contractor management

Subcontracting was common industry practice, but with the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding. In this case, information about test results and technical analyses did not always find its way to the right person. BP's supervision of contractors was weak, and contractors did not feel able to challenge BP staff decisions, deferring to their expertise.

6. Use of technology

The blowout preventer may have failed, in part, due to poor maintenance. Drilling techniques were much more sophisticated than the technology required to guard against blowouts. Well-monitoring data displays relied on the right person looking at the right data at the right time.

7. Risk management

BP and Transocean did not have adequate risk assessment and management procedures. Decisions were biased towards saving costs and time. The Macondo Well risk register focused on the impact of risks on time and cost, and did not consider safety.

8. Regulation

The Minerals Management Service was responsible for safety and environmental protection, and for maximizing revenues from leases and royalties – competing goals. MMS

revenues for 2008 were \$23 billion. Regulation had not kept pace with offshore drilling technology development. MMS lacked the power to counter resistance to regulatory oversight, and staff lacked the training and experience to evaluate the risks of a project like *Deepwater Horizon*.

Organization and management failures caused this disaster. This pattern can be seen in other serious events, accidents, and catastrophes in different sectors. (See Boebert and Blossom, 2016, for another analysis of the technological, managerial, and organizational causes of this disaster.)

Organizational dilemma how to reconcile inconsistency between individual needs and aspirations, and the collective purpose of the organization.

Organizations can mean different things to those who use them and who work in them, because they are significant personal and social sources of:

- Money, physical resources, other rewards
- Meaning, relevance, purpose, identity
- Order, stability, security
- Status, prestige, self-esteem, self-confidence
- Power, authority, control.

The goals pursued by individual members of an organization can be different from the purpose of their collective activity. This creates an **organizational dilemma** – how to design organizations that will achieve overall objectives, while also meeting the needs of those who work for them.

Home viewing

One of the features of 'high reliability organizations' is *deference to expertise*, which means giving decision rights to those closest to the action regardless of their seniority. What happens when the organization does not defer to 'on the spot' expertise? Starring Mark Wahlberg, Kurt Russell and John Malkovich, the disaster movie *Deepwater Horizon* (2016, Director Peter Berg) tells the story of the BP oil exploration platform in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, when a blowout and fire killed 11 crew. The movie shows BP management more concerned with maintaining production than with safety. In one scene, a junior control room operator decides to seal the oil well which is fuelling the fire. But her colleague prevents her from doing this because 'We don't have the authority'. This also happened during the *Piper Alpha* oil platform disaster in the North Sea in 1988, where the fire would have burned out if it were not being fed by oil from two neighbouring platforms – which continued pumping as their staff did not have company permission to shut down; 167 died in that incident.

BP management criticized the movie, arguing that it did not accurately represent the character of the company, and that 'It ignores the conclusion reached by every official investigation: that the accident was the result of multiple errors made by a number of companies' (Ward and Crooks, 2016, p.17).

Health service management dilemmas

The UK National Health Service (NHS) held a boat race against a Japanese crew. After Japan won by a mile, a working party found the winners had eight people rowing and one steering, while the NHS had eight steering and one rowing. So the NHS spent £5 million on consultants, forming a restructured crew of four assistant steering managers, three deputy managers and a director of

steering services. The rower was then given an incentive to row harder. They held another race and lost by two miles, so the NHS fired the rower for poor performance, sold the boat and used the proceeds to pay a bonus to the director of steering services.

Source: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1995/nov/22/the-economy>

Organizations are social arrangements in which people control resources to produce goods and services efficiently. However, organizations are also political systems in which some individuals exert control over others. Power to define the collective purposes of organizations is not evenly distributed. One of the main mechanisms of organizational control is the hierarchy of authority. It is widely accepted (often with reluctance) that managers have the right to make the decisions while lower-level employees are obliged to comply, or leave.

A concern with performance leads to rules and procedures, and to jobs that are simple and repetitive. This makes it easier to plan, organize and coordinate the efforts of large numbers of people. This efficiency drive, however, conflicts with the desire for freedom of expression, autonomy, creativity and self-development. It seems to be difficult to design organizations that use resources efficiently, and which also develop human potential. Many of the 'human' problems of organizations arise from conflicts between individual needs, and the constraints imposed in the interests of collective purpose. Attempts to control and coordinate human behaviour are thus often self-defeating.

That is a pessimistic view. Organizations are social arrangements, designed by people who can also change them. Organizations can be repressive and stifling, but with thoughtful design, they can also provide opportunities for self-fulfilment and expression.

How eighteenth-century pirates solved the organizational dilemma

Martin Parker (2012) notes that life on navy and merchant ships in the early eighteenth century was vicious and unsanitary. Sailors had poor food, their pay was low, and they enjoyed highly unequal shares of the treasure. Discipline was cruel, violent, and often sadistic. A voyage could be regarded as successful if half the crew survived.

Pirates, on the other hand, developed a radical alternative approach to work organization based on more democratic, egalitarian principles.

On pirate ships, written 'articles' gave each man a vote, and most had an equal share of the stores and the plunder, apart from senior officers. Crew members could earn extra rewards for joining boarding parties, and pirate vessels operated injury compensation schemes.

There were clear rules, with graded punishments for theft, desertion and fighting on board: 'being set ashore somewhere where hardships would ensue, slitting the nose and ears, a slow death by marooning on an island or a quick death on board' (p.42). Weapons were to be kept clean, and no boys or women were allowed on board. In addition, authority depended on consent. Pirate captains had to win a vote by their crew for their position, and only had absolute authority during a conflict. Contrary to the popular image, pirate ships often cooperated with each other in pursuit of a prize. For seafarers, therefore, piracy could be a more attractive alternative than the legitimate alternatives. While naval and merchant ships often had to 'press' their crew

members into service by force, many pirates were ex-merchant seamen.

Parker thus argues that the boundaries between legitimate and illegal organizations and activities (including outlaws and the mafia) are not always as clear as

they appear to be. Eighteenth-century pirates solved the organizational dilemma, and could meet both individual and organizational needs more effectively than the 'legal' competition.



The organizational behaviour field map

How can behaviour in organizations be explained? To answer this question systematically, we will first develop a 'field map' (Figure 1.1). Organizations do not operate in a vacuum, but are influenced by their wider context, represented by the outer box on the field map. One approach to understanding context is 'PESTLE analysis', which explores the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Ecological issues affecting the organization and its members.

The map explains two sets of outcomes; organizational effectiveness, and quality of working life. There are four sets of factors which can explain those outcomes. These concern individual, group, management and organization, and leadership process factors. Organizations are not static. They and their members have plans for the future which influence actions today. Past events also shape current perceptions and actions. We need to explain behaviours with reference to their location in time.

As well as helping to explain organizational behaviour, this field map is an overview of the content of this book. You will see this field map again at the beginning of each Part of the book, to help you to locate each topic in the context of the subject as a whole.

Remember the person who served you in the café at the start of this chapter? In these situations, we often assume that the person is to blame, and we overlook the context in which they work. Our tendency to blame individuals is called the **fundamental attribution error** by Lee Ross (1977). In some cases, the individual could be at fault. But if we are not careful,

Fundamental attribution error the tendency to explain the behaviour of others based on their personality or disposition, and to overlook the influence of wider contextual influences.

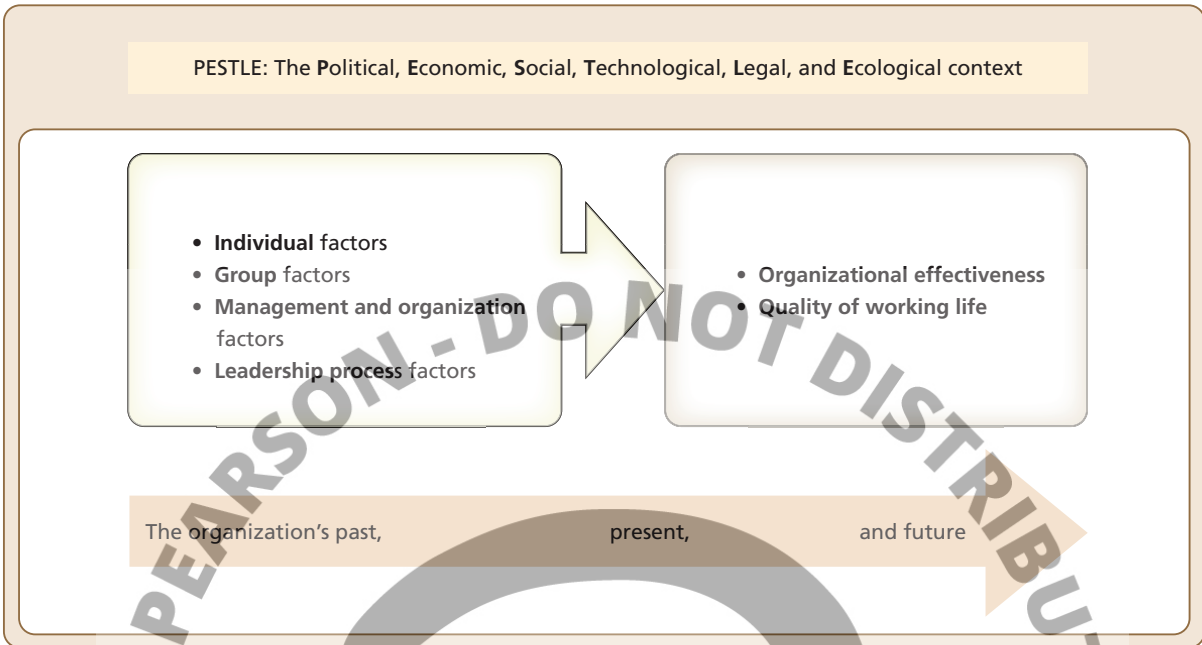


Figure 1.1: The organizational behaviour field map

the fundamental attribution error leads to false explanations for the behaviour of others. We need to be aware of how context affects behaviour, through less visible and less obvious influences. Here are some possibilities:

- *Context factors:* The café has new competition, sales have fallen, they are closing next month, and staff are angry about losing their jobs (economic factors). Perhaps closure is threatened because sales are falling because the local population is in decline (social issues).
- *Individual factors:* The café staff are not coping with the demands of the job through lack of training (learning deficit). Maybe some staff do not like dealing with a demanding public (personality traits). Or they find the job boring and lacking in challenge (motivation problem).
- *Group factors:* The café staff are not a cohesive team (group formation issues). Maybe this staff member is excluded from the group (a newcomer, perhaps) and is unhappy (group structure problems). The informal norm for dealing with awkward customers like you is to be awkward in return, and this person is just 'playing by the rules' (group norms).
- *Structural factors:* The organization is bureaucratic and slow, and staff are anxiously waiting for a long-standing issue to be resolved (hierarchy problems). Maybe there is concern about the way in which work is allocated (work design problems). Perhaps the café manager has to refer problems to a regional boss (decision making issues), who doesn't understand local issues.
- *Management process factors:* The autocratic café manager has annoyed the person serving (leadership style), or this person is suffering 'initiative fatigue' following a restructuring (change problems). Perhaps staff feel that management has made decisions without consulting employees who have valuable ideas (management decision making problems).

These are just some examples. Can you think of other contextual, individual, group, structural and management process factors? This analysis of your experience in the café illustrates four features of explanations of organizational behaviour.

First, we almost always need to look beyond the person, and consider factors at different levels of analysis: individual, group, organization, management, the wider context.

Second, it is tempting to look for the single main cause of behaviour. However, behaviour can be influenced by many factors at the same time.

Third, while it is easy to address these factors separately, in practice they are often linked. Our employee's rude behaviour could be the result of falling sales which jeopardize job security (context), and encourage an autocratic supervisory style (management), leading to changes in working practices (process), which affect existing jobs and lines of reporting (structure) and team memberships (group), resulting in increased anxiety and reduced job satisfaction (individual). These links are not shown in Figure 1.1 because they can become complex (and make our diagram untidy).

Fourth, we need to consider what we want to explain. One of the terms on our field map, **organizational effectiveness**, is controversial. Stakeholders have different ideas about what counts as 'effective'.

Organizational effectiveness a multi-dimensional concept that can be defined differently by different stakeholders.

CRITICAL THINKING

Consider your current educational institution. Who are the internal and external stakeholders? How do you think these stakeholders each define organizational effectiveness for this institution. Why are there differences? Could these lead to conflict between stakeholders?

Balanced scorecard an approach to defining organizational effectiveness using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quality of working life an individual's overall satisfaction with their job, working conditions, pay, colleagues, management style, organization culture, work-life balance, and training, development and career opportunities.

Organizational effectiveness can be defined in different ways. For commercial companies, effectiveness often means 'profit', but this raises other issues. First, timescale is important, as improving short-term profits can damage future performance. Second, some organizations forgo profit in order to increase market share, or to secure survival and growth. Shareholders want a return on investment, customers want quality products or services at reasonable prices, managers want high-flying careers, employees want decent pay, good working conditions, job security, and development and promotion opportunities. Environmental groups want to protect wildlife, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other pollution, reduce traffic and noise levels, and so on.

One approach to managing organizational effectiveness is the **balanced scorecard**. This involves deciding on a range of quantitative and qualitative performance measures, such as environmental concerns, employee development, internal operating efficiencies, and shareholder value.

The phrase **quality of working life** has similar problems, as we each have different needs and expectations. Quality of working life is linked to organizational effectiveness, and also to most of the other factors on the left hand side of our map. It is difficult to talk about quality of working life without considering motivation, teamwork, organization design, development and change, human resource policies and practices, and management style.

Let's go back to Figure 1.1. What kind of model is this? The 'outputs' overlap with the 'inputs'. The causal arrow runs in both directions. High motivation and group cohesiveness lead to organizational effectiveness, but effectiveness can increase motivation and teamwork. The 'outputs' can influence the 'inputs'. Can an 'effect' influence a 'cause'? Logically, this is the wrong way around.

Home viewing



Management at the Belgian manufacturing company Solwal need to cut costs due to competition from Asia. This is the setting for *Two Days, One Night* (2014, directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne) which explores the consequences of the global financial crisis. Sandra Bya (played by Marion Cottillard) has been off work with depression. In her absence, Mr Dumont, the manager, decides that in Sandra's section they need only 16 workers and not 17. He calculates that the company can either pay the €1,000 annual bonuses for 16 employees, or cancel the bonuses and Sandra can stay. The staff vote 13 to 3 in favour of their bonuses. Sandra learns about this on the Friday before returning to work. However, one of Sandra's colleagues persuades Dumont to hold another ballot on Monday morning. Sandra is married with two children, and needs her job. Her husband persuades her to speak to those who voted for the bonuses, to ask them to change their minds. She has two days in which to do this. Sandra soon discovers that her colleagues have financial problems of their own.

How do you feel about Dumont's decision to let his employees decide whether to keep their bonuses, or to keep Sandra? At the end of the movie, how do you feel about Dumont's proposal to give Sandra her job back? Is it inevitable that, in a financial crisis, organizational and individual needs cannot both be satisfied? What else could management do in this situation?

The problem with social science

What can social science offer to our understanding of organizational behaviour? The contribution of social science to the sum of human knowledge is often regarded with scepticism. The natural sciences do not have this problem. What is the problem with social science?

Natural science has enabled us to make self-driving cars, send movies to our phones, genetically engineer crops, perform 'keyhole' surgery, and so on. It has also given us technology with which we can do great damage. Texts in computing, electrical engineering, naval architecture, and cardio-vascular surgery tell readers how things work, how they go wrong, and how to fix them. Students from these disciplines often find psychology, sociology, and organizational behaviour disappointing because these subjects do not offer clear practical guidance. Instead, social science often raises more questions than it answers, focusing on debates, conflicts, ambiguities and paradoxes. Natural science gives us material technology. Social science has not given us a convincing social engineering which, perhaps, would reduce car theft, or eliminate terrorism. Nevertheless, managers expect organizational research to help solve organizational problems.

Sample provided via

Pearson.com

CRITICAL THINKING

You discover that one of your instructors has a new way to improve student performance. She gives students poor grades for their first assignment, regardless of how good it is. This, she argues, motivates higher levels of performance in later assignments.

This is an attempt at 'social engineering'. To what extent is this ethical?

The goals of science include description, explanation, prediction and control of events. These four goals represent increasing levels of sophistication. Social science, however, seems to have problems in all of these areas (see Table 1.2).

These problems only arise if we expect social science to copy natural science practices. If the study of people and organizations is a different kind of business, then we need different procedures. Social science is just a different kind of science.



Description

Natural and social science differ in what they want to describe. Natural science describes an objective reality. Social science describes how people understand and interpret their circumstances. Objective reality is stable. People’s perceptions change.

The first goal of science, however, is description. To achieve this, social science has only three methods: observation, asking questions, and studying documents. Documents can include blogs, podcasts, emails, texts, websites, diaries, letters, company reports, committee minutes and other publications. Physicists and chemists use only one of these methods – observation. Metals, chemicals and interstellar objects do not respond well to questioning, or send text messages.

We can observe in many different ways. The researcher can observe an informal discussion in a cafeteria, join a selection interview panel, follow candidates through a training programme, or take a job with an organization to find out what it is like to work there. Our understanding of the role of managers, for example, is based largely on observation. But observation has limitations. What can we say about someone’s perceptions and motives just by

watching them? We can shadow somebody for a day or two, and make guesses. Eventually we will need to ask them questions.

How do we study phenomena that cannot be observed directly, such as learning (Chapter 5)? We do this through inference. As you read this book, we would like to think that you are learning about organizational behaviour. However, if we could open your head as you read, it would be hard to find ‘the learning process’ (neurophysiology has now begun to understand memory processes). The term ‘learning’ is a label for an invisible (to a social scientist) activity whose existence we can assume.

Table 1.2: Goals of science and social science problems

Goals of science	Practical implications	Social science problems
Description	Measurement	Invisible and ambiguous variables People change over time
Explanation	Identify the time order of events Establish causal links between variables	Timing of events not always clear Cannot always see interactions
Prediction	Generalizing from one setting to another	Uniqueness, complexity and lack of comparability between settings
Control	Manipulation	Ethical and legal constraints

We can study learning by simple inference. We can examine your knowledge before you read this book, and repeat the test afterwards. If the second set of results is better than the first, then we can infer that learning has taken place. We can also study the effects of different inputs to the learning process – characteristics of the teachers, learners, physical facilities, and the time and other resources involved. We can study variations in methods, materials and timing. In this way, we can develop our understanding of the learning process, and suggest improvements.



EMPLOYABILITY CHECK (problem-solving skills, critical thinking)

The manager of a major high street retail store in your area has asked you, a researcher, to assess the level of job satisfaction among sales staff. You cannot speak to staff, because that would affect sales. Can you do this assessment by observation? What will you look for?



Questions can be asked in person in an interview, or through self-report questionnaires. The validity of responses, as a reflection of the ‘truth’, is questionable for at least three reasons.

First, our subjects may lie. People planning to defraud the company, or who simply resent the intrusion of a researcher, may give deliberately misleading answers.

Second, our subjects may not know. We are not always consciously aware of our motives. Do you constantly ask yourself, ‘why am I here?’, and ‘what am I doing?’. The researcher gets the answers of which the person is aware, or which seem to be appropriate in the circumstances.

Third, our subjects may tell us what they think we want to hear. People rarely lie to researchers. They create problems by being helpful. Easier to give a simple answer than a complex story of intrigue and heartbreak. The socially acceptable answer is better than no answer at all.

Explanation

A second goal of science is explanation. If your test score is higher after reading this book than before (and you have not been studying other materials), then we can infer that this book has caused your score to improve. The cause, of course, should come before the effect. We might assume that high job satisfaction causes higher job performance. However, we also know that good performance makes people more satisfied. Which comes first? Which way does the causal arrow point?

The laws that explain human behaviour are different from those that govern the behaviour of natural phenomena. Consider the meteorological law, ‘clouds mean rain’. This law holds good around the planet. The cloud does not have to be taught about the business of raining. Compare this with the social law, ‘red means stop’. A society can change this law, to ‘blue means stop’. The human driver can deliberately jump a red light, or pass the red light accidentally. Clouds cannot vote to change the laws that affect them, nor can they break these laws, or get them wrong by accident.

We are not born with pre-programmed behavioural guides. We have to learn the rules of our society at a given time. Different cultures have different rules about relatively minor matters, such as how close people should stand to each other; how and when to shake

hands; for how long the shake should last; about the styles of dress and address appropriate to different occasions; about relationships between superior and subordinate, between men and women, between elderly and young.

We therefore cannot expect to discover laws that explain human behaviour consistently across time and place. Social and cultural norms vary from country to country, and vary across subcultures in the same country. Our individual norms, attitudes and values also vary over time and with experience, and we are likely to answer a researcher's questions differently if approached a second time.

Prediction

A third goal of science is prediction. Social science can often explain events, but without making precise predictions (Table 1.3). We may be able to predict the rate of suicide in a given society, or the incidence of stress-related disorders in an occupational group. However, we can rarely predict whether specific individuals will try to kill themselves, or suffer sleep and eating disorders. This problem is not critical. We are often more interested in the behaviour of groups than individuals, and more interested in tendencies or probabilities than in individual predictions and certainties.

There is a more fundamental problem. Researchers often communicate their findings to those who have been studied. Suppose you have never given much thought to the ultimate reality of human existence. One day, you read about an American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, who claims that we have a basic need for 'self-actualization', to develop our capabilities to their full potential. If this sounds like a good idea, and you act accordingly, then his claim has become true, for you.

Some predictions are thus self-fulfilling. Simply saying that something will happen can either make it happen, or increase the likelihood of it happening. A statement from a government spokesperson that 'there is no need for motorists to start panic-buying petrol' always triggers panic-buying by motorists, thus creating the fuel shortages that the statement was designed to avoid. Some predictions are intentionally self-defeating. Many of the disastrous predictions of economists, about budget deficits and interest rate movements, for example, are designed to trigger action to prevent those prophecies from coming true. In an organization, one could predict that valuable employees will leave if a given management style continues, in the hope that this will lead to a change in management style.

Table 1.3: We can explain – but we cannot confidently predict

We can explain staff turnover in a supermarket due to the repetitive and boring work	but we cannot predict which staff members will leave, or when they will choose to do so	Individual factors
We can explain the factors that contribute to group cohesiveness in an organization	but we cannot predict the level of cohesion and performance of particular groups	Group factors
We can explain why some types of organization structure are more adaptable to change than others	but we cannot predict the performance improvements that a given structure change will bring	Structure factors
We can explain how different management styles encourage higher or lower levels of employee commitment and performance	but we cannot predict which managers will achieve the highest levels of commitment and performance in a given setting	Management factors

Control

A fourth goal of science is control, or the ability to change things. Social science findings are often designed to encourage change. The natural scientist does not study the order of things in order to be critical, or to encourage that order to improve itself. Is it good or bad that gas expands when heated? Is the number of components in a strand of DNA correct? Social scientists, in contrast, are often motivated by a desire to change aspects of society and organizations. To do that, we need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the way things currently work. Such understanding, therefore, is not just an end in itself. Social science can be critical of the social and organizational order that it uncovers, because that order is only one of many that we are able to create.

As we said earlier, we do not have a social technology that enables us to manipulate other people. Perhaps we should be grateful for this. However, Table 1.4 identifies organizational interventions that are designed to control aspects of employee behaviour.



EMPLOYABILITY CHECK (communication and problem-solving skills, political awareness)

You are a management consultant studying repetitive clerical work in an insurance company. The staff are bored, unhappy, and demotivated. Your study shows how some simple work redesign would increase the variety and autonomy in their jobs. However, managers claim that their system is cost-effective, and provides the service which customers want, while allowing them to keep their staff under control.

As the management consultant with the evidence, how would you persuade management to accept your recommendations? What do you think are your chances of success?

Table 1.4: Interventions to control organizational behaviour

Organizational intervention	Attempts to control
Staff training and development programmes (Chapter 5, Learning)	Employee knowledge and skills
Psychometric assessments (Chapter 6, Personality)	The types of people employed
Employee communications (Chapter 7, Communication)	Employee understanding of and compliance with management-inspired goals
Job redesign (Chapter 9, Motivation)	Employee motivation, commitment and performance
Teambuilding (Part 3)	Levels of team cohesion and performance
Reorganization – structure change (Part 4)	Ability of the organizational to respond to external turbulence
Organizational change (Chapter 19, Change)	Speed of change and reduction of conflict and resistance
Organization culture change (Chapter 4, Culture)	Values, attitudes, beliefs and goals shared by management and employees
Human resource management (Chapter 1, Explaining OB)	high employee performance
Leadership style (Chapter 18, Leadership)	Commitment to an overarching vision

Explaining organizational behaviour

Positivism a perspective which assumes that the world can be understood in terms of causal relationships between observable and measurable variables, and that these relationships can be studied objectively using controlled experiments.

Operational definition the method used to measure the incidence of a variable in practice.

The natural sciences are based on an approach known as **positivism**. The term 'scientific' is often used to mean a positivist approach that is objective and rigorous, using observations and experiments to find universal relationships.

Heat a bar of metal, and it expands. Eat more salt, and your blood pressure rises. The factor that causes a change is the independent variable. The effect to which it leads is the dependent variable. These are also known as the causal and outcome variables. Salt is the independent (causal) variable; blood pressure is the dependent (outcome) variable. Those variables can be measured, and those causal relationships are universal and unchanging. To measure something, you need an **operational definition** – a method for quantifying the variable.



... and then he raises the issue of, 'how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?', and I say, you haven't operationalized the question sufficiently – are you talking about classical ballet, the two-step, country swing ...

Variance theory an approach to explaining organizational behaviour based on universal relationships between independent and dependent variables which can be defined and measured precisely.

The operationalization of temperature and blood pressure involves thermometers and monitors. Questionnaires are often used as operational definitions of job satisfaction and management style. With those measures, we can answer questions about the effects of different management styles on employee satisfaction, and job performance. That assumes that human behaviour can be explained with the methods used to study natural phenomena.

Our field map (Figure 1.1) can be read as a 'cause and effect' explanation. Manipulate the independent variables on the left, and you alter the values of the dependent variables – organizational effectiveness and quality of working life – on the right. This kind of explanation is known as a **variance theory**; do variations in management style cause

varying levels of job satisfaction; do varying personality traits cause variations in levels of job performance?

Positivism and variance theory have been successful in the natural sciences. Many social scientists, however, argue that this approach is not suitable for the study of society and organizations. Positivism assumes that there is an objective world 'out there' which we can observe, define and measure. In contrast, **constructivism** argues that many aspects of that so-called objective reality are determined by us. 'Reality' depends on how we and others see it, on how we construct it socially (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Constructivism a perspective which argues that our social and organizational worlds have no ultimate objective truth or reality, but are instead determined by our shared experiences, meanings and interpretations.

What does it mean to say that 'reality is socially constructed'? Suppose you want to measure aggression at student functions. As a positivist, you first have to decide what counts as 'aggression'. Your *operational definition* could be an 'aggression index' which you use to count observable behaviours such as raised and angry voices, physical contact, pain and injury, and damage to property. You might find, for example, that some functions are more aggressive than others, that aggressiveness is higher later in the evening, that female students are just as aggressive as male students, and so on.

Now, suppose you observe one male student shout at and punch another on the arm. The second student responds angrily and pushes the first student away. A table is shaken, drinks are spilled, glasses are broken. Your 'aggression index' just went up by five or six points. When you speak to the students, however, they describe their actions as friendly, fun, playful: a typical Friday night. The other members of their group agree. This *socially constructed* version of events, for actors and observers, actually involves friendship. Your operational definition is misleading. What matters is how those involved interpret their own actions. Of course, in a different social or organizational setting, raised voices, physical violence, and damaged property will be understood as aggression. The interpretation of those behaviours is not consistent from one context to another. Temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius, or blood pressure of 180 over 90, will always be 'high', wherever you are.

Constructivism argues that we are self-interpreting beings. We attach meaning and purpose to what we do. Chemical substances and metal bars do not attach meaning to their behaviour, nor do they give interviews or fill out questionnaires. So, human behaviour cannot be studied using methods that apply to natural objects and events. As a constructivist, our starting point must lie with how others understand, interpret and define their own actions, and not with definitions that we create for them. The organizational behaviour variables in which we are interested are going to mean different things, to different people, at different times, and in different places.

Process theory an approach to explaining organizational behaviour based on narratives which show how several factors, combining and interacting over time in a particular context, are likely to produce the outcomes of interest.

Variance theory, therefore, is not going to get us very far. To understand organizational issues, we have to use **Process theory** (Mohr, 1982; Langley et al., 2013). Process theory shows how a sequence of events, in a given context, leads to the outcomes in which we are interested. Those outcomes could concern individual satisfaction, the effectiveness of change, organizational performance, the resolution of conflict. Outcomes are often generated by combinations of factors interacting with each other. If salt raises your blood pressure, half that salt will reduce the pressure by a measurable amount. If leadership is necessary for the success of organizational change, it does not make sense to consider the implications of half that leadership.

The Macondo Well blowout described earlier is a good example of a process explanation. This disaster was caused by a combination of factors over time: confused leadership structures, poor communication, lack of procedures, mismanagement of contractors, poor maintenance and use of technology, inadequate risk management and an ineffective regulatory system. No single factor was to blame as they all contributed to the sequence of disastrous events and to the tragic outcomes.

Process theory is helpful when we want to understand:

- Complex and messy social and organizational problems
- Situations that are affected by many different factors which are difficult to define and measure, and which change with time and context

- Factors which do not have independent effects, but combine and interact with each other
- Sequences of events where the start and end points are not well defined
- Interesting outcomes which are themselves difficult to define and measure.

Variance theory offers *definitive* explanations where the links between causes and outcomes do not change. The values of the causal variables always predict the values of the outcome variables (this temperature, that volume). Process theories offer *probabilistic* explanations. We can say that combinations of factors are more or less likely to generate the outcomes of interest, but not always.

CRITICAL THINKING

Hospital managers are concerned that patients with serious conditions wait too long in the emergency department before they are diagnosed, admitted and treated.

How would a positivist study this problem? How would a constructivist study this problem? Which approach will lead to a better understanding of the problem, and why?

Table 1.5 summarizes these contrasting ways of explaining organizational behaviour. What are the implications for our field map? Seen from a *positivist* perspective, the map encourages the search for consistent causal links: this organization structure will improve effectiveness and adaptability, that approach to job design will enhance performance and quality of working life. The positivist is looking for method, for technique, for universal solutions.

Table 1.5: Positivism versus constructivism

	Perspective	
	Positivism	Constructivism
Description	Accepts information that can be observed and quantified consistently	Accepts qualitative information, and relies on inference; studies local meanings and interpretations
Explanation	Uses variance theories Relies mainly on observable quantitative data and measurements Seeks universal laws based on links between independent and dependent variables	Uses process theories Relies mainly on qualitative data and self-interpretations Develops explanatory narratives based on factors combining and interacting over time and in context
Prediction	Based on knowledge of stable and consistent relationships between variables Predictions are deterministic	Based on shared understanding and awareness of multiple social and organizational realities Predictions are probabilistic
Control	Aims to shape behaviour and achieve desired outcomes by manipulating explanatory variables	Aims at social and organizational change through stimulating critical self-awareness

Seen from a *constructivist* perspective, our field map suggests other questions: how do we define and understand the term ‘organization’, and what does ‘effectiveness’ mean to different stakeholders? What kind of work experiences are different individuals looking for, and how do they respond to their experience, and why? The constructivist argues that explanations may apply only to a small part of the social and organizational world, and that explanations may have to change as the context changes, with time. Constructivists seek to trigger new ideas and change by stimulating self-critical awareness.

This field map, therefore, does not set out straightforward causal links. This is just one way to picture a complex subject quickly and simply. We hope that it also gives you a useful overview, and helps you to organize the material in this book. It also serves as a reminder to consider the range of interacting factors that may explain what we observe, and that it is often helpful to look beyond what may appear to be the main and obvious explanations.

Research and practice: evidence-based management

Ian MacRae and Adrian Furnham (2018) argue that managers rely on too many out of date assumptions about work and organization, such as:

- Women are not as competitive as men
- Millennials are changing the workplace
- Working from home reduces productivity
- The use of social media at work damages performance
- A Google-style ‘fun’ office environment will make staff more innovative
- The best way to motivate people is to pay them more
- Open-plan offices are always better.

These are all myths. When we look at the research evidence, we find that these assumptions are false (women *are* as competitive, social media use *does not* lower performance, pay rises *do not* improve performance), or that they are too simple (open-plan offices do not suit all work, some people like ping pong and video games in the office, others see this as a management trick to keep them at work).

There is a well-known gap between academic research and organizational practice, and it is not difficult to explain why. Researchers publish their work in academic journals. Most managers do not read much, and few read academic publications. Many researchers follow lines of enquiry that do not focus on the problems that organizations and their managers are facing. Research and practice also work on different timescales. A manager with a problem wants to solve it today. A researcher with a project could take two to three years to come up with some answers.

What does evidence-based management look like?

‘Here is what evidence-based management looks like. Let’s call this example, a true story, ‘Making Feedback People-Friendly’. The executive director of a health care system with twenty rural clinics notes that their performance differs tremendously across the array of metrics

used. This variability has nothing to do with patient mix or employee characteristics. After interviewing clinic members who complain about the sheer number of metrics for which they are accountable (200+ indicators sent monthly, comparing each clinic to the 19

others), the director recalls a principle from a long-ago course in psychology: human decision makers can only process a limited amount of information at any one time. With input from clinic staff, a redesigned feedback system takes shape. The new system uses three performance categories – care quality, cost and employee satisfaction – and provides a summary measure for each of the three. Over the next year, through provision

of feedback in a more interpretable form, the health system's performance improves across the board, with low-performing units showing the greatest improvement' (from Rousseau, 2006, p. 256).

In this example a *principle* (we can process only a limited amount of information) is translated into *practice* (give feedback on a small number of performance metrics using terms people understand).

MacRae and Furnham (2018) suggest that management decisions should be based on evidence, rather than on habit, bias or false assumptions. Here is another example of a myth in practice. The UK government once decided to pay hospital surgeons according to their success in their operating theatres. This approach assumes that (a) performance depends on motivation, (b) staff are motivated by money, (c) performance can be measured in a consistent and reliable way, and (d) employees work alone, and do not rely on the contributions of others. These assumptions are all false (or too simple).

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton (2006) are critical of such 'pay for performance' schemes. 'Performance' can have several dimensions, some of which are subjective ('quality of care'). The emphasis on pay overlooks the importance that most of us attach to intrinsic rewards and doing a good job. The surgeon in an operating theatre is dependent on the cooperation of many colleagues, whose efforts also affect the patient's wellbeing. Paying some members of staff more than others is divisive if the scheme is seen as unfair, and that will lower everyone's performance. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) argue that, while pay for performance schemes are popular, there is no evidence that they work. Research evidence shows that these schemes actually reduce performance. Managers aware of this evidence can find better and less expensive ways to motivate staff (see Chapter 9).



Evidence-based management

systematically using the best available research evidence to inform decisions about how to manage people and organizations.

Inspired by evidence-based medicine, these ideas have led to an **evidence-based management** movement (EBMgt). There is a Center for Evidence-Based Management based in The Netherlands. EBMgt has a Wikipedia entry (check it out). EBMgt is a seductive idea. It is attractive to researchers who want to influence practice, and is attractive to managers looking for independent legitimation for their decisions and actions. But does it work as intended?

The similarities between medicine and management are exaggerated. Medicine can often advise with confidence, 'take pill, cure headache', but there are few simple solutions to



STOP AND SEARCH

YouTube for *Evidence-based management*.

organizational problems. There is no such thing as ‘best practice’ because solutions depend on local circumstances. Usually, a number of initiatives or solutions are implemented at the same time. It is rare to see one solution aimed at one problem. Medical and managerial decisions differ in other ways, too; doctors treating a headache do not have to consider the impact of their decisions on other patients.

Best practice or next practice?

Susan Mohrman and Edward Lawler (2012, p.42) argue that:

‘The major challenge for organizations today is navigating high levels of turbulence. They operate in dynamic environments, in societies where the aspirations and purposes of various stakeholders change over time. They have access to ever-increasing

technological capabilities and information. A key organizational capability is the ability to adapt as context, opportunities, and challenges change.’

Evidence-based best practice means doing what worked in the past. To respond effectively to new challenges, we need to focus on ‘next practice’.

Christine Trank (2014) sees two other problems with EBMgt. First, academic articles are designed to persuade. They are open to interpretation and are not simply neutral ways of sharing information. Different readers can come to different conclusions from the same evidence. Second, she criticizes the prescriptive ‘what works’ approach of EBMgt because, ‘It points towards a more technocratic than professional practice: one in which scientific research is translated to narrow action rules that are applied as routines, rather than one in which considerable autonomy is granted to knowledgeable practitioners using judgement and values to decide on action’ (Trank, 2014, p.384). Those involved in professional work, she argues, must be able to use their judgement and to ignore ‘action rules’ based on what worked in the past, and elsewhere, but which may not work here and now.

David Denyer and David Tranfield (2009, p.687) prefer the terms ‘evidence-informed’ and ‘evidence-aware’. Rob Briner et al. (2009) note that research evidence is only one factor in most professional decisions, and may not be the most important; stakeholder preferences, context, and judgement are also involved. If the term is used rigidly, EBMgt may *underestimate* the contributions of research to practice. For Alan Bryman and David Buchanan (2009, p.711) these research contributions include:

- Developing new perspectives, concepts and ideas
- Suggesting how current arrangements could be redesigned
- Confronting social and organizational injustices
- Highlighting significant issues, events and processes
- Surfacing issues that might remain hidden
- Broadcasting voices that might remain silent
- Demonstrating the potential consequences of different actions.

Organizational research can shape practice by suggesting, in creative and positive ways, how problems are understood in the first place, and how they are approached. We can rarely say,

'here is the solution to your problem'. But we can often say, 'here is a way to understand your problem, and to develop solutions that will work in this context'.

Human resource management: OB in action

Human resource management the function responsible for establishing integrated personnel policies to support organization strategy.

Employment cycle the sequence of stages through which all employees pass in each working position they hold, from recruitment and selection, to termination.

One area where organizational behaviour (OB) contributes to evidence-based practice is **human resource management** (HR – or personnel management). These subjects are often taught separately, but there is overlap. OB is concerned with micro- and macro-organizational issues, at individual, group, corporate and contextual levels of analysis. HR develops and implements policies which enhance quality of working life, and which encourage commitment, engagement, flexibility and high performance from employees.

In designing those policies, HR is 'organizational behaviour in practice'. This applies to the stages of the **employment cycle** (Figure 1.2) – stages that you will experience at various points in your career.

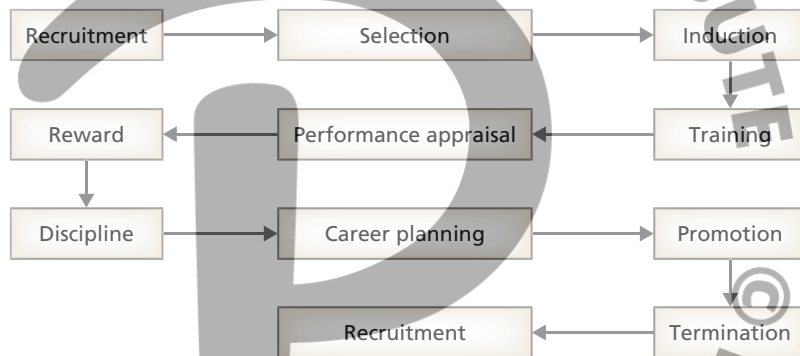


Figure 1.2: The employment cycle

The basic model of HR (Figure 1.3) says that, *if* you design your people policies in a particular way, *then* performance will improve. In terms of the concepts we introduced earlier, HR policies are *independent variables*, and the quality of working life and organizational effectiveness are *dependent variables*. However, as we will see, a process perspective offers a better explanation for the relationships between HR policies and organizational outcomes. Table 1.6 shows the links between HR practice and the OB topics covered in this text.

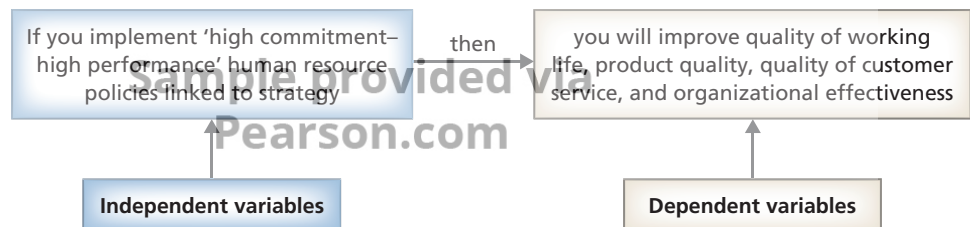


Figure 1.3: The basic model of HR

Table 1.6: Human resource management and organizational behaviour

HR functions	Issues and activities	OB topics
Recruitment, selection, induction	Getting the right employees into the right jobs; recruiting from an increasingly diverse population; sensitivity to employment of women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the elderly	Environmental turbulence; PESTLE analysis; personality assessment; big data; human capital analytics; communication; person perception; learning; new organizational forms
Training and development	Tension between individual and organizational responsibility; development as a recruitment and retention tool, coping with new technologies	Technology and job design; new organizational forms; learning; the learning organization; motivation; organizational change; artificial intelligence, cobots
Performance appraisal and reward	Annual appraisal; pay policy; fringe benefits; need to attract and retain staff; impact of teamwork on individual pay	Motivation; expectancy theory; equity theory; group influence on individual behaviour; teamworking
Managing conduct and discipline	Sexual harassment, racial abuse, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, health and safety; monitoring misconduct; using surveillance; formulation and communication of policies	Surveillance technology; learning; socialization; behaviour modification; organizational culture; managing conflict; management style
Participation and commitment	Involvement in decisions increases commitment; design of communications and participation mechanisms; managing organizational culture; tap ideas, release talent, encourage loyalty	Communication; motivation; organization structure; social media at work; engagement and employee voice; organization culture; flexible organization; organizational change; leadership style
Organization development and change	The personnel/human resource management role in facilitating development and change; flexible working practices	Organization development and change; motivation and job design; organization culture and structure; leadership

The Bath model of HR

The Bath People and Performance Model (Purcell et al., 2003) is shown in Figure 1.4. This model focuses on the *processes* through which HR policies affect employee behaviour and performance. For people to perform beyond the minimum requirements of a job, three factors are needed: Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO):

Factor	Employees must
Ability	have job skills and knowledge, including how to work well with others
Motivation	feel motivated to do the work, and to do it well
Opportunity	be able to use their skills, and contribute to team and organizational success

Discretionary

behaviour freedom to decide how work is going to be performed; discretionary behaviour can be positive, such as putting in extra time and effort, or it can be negative, such as withholding information and cooperation.

If one of these factors is weak or missing, then an individual's performance is likely to be poor. You may have the ability and the motivation, but if your supervisor prevents you from sharing ideas with colleagues and insists on 'standard procedure', then you will probably not 'go the extra mile'.

Most employees have some choice over how, and how well, they perform their jobs. This is known as **discretionary behaviour**.

Sales assistants, for example, can decide to adopt a casual and unsympathetic tone, or they can make customers feel that their concerns have been handled in a competent and friendly way. Negative, uncaring behaviours are often a response to an employee's perception that the

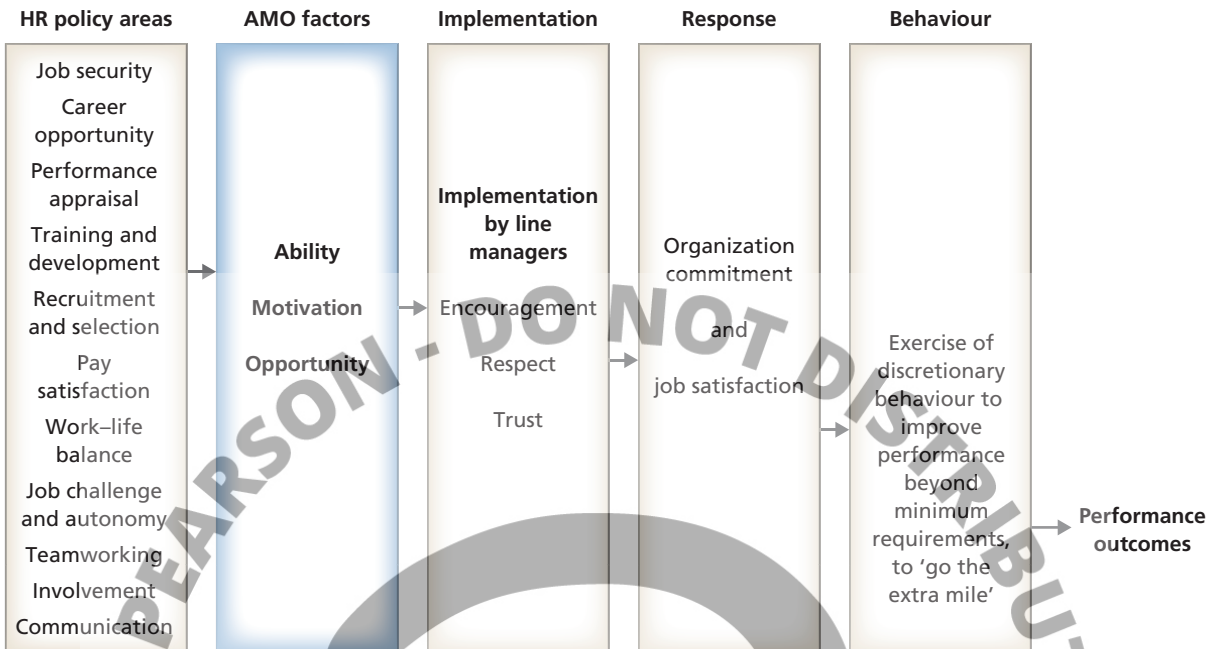


Figure 1.4: The Bath People and Performance Model

Source: adapted from Purcell et al. (2003, p.7). Reprinted by permission of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

organization no longer cares about them. When one member of staff annoys a customer, and management finds out, then that employee has a problem. If all staff withdraw their positive discretionary behaviours, this affects the performance of the organization, and management has a problem.

What encourages employees to 'go the extra mile'? The answer lies in the model's *process theory*, which explains performance outcomes in terms of a combination of factors:

1. Basic HR policies are required to produce the Ability, Motivation and Opportunity that are key to any level of performance.
2. The line managers who 'bring these policies to life' have to communicate trust, respect and encouragement, in the way that they give directions, and respond to suggestions.
3. HR policies and line management behaviours must lead to feelings of job satisfaction and commitment, or the policies will have little impact on behaviour and performance.
4. People tend to use positive discretionary behaviours when they experience pride in their organization, and want to stay there.

Looking ahead: human resource management in 2030

Mark Frary (2017) predicts what human resource management will look like in the coming decades:

- Management roles are not likely to be replaced, but administrative tasks such as payroll and time-keeping will be taken over by technology.
- A higher proportion of older people – many with health conditions – will continue in work as life expectancy increases and the retirement age is raised.
- Business travel will no longer be a perk for the young, and companies will have to consider emergency planning and higher travel insurance premiums for older employees.
- With 20 to 30 per cent of the working population already 'gigging', or working 'on demand', the job-for-life culture is gone; organizations will struggle to encourage company loyalty.



- The ability to adapt to rapid change becomes a core competency, with faster business cycles and more disruptive technology.
- Individuals and organizations will need to commit to continuous skills development and lifelong learning.
- The workforce will be more diverse, and people skills will be more important as technology becomes pervasive; cross-cultural and cross-generational teams are the new normal.
- Your CV is obsolete, 'replaced by a sort of LinkedIn on steroids' – an online record of your experience, skills, competencies and potential, drawing from several sources such as past and current employers and your social connections.
- Pressure on property values makes large central offices too expensive, encouraging more remote working; teleworkers will use immersive virtual reality headsets to interact with colleagues around the world.
- The growth in number of smart connected products (SCPs) will allow organizations to monitor employees in detail.



'Those employees whose roles have not been automated will be monitored in real time to ensure they are happy; it could be a case of monitoring inflexions in their voices for stress as they carry out a search that would have been typed in earlier years. Behind the scenes, an algorithm will note this and automatically provide them with a different task more suited to their current state of mind' (p.16).

The *process* of implementing those policies is also important. The same policies, with inconsistent or half-hearted management, can lower commitment and satisfaction, and positive discretionary behaviours will be withdrawn. The 'high performance' HR policies in this model are:

1. *Recruitment and selection* that is careful and sophisticated
2. *Training and development* that equips employees for their job roles
3. *Career opportunities*
4. *Communication* that involves two-way information sharing
5. *Involvement* of employees in management decision making
6. *Teamworking*
7. *Performance appraisal* and development
8. *Pay* that is equitable and motivating
9. *Job security*
10. *Challenge and autonomy*
11. *Work-life balance.*

This suggests that a *positive bundle* of policies which reinforce each other will have more impact than the sum of individual policies. On the other hand, a *deadly combination* of other policies can compete with and weaken each other; for example financial rewards based on individual contributions, with appraisal and promotion systems that encourage teamworking.

Big data and the HR contribution

Big data information collected, often real-time, from sources such as internet clicks, mobile transactions, user-generated content, social media, sensor networks, sales queries, purchases.

There is compelling evidence for the link between ‘high performance’ human resource management and organizational performance. On commercial grounds alone, surely this evidence has made an impact on practice? Stephen Wood et al. (2013) report the findings from a survey of 87,000 UK businesses. They found that adoption of high performance practices varied from sector to sector, and between larger and smaller employers. Innovative organizations, and those in competitive markets for premium quality goods and services were more likely to be adopters than those producing basic goods. In the UK, the use of all high performance practices declined between 2007 and 2011. These ‘best practices’ are not as common in practice as they are in textbooks.

CRITICAL THINKING

There is evidence to show that ‘high performance’ HR practices do work, and can improve financial returns. They have been widely publicized in management journals. So why do you think these management practices are not more widely used?

Data analytics the use of powerful computational methods to reveal and to visualize patterns and trends in very large sets of data.

Human capital analytics an HR practice enabled by computing technologies that use descriptive, visual and statistical analyses of data related to HR processes, human capital, organizational performance and external economic benchmarks to establish business impact and enable evidence-based, data-driven decision-making.

The low impact of HR policies may now change, due to the development of **big data**. The digitization of services and processes allows organizations to capture large amounts of information concerning those who use them. This information allows organizations to explore and to predict patterns and trends in individual and group behaviours, such as consumer choices, traffic patterns, or the outbreak and spread of diseases. To reveal those patterns and trends, statistically and visually, more powerful computational tools have been developed, known as **data analytics**. Applied to HR, **human capital analytics** can provide insights into an organization’s workforce, the HR policies and practices that support them, and workforce characteristics such as knowledge, skills and experience (see Houghton, 2017, p.24).

Big brother is not just watching you; it is logging your lifestyle through your digital traces. Send a text message; that act is recorded. Buy a book from Amazon; that purchase is recorded. Check a website; recorded. Book a holiday online; recorded. Send a Tweet; recorded. Smartphones and vehicles with GPS record your location. The Amazon home help voice-activated devices Echo and Alexa are not just speakers; they are microphones that record and transmit what you say back to Amazon. Data generated by online customers of a well-known retailer is passed on to a number of advertisers, marketing companies, data analytics groups, and other ‘selected partners’ who are unknown to consumers (Thompson, 2018). Some American employers are implanting staff with microchips which can be used to pay for meals in the cafeteria, open office doors, and use the photocopier, with a wave of the hand. These chips also allow the company to log staff activity and movements. Capturing big data is fast, simple and inexpensive because it is based on internet clicks, mobile transactions, calls and messages, wearable technology, user-generated content, social media, sales queries, product purchases – and the wave of a hand at a security barrier.

Sample provided via

CRITICAL THINKING

Should we be concerned about privacy? Does big data mean more surveillance and control? Most of us are probably aware that organizations collect our personal data. But do we really know what information we reveal online, such as our social network friends, location, web searches, communication history, fitness regime, IP address or web surfing history?

Big data is contributing to human resource management by providing objective information on which to base decisions and solve HR problems. Bruce Fecheyr-Lippens et al. (2015) describe how a leading healthcare organization improved employee engagement, saving more than US\$100 million. Analysis showed that pay discrepancies had caused job dissatisfaction which led to high staff turnover. Using predictive analytics, another company saved \$20 million on bonuses while cutting staff turnover by half. Analysis showed that the main reasons why staff left concerned lack of investment in training and inadequate recognition. Expensive retention bonuses were having no impact. The consulting company McKinsey believed that staff defections were due to performance ratings or compensation. Analytics showed, however, that the key factors were a lack of mentoring and coaching. The 'flight risk' across the company fell by up to 40 percent once coaching and mentoring were improved (Fecheyr-Lippens et al., 2015, p.2).

Human capital analytics is transforming HR. Why? In the past, HR relied on soft, subjective, qualitative information to support policy and practice, job satisfaction, engagement, culture, commitment, and so on. Now, with the availability of large amounts of work-related data, it is possible to analyse the drivers of employee behaviour and performance. HR advice can be based on hard, objective, quantitative data. This leads to another benefit. Relying on subjective judgement, HR has lacked power compared to other management functions, especially finance (see Chapter 22). By measuring the impact of policy and practice on organizational performance, HR becomes a more 'hard-edged' function. Human capital analytics will increase the influence of HR in the boardroom.

Human capital analytics

Why are some employees more likely to leave an organization? Will reorganization improve productivity? Why are some groups more creative and productive than others? Will our new rewards strategy improve customer service? The answers to questions such as these traditionally draw on experience, judgement and intuition. However, big data and human capital analytics enable HR professionals to demonstrate, with quantifiable measures, the impact HR policies and practices have on individual and group behaviour and performance. HR analytics can thus identify cause and effect relationships, and predict the consequences of introducing new policies and practices.

The benefits of HR are illustrated by Henri de Romée et al. (2016):

1. A bank faced the problem of identifying high-potential employees. What employee profile, they wanted to know, best predicts performance? Analytics revealed that branch and team structures were the best predictors. This challenged traditional assumptions about the importance of factors such as academic achievement.
2. A professional services company developed automated CV (résumé) screening to reduce the costs of processing large numbers of job applicants. However, they also had a policy of hiring more women. The HR algorithm successfully identified candidates most likely to be hired, and rejected those with little or no chance of being recruited. Costs were reduced, and the algorithm proved that achieving gender diversity did not depend on human screening.
3. An insurance company with high staff turnover offered bonuses to encourage staff to stay, but these had little effect. Data analytics were then used to profile high-risk staff. This showed, contrary to traditional assumptions, that those in small teams with longer periods between promotions, and with lower performing managers, were most likely to leave. The solution involved scrapping the bonuses and spending that money instead on offering more opportunities for development, combined with support from stronger managers. Performance and retention both improved.





EMPLOYABILITY CHECK (practical skills)

The *Financial Times* newspaper asked employers in 2018 what skills they looked for when recruiting Masters graduates from business schools. The top five were all 'soft' skills: ability to work in a team, ability to work with a wide variety of people, ability to solve complex problems, ability to sustain and expand a network of people, and time management and ability to prioritize (Nilsson, 2018). How do you rate yourself on those five skills? What actions do you need to take to develop those soft skills?



RECAP

1. *Explain the importance of an understanding of organizational behaviour.*
 - Organizations influence almost every aspect of our daily lives in a multitude of ways.
 - If we eventually destroy this planet, the cause will not lie with technology or weaponry, but with ineffective organizations and management practices.
2. *Explain and illustrate the central dilemma of organizational design.*
 - The organizational dilemma concerns how to reconcile the inconsistency between individual needs and aspirations, and the collective purpose of the organization.
3. *Understand the need for explanations of behaviour in organizations that take account of combinations of, and relationships between, factors at different levels of analysis.*
 - The study of organizational behaviour is multidisciplinary, drawing in particular from psychology, social psychology, sociology, economics and political science.
 - Organizational behaviour involves a multi-level study of the external environment, and internal structure, functioning and performance of organizations, and the behaviour of groups and individuals.
 - Organizational effectiveness and quality of working life are explained by a combination of contextual, individual, group, structural, process and managerial factors.
 - In considering explanations of organizational behaviour, systemic thinking is required, avoiding explanations based on single causes, and considering a range of interrelated factors at different levels of analysis.
4. *Understand the difference between positivist and constructivist perspectives, and their respective implications for the study of organizational behaviour.*
 - A positivist perspective uses the same research methods and modes of explanation found in the natural sciences to study and understand organizational behaviour.
 - It is difficult to apply conventional scientific research methods to people, because of the 'reactive effects' which come into play when people know they are being studied.
 - A constructivist perspective assumes that, as we are self-defining creatures who attach meanings to our behaviour, social science is different from natural science.
 - A constructivist perspective believes that reality is not objective and 'out there', but is socially constructed.
 - A constructivist approach abandons scientific neutrality and seeks to stimulate social and organizational change by providing critical feedback and encouraging self-awareness.
5. *Understand the distinction between variance and process explanations of organizational behaviour.*
 - Variance theory explains organizational behaviour by identifying relationships between independent and dependent variables which can be defined and measured. Variance theories are often quantitative, and are based on a positivist perspective.
 - Process theory explains organizational behaviour using narratives which show how many factors produce outcomes by combining and interacting over time in a given context. Process theories can combine quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and can draw from positivist and constructivist traditions.



6. Explain the development and limitations of evidence-based management.

- The concept of evidence-based management is popular, but the links between evidence and practice are complex; evidence can shape the ways in which problems are understood and approached, rather than offering specific solutions.

7. Recognize the breadth of applications of organizational behaviour theory, and contributions to human resource management practice.

- The Bath model of human resource management argues that discretionary behaviour going beyond minimum requirements relies on having a combination of HR policies.
- High performance work practices increase organizational profitability by decreasing employee turnover and improving productivity, but they are not widely adopted.

8. Assess how the human resource management function can use big data and human capital analytics to improve individual and team performance, and organizational effectiveness

- Extremely large and complex sets of data – ‘big data’ – can be captured easily, stored cheaply, and analysed rapidly, due to developments in data storage and data processing capabilities.
- Human capital analytics applies sophisticated analytical tools and techniques to big data sets in order to generate fresh HR insights that can improve organizational performance.
- Human capital analytics can complement (or replace) experience, judgement and intuition as bases for HR decision making, with quantified metrics that can help to establish causal relationships between HR policies and practices and performance outcomes.

Revision



1. How is organizational behaviour defined? What topics does this subject cover? What is the practical relevance of organizational behaviour?
2. Describe an example of organizational *misbehaviour*, where you as customer were treated badly. Suggest possible explanations for your treatment.
3. Hospital managers are concerned that patients with medical emergencies wait too long in the casualty department before they are diagnosed and treated. Which approach, positivist or constructivist, is more likely to resolve this problem, and why?
4. Using your own examples, explain how removing each element in turn from the Bath model – ability, motivation, opportunity – can reduce employee performance. For each of the three elements, suggest how the performance problem could be solved.
5. What contribution can big data and human capital analytics make to organizational performance in general, and to the human resource management function in particular?

Research assignment



Organizations affect all aspects of our lives. Buy a small notebook. Starting on Friday morning when you wake up, and ending on Sunday night when you go to bed, keep a list of all the organizations with which you have contact over this period.

‘Contact’ includes, for example, a radio programme that you listen to at breakfast, a television station that you watch, the shops that you visit, the bank with whose card you make payments, the companies who run the buses, trains and taxis that you use. Which companies make the food and drinks that you consume? Also, which cinemas, bars, nightclubs, sports and social clubs did you visit? Religious and educational establishments? Medical facilities or emergency services that you have used (you never know)? Check your mail: which organizations have written to you? Do you have any utility or council tax bills to pay, and from which organizations do you get these services? Have you dealt with any charity requests? Have you checked your internet service provider and social networking organizations? What companies made your computer and mobile phone? Which

companies designed the browser and other software that you are using? Whose advertisements have you watched?

Every time you do anything or go anywhere over these three days, stop and ask, which organizations am I interacting with in some way? Record the names in your notebook. Then on Sunday night, or first thing Monday morning:

1. Total the number of organizations with which you have had contact on each of the three days – Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
2. Remove any duplicates and assign a number to each organization on your remaining list.
3. Devise a categorization scheme for your numbered organizations, including as many of them as possible: private-public; profit-charitable; goods-services. Use as many categories as you need. Some organizations may not ‘fit’ your scheme, but this is not a problem. How many organizations were in each category?
4. Consider what this list of organizations reveals about you and your lifestyle. Be prepared to share your conclusions with colleagues.

Springboard

Stella Cottrell (2017) *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis, Argument, and Reflection*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Best-selling students’ guide to nature and use of critical thinking.

Edward Houghton (2017) *Human Capital Analytics and Reporting: Exploring Theory and Evidence*. London: Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development. Reviews the evidence on human capital analytics, noting that practice is restricted to larger and more affluent organizations. Finds that HR professionals still rely on personal judgement, and that there is scope for HR analytics insights.

Lyman W. Porter and Benjamin Schneider (2014) ‘What was, what is, and what may be in OP/OB’, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1: 1–21. Fascinating account of the history of organizational behaviour from the mid-twentieth century; reviews current status, with recommendations for the future.

Patrick Wright and Michael Ulrich (2017) ‘A road well traveled: the past, present, and future journey of strategic human resource management’, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4: 45–65. Review of research focusing on the links between HR policies and practices and organizational performance.

OB cinema



Antz (1998, directors Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson). This clip (7 minutes) begins immediately after the opening credits with Z (played by Woody Allen) saying ‘All my life I’ve lived and worked in the big city’, and ends with General Mandible (Gene Hackman) saying, ‘Our very next stop Cutter’. This is the story of a neurotic worker ant, Z 4195, who wants to escape from his insignificant job in an authoritarian organization – the ant colony.

1. Using the field map of the organizational behaviour terrain as a guide, identify as many examples as you can of how individual, group, structural and managerial process factors influence organizational effectiveness and quality of working life in an ant colony.
2. What similar examples of factors affecting organizational effectiveness and quality of working life can you identify from organizations with which you are familiar?

Chapter exercises



1: Best job – worst job

- Objectives**
1. To help you to get to know each other.
 2. To introduce you to the main sections of this organizational behaviour course.

- Briefing**
1. Pair up with another student. Interview each other to find out names, where you both come from, and what other courses you are currently taking.
 2. In turn, introduce your partner to the other members of the class.
 3. Two pairs now join up, and the group of four discuss:
 - What was the worst job that you ever had? What made it so bad?
 - What was the best job that you ever had? What made it so good?
 4. Appoint a scribe to record the recurring themes revealed in group members' stories about their best and worst jobs. Appoint also a group spokesperson.
 5. The spokespersons then give presentations to the whole class, summarizing the recurring features of what made a job good or bad. As you listen, use this score sheet to record the frequency of occurrence of the various factors.

Factors affecting job experience		
Factors	Examples	(✓) if mentioned
Individual factors	Pay: reasonable or poor Job training: comprehensive or none Personality: clashes with other people Communication: frequent or little	
Group factors	Co-workers: helping or not contributing Conflict with co-workers Pressure to conform to group norms Staff not welded into a team	
Structural factors	Job tasks: boring or interesting Job responsibilities: clear or unclear Supervision: too close or little Rules: too many or insufficient guidance	
Management factors	Boss: considerate or autocratic Decisions: imposed or asked for opinions Disagreements with managers: often or few Changes: well or poorly implemented	

Sample provided via
Pearson.com

2: Management versus workers

Rate each of the following issues on this five-point scale, in terms of whether you think managers and workers have shared, partially shared, or separate interests (from Noon and Blyton, 2007, p.305):

share identical interests 1 2 3 4 5 have completely separate interests

- Health and safety standards
- Basic pay
- Introducing new technology
- Levels of overtime working
- Designing interesting jobs
- Bonus payments
- Flexible working hours
- Equal opportunities
- Company share price
- Developing new products and/or services
- Redundancy

Explain why you rated each of these issues in the way that you did.

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