Course Learning Outcomes for Unit I

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Define organizational behavior and organization.
2. Compare and contrast four perspectives of organizational effectiveness.
3. Explain corporate social responsibility (CSR) organizational cost and benefit.
4. Elaborate on organizational opportunities and challenges of globalization.
5. Discuss the anchors on which organizational behavior is based.
6. Outline the four factors that directly influence individual behavior and performance.
7. Summarize the five types of individual behavior in organizations.
8. Examine personality, the big five personality dimensions, and the four MBTI types.
9. Determine three ethical principles and four factors that influence ethical behavior.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 1:
Introduction to the Field of Organizational Behavior

Chapter 2:
Individual Behavior, Personality, and Values

Unit Lesson

What is behavior? Think about a child in a classroom. Some children learn to be pro-social and conform to rules, while others take more time. Organizational behavior (OB) can relate certainly to the basics, but behaviors also interrelate in various ways that can motivate or deflate coworkers and can either propel success or delay success of the organization. There are many theories about organizational behavior, and in this course, students will have the chance to explore and contemplate these complexities in their own lives.

In any organization, whether a McDonalds restaurant, a small office supply company, or a large automobile sales company, employees and owners are involved in the company’s organizational behavior. Organizational behavior (OB) is the unit of study involving what people do in relation to an organization (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013). In any workplace, each of us engages in a particular behavior, decision-making (however small), perceptions (of ourselves/others), and emotionality (both happy and disappointed).

Have you ever had a negative employee review? The study of ethics and leadership during the times of Confucius and Plato gave way to the observation and recording of behavior (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013). Subordinates are usually evaluated by those in leadership positions who assess performance. Some people do not like authority (those potentially observing and giving the reviews) and have pre-conceived anxiety or dislike regarding being reviewed. Others value observation and seek feedback to improve their work. Which mindset do you have? What if you owned a company? How would you look at the supervision of your staff? Would you measure performance and reward a job well done? One benefit of obtaining OB knowledge is that we can understand that there is an effective way to remedy issues and ensure smooth operations. What does it mean to be effective?

Perspectives of organizational effectiveness can be seen when we look at the most successful companies in the world, such as Apple, Inc.; Google; or Home Depot. A coherent model of organizational effectiveness is presented by McShane and Von Glinow (2013) below:
First is having an open-systems perspective; that is one that uses interactive and inter-dependent processes and internally and externally in order to benefit from resources as well as feedback for ongoing change and growth.

Second is maintaining an organizational learning perspective, which provides an emphasis and value for knowledge. Here, the organization's capacity to be effective depends greatly on the organization's capacity to acquire, share, use, and store valuable knowledge in order to continually improve. Constructs such as Human and intellectual capital are invaluable.

Third, High-performance Work practices (HPWP) Perspective, similar to organizational learning, is the belief that human capital (knowledge/skills) is an important source of competitive advantage for organizations. The distinctive feature of the HPWP is that it continually attempts to identify new structures in order to generate the most value from an organization's human capital. Human competence is a key variable in this perspective and so performance is linked to skill development of all employees.

The fourth view is stakeholder perspective, which allows for the critical importance with any person who has a relationship to the organization, collectively known as the stakeholders. Managing and satisfying stakeholders, including those who have conflicting interests and varying levels of power, forces leadership to examine organizational values, ethics, and corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) ideas in an organization are ideas that are beneficial for society and are not developed just to make a profit (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013). Look at Google for instance. The resource is used by countless people.

Organizational globalization is connecting on three levels: economic, social, and cultural. The connection is shown in an observable way. Apple has a global mindset.

Anchors of organizational behavior are the principles in which OB knowledge is developed and refined e.g., systematic research anchor, the disciplinary anchor, the contingency anchor, and the multiple levels of analyses anchor. More information in our textbook explains how the individual, team, and organization each have a perspective and how information should be categorized/assessed.

Factors of individual behavior and performance are easiest to remember by the acronym MARS. As presented in our textbook, the MARS model of behavior and performance is composed of predictors of behavior and performance: motivation, ability, role perceptions, and situational factors. On pages 34 through 38 of your textbook, you can read about each area in more detail and how these behaviors affect organizational results (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013). You will likely notice topics that relate to yourself, coworkers, and supervisors in your current workplace.

Personality: We all know people with whom we have personality clashes; some impress or entertain us, and some bother us. In the workplace, more and more organizations are coming to value personality analysis. It is just as important to consider the personality of a new candidate as it is their college degree.

The five major personality dimensions are: conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience, and extraversion. Every person has varying degrees of agreeability, assertiveness, and overall cooperativeness. These individual attributes affect the overall success of an organization once the group dynamics begin. These categories of behavior can be observed and reported on with regard to organizational performance. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one tool used for personality testing.

The four MBTI types represent a person’s perceptions and judgments of information. These personality traits (perceiving/judging) have a specific influence on one’s ability to work well with others. Personality testing in organizations is gaining popularity as a way to increase employee and team understanding. Individuals in leadership are even selecting personality types for particular roles. See some interesting examples in your textbook on pp. 45-50, where you may also enjoy the sections about personal values and values congruence in the workplace (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013).
Ethics: Everyone enjoys the idea of working with people with integrity. We want to trust the people we work with, right? Three principles that influence ethical behavior include utilitarianism, individual rights, and distributive justice. Ideally, all three principles should be actively considered, but sometimes, people only consider one or two.

The three areas are discussed in more detail in the textbook, but they can be summarized as follows:

1. utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number of people),
2. individual rights (the individual freedoms of those involved), and
3. distributive justice (the variation of rewards/burdens accordingly matched to similar positions).

Obviously, ethical conduct in the organization must be addressed, or the workplace can become toxic with negativity.

Factors that influence ethical behavior include: moral intensity of the issue, an individual’s ethical sensitivity, situational factors, and mindfulness. Some people are more ethically sensitive than others.

Have you ever run into a situation that involved basic right and wrong, but another person involved acted unethically without apology? Ethical behaviors also influence organizational outcomes.

People in leadership who themselves present unethical behaviors lead to entire organizational climates of mistrust and deceit. Some companies have grievance procedures that include confidential reporting systems for employees and for clients. This is helpful in sustaining and promoting ethical conduct.

Reference


Suggested Reading

Click here for the Chapter 1 Presentation in PowerPoint form. Click here to access a PDF version of the presentation.

Click here for the Chapter 2 Presentation in PowerPoint form. Click here to access a PDF version of the presentation.

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