



INTEGRATED INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

Our Accreditations



Our Standards



Organizational Behaviour

Key concepts and terms

- Behavioural science
- Process theory
- Variance theory
- Organizational behaviour
- Social sciences

Learning outcomes

On completing this chapter you should be able to define these key concepts. You should also know about:

- The characteristics of organizational behaviour
- The sources and applications of organization behaviour theory
- The factors affecting organizational behaviour
- The significance of organizational behaviour theory

Organizational Behaviour

It is concerned with ‘the study of the structure, functioning and performance of organizations, and the behaviour of groups and individuals within them’.

Organizational behaviour defined

‘Organizational behaviour’ is the term used to describe how people within organizations act; individually or in groups, and how organizations function, in terms of their structure, processes and culture.

Characteristics of organizational behaviour

The following are the characteristics of organizational behaviour;

1. It is a way of thinking about individuals, groups and organizations.
2. It is multidisciplinary – it uses principles, models, theories and methods from other disciplines.
3. There is a distinctly humanistic orientation – people and their attitudes, perceptions, learning capacities, feelings and goals are of major importance.
4. It is performance-orientated – it deals with the factors affecting performance and how it can be improved.
5. The use of scientific method is important in studying variables and relationships.
6. It is applications-orientated in the sense of being concerned with providing useful answers to questions which arise when managing organizations.

Organizational behaviour and the social and behavioural sciences

Organizational behaviour studies make considerable use of social and behavioural science methodologies which involve the use of scientific procedures. The social sciences include the disciplines of psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and political science. Behavioural science is mainly concerned with psychology and sociology.

Explaining organizational behaviour

Two ways of explaining organizational behaviour are: variance theory and process theory.

Variance theory

Variance theory explains the causes of organizational behaviour by reference to the independent or causal variables which cause a change and result in dependent variables – the outcomes of the change. Variance theory involves the definition and precise measurement of the variables.

Process theory

Process theory explains organizational behaviour by producing narratives which provide probable explanations of the outcomes of a series of events.

Factors affecting organizational behaviour

- The characteristics of people at work – individual differences, attitudes, personality, attributions, orientation and the roles they play.
- How people are motivated.
- The process of employee engagement.
- The process of organizational commitment.
- How organizations function.
- Organizational culture.

The sources and applications of organizational behaviour theory

Discipline

Contribution to theory

Application

Psychology

- individual differences
- personality
- attitudes
- perceptions
- self-concept
- attributions
- motivation
- engagement and commitment
- learning
- leadership

- job/work design
- selection processes and tests
- learning and development programmes
- performance management
- reward management
- attitude measurement

Social psychology

- group processes
- attitude change
- behavioural change
- communication

- organization development
- organization design
- change management
- communication systems

Sociology

- group dynamics
- power
- politics
- conflict
- organization culture
- leadership

- organization development
- organization design
- leadership development
- employee relations



The significance of organizational behaviour theory

- All managers and HR specialists are in the business of influencing behaviour in directions that will meet business needs. An understanding of organizational processes and skills in the analysis and diagnosis of organizational behaviour is therefore important.
- The manager needs to understand the patterns of behaviour that are observed to predict in what direction behaviour will move (particularly in the light of managerial action), and to use this knowledge to control behaviour over the course of time. Effective management action requires that the manager be able to diagnose the system he or she is working in.

The sources and applications of organization behaviour theory

- The sources comprise the disciplines of psychology, social psychology and sociology.
- Contributions are based on an understanding of individual differences, leadership, group processes and concepts such as motivation, engagement and commitment.
- Applications cover all aspects of people management and development.

The significance of organizational behaviour theory

- All managers and HR specialists are in the business of influencing behaviour in directions that will meet business needs.
- An understanding of organizational processes and skills in the analysis and diagnosis of organizational behaviour is therefore important.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. A colleague e-mails you to the effect that she missed a session on organizational behaviour in her course at the local college of further education. She asks you to recall what you learned about the subject when you took the course and for your opinion on its importance. Reply.
2. What are the characteristics of organizational behaviour?
3. What are the factors that affect organizational behaviour?

CONGRATULATIONS