

TOPIC 1 Organisational Behaviour in a Global Economy

What is Organisational Behaviour?

Organisational behaviour is the study of individuals and groups in organisations

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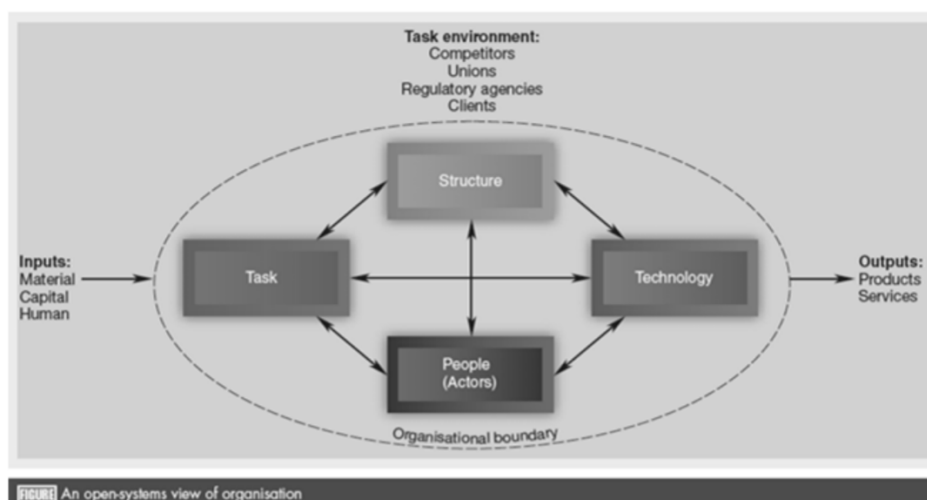
- 'An interdisciplinary field drawing on a number of disciplines'.
 - Psychology - Anthropology
 - Sociology - Political science
 - Social psychology
- 'The study of structure, functioning & performance of organisations, and the behaviour of individuals within them'.
- 'The study of what people think, feel and do in organisations'.

In summary: individuals, groups, organisation

The Context: OB and Organisations

- Why do organisations exist?
 - Organisations are mechanisms through which many people combine their efforts and work together to accomplish more than any one person could alone.
- Key features
 - Task
 - Structure
 - People
 - Technology

Understanding Organisations as an Open System



The “two sides” of organisations

- Formal organisation:
the official, legitimate and most visible part of the system, i.e. the logical and rational view
- Informal organisation:
the unofficial and less visible part of the system
- just as important as the formal organisation

Some key issues for managers and OB

- Globalisation
- Changing nature of work
- Changing nature of workforce

Globalisation

- Globalisation is the process of becoming more international in scope, influence or application.
- Requires expanded management skills and competencies.

Changing nature of work

- What we do, eg.
 - technology implications
 - knowledge management aspects
- How we do it, eg.
 - Outsourcing
 - Casualisation of the workforce
 - Telecommuting
 - Work-life balance concerns

Changing nature of the workforce

- Age
 - Loss of organisational memory
 - Generational differences: different values, less loyalty, greater mobility, changing technical skills.
- Gender
 - Increasing rate of participation of women in workforce.
 - Gender-specific job stereotypes
- Culture
 - Leadership; motivation; decision making

Cultural differences & work-related attitudes

- Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural differences
- Examined IBM employees
 - 5 key dimensions of culture – focuses specifically on work values – Implications for management and OB



Cultural Differences: Hofstede's dimensions

Individualism ↔ Collectivism

Low power distance ↔ High power distance

Masculinity ↔ Femininity

Low uncertainty avoidance ↔ High uncertainty avoidance

Short-term orientation ↔ Long-term orientation

Problems in Cross-Cultural Awareness

- Warning: be alert for cultural paradoxes
 - Cultural concepts and differences need to be viewed as tendencies and patterns.
 - Characterisations of other cultures are at best guesses, nothing more.
 - Some researchers argue that we focus too much on differences rather than universal behaviours
- Question: should managers be looking for differences or commonalities?