

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Relevance of Workplace Behavior on the Achievement of Organizational Goals

### ABSTRACT

One of the most commonly discussed topics in company meetings is the performance of workers in individual and team tasks, and the attitudes and decisions adopted by individuals which are often due to personal reasons. For this reason, it is important for organizations to consider evaluating workers' behavior in order to reach their organizational goals. Some organizations have job candidates sit a psychological evaluation to find out about their character and behavior because they are aware that, nowadays, it is not enough to meet experience and academic requirements. In fact, when workers show appropriate behavior in their work plus excellent teamwork skills, the organization will follow the correct path and achieve its expected goals. If the workers' behavior is understood, it is possible to propose mechanisms to modify it or direct it toward the benefit of both the organization and the individuals themselves.

**Keywords:** behavior; organizations; workers.

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Submitted: 02/16/2023 - Accepted: 04/13/2023 - Published: 06/29/2023

## INTRODUCTION

Human behavior is a key factor for companies because it involves individual and collective relationships, as well as the communication between individuals within organizations. Successful teamwork depends on appropriate behavior and the harmonious performance of various activities which are key to the growth of organizations, making it possible to reach their expected goals. Chiavenato (2009) states that "behavior in organizations shows the constant interactivity and mutual influence between organizations and individuals" (p. 6).

When workers display optimistic and positive behavior toward their colleagues and the organization, it can be inferred that they feel comfortable and satisfied with their duties. When workers perform their duties while in a good mood, their productivity will be optimal. If workers feel happy to belong to a certain organization, whether it is due to its prestige or admiration for it, this will result in more focus on their behavior and a desire to continue working for it for a long time. Robbins (2004) states that "researching the effect of individual or group behavior within companies promotes an organization's effectiveness" (p. 8).

This review article evaluates theories proposed by renowned scientists and researchers, who performed several studies in relation to the behavior of individuals both in their personal and work environments. The aim of this article is to describe and understand workplace behavior, as well as the factors that motivate this behavior.

## PURPOSE

This review article will show that it is important for organizations to pay attention to workplace behavior, while trying to understand it, to reorientate it for the benefit of the workers themselves and the company. In many organizations, the turnover index is high, so an option to solve this problem is to understand what motivates workers to perform their duties, given that motivation leads to a certain behavior. It is therefore important to analyze the factors (dimensions) which are involved in behavior and help describe it and understand it for the benefit and growth of all parties involved.

## ARGUMENTATIVE REVIEW

This review article has considered approaches that are renowned for their outstanding contribution to the research on human behavior. There are references to various authors who have established theories on the importance of appropriate employee behavior while at work, and used various dimensions as components of behavior, obtaining results that make it possible to describe behavior. The work of five authors has been reviewed for this article, as described below.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action, whose aim is to understand human behavior to better predict it. To this end, they performed laboratory and field experiments. They proposed two dimensions for their study:

- **Attitude:** Defined by the authors as the predisposition to respond, whether favorably or unfavorably, to an objective that an individual wishes to achieve. Attitude is linked to each individual's nature because they analyze what they will gain by choosing to perform or not to perform a particular action.
- **Subjective Norms or Social Factors:** They refer to the fact that individuals think and act depending on how their social environment wishes them to behave. This theory is also referred to as motivation to comply; it is therefore linked to the pressure exerted by groups on individuals.

McClelland (1961) proposes the Three Needs Theory. This research focused on finding out what motivates and orientates individuals' behavior, finding three patterns that determine their attitudes; these three factors were considered the dimensions of behavior (and learned within the workplace):

- **Need for Achievement:** To meet this need, individuals display an attitude for overcoming difficult challenges that they have set on themselves in relation to their work. They must overcome any obstacle that prevents them from achieving a goal, which may require effort, sacrifice, and dedication. Individuals show a preference for individual work.

- **Need for Power:** To meet this need, individuals display an attitude for influencing other people. It refers to individuals who wish to control everything that surrounds them. It produces a competitive attitude because they believe that they will gain power by overcoming everyone else, thereby achieving status and recognition within the company.
- **Need for Affiliation:** Individuals meet this need by socializing with others. There is a marked preference for teamwork and for relating to other individuals socially. Those who have this need wish to belong to a certain social group, prefer to forgo opinions that differ from those of their colleagues, and feel happy to be recognized for their good actions and selfless acts for others. They treasure friendship, and show a preference for working in teams and collaboratively.

Atkinson (1957) proposed the Expectancy-Value Theory using the concepts of need, expectancy, and value. His research explained that individuals' behavior was conditioned and/or determined by their own expectancy for achieving a particular goal or incentive, and by the value of doing so as perceived by the individuals. Atkinson's study considers three dimensions:

- **Motives or Need for Achievement:** It is a reasonably stable trait of individuals, which helps them to make an effort to comply with a task successfully and feel proud after completing it, avoiding failure and its consequences.
- **Expectancies or Probability of Success:** It is the likelihood of success deduced by individuals in relation to performing a task or achieving a proposed goal, eliciting a particular behavior to that end.
- **Incentive Value:** It is the affective reaction experienced by individuals after successfully completing a particular task. The easier the task, the greater value the incentive will have for them.

Herzberg (1968) researched people's job satisfaction and motivation. The author considers motivation to be an agent that drives

individuals to perform better at work. He developed a theory called Motivation-Hygiene or Two-Factor Theory, where he presents a model involving two factors that generate workers' motivation to work. This theory considers two dimensions:

- **Hygiene Factors:** They are directly linked to the work environment. They are the basic aspects for individuals, such as salary, job security, organizational climate, company policy, etc. If these aspects are absent or individuals believe that they will not be able to satisfy these factors, this will result in workers feeling dissatisfied and, as a consequence, their performance will decrease.
- **Motivational Factors:** They are the aspects related to the position in the workplace; for example, if the workplace offers recognitions for any goals attained, a career ladder, bonuses for achieving objectives, among others. If this factor exists, it will contribute greatly to individuals' satisfaction.

Lewin (1939) used scientific methods for his research on behavior. He proposed the Field Theory, which argues that behavior does not follow any past or future circumstances, but current situations and how these are perceived by individuals. For the author, any study on behavior has to be performed on individuals and their environment jointly rather than separately. Each individual's response to stimuli will depend on their own perception of these. Lewin's theory considers three dimensions, as described below:

- **Force:** The author considers force to be the reason behind actions. Individuals encounter a need, and this causes a force or set of forces that lead them to perform an activity. These forces may be positive or negative, and the psychological combination of these forces results in a particular behavior.
- **Tension:** It is the similarity between an individual's current state and their proposed goals. There is an internal pressure in the individual which drives them to fulfil an intention.
- **Need:** It is the factor that develops motivating tensions. Due to the presence of

psychological needs, which are always present in people, individuals will feel an internal tension which will motivate them to satisfy these needs in order to return to the state of equilibrium in which they previously were.

## CONCLUSIONS

- This research analyzed the theories of five renowned authors which attempted to understand, explain, and predict human behavior. They performed experiments, analyses and tests on individuals to propose various dimensions that may help describe behavior. This review article will help organizations to understand the types of behavior that their workers may display, and to direct them to the achievement of the company's goals. Each organization has different objectives and goals; therefore, for an optimal recruitment of new personnel, it does not suffice to consider the candidates' technical and academic skills and their experience; instead, it is necessary to reuse a more in-depth analysis of their psychological profile (behavior), which should be compatible with the company's values, goals, and objectives, especially when it comes to key positions that may define the organization's success or failure.
- Fishbein and Ajzen's theory is applied in organizations by instructing workers. For instance, if a worker is instructed on the company's promotion prospects and the financial rewards for production or goal achievement and, in addition, their colleagues tell them that the company does not fail to provide these benefits, the worker's intent may be strengthened and translated into a change of behavior.
- To apply McClelland's theory in organizations, for example, the need for achievement could be addressed by proposing a financial incentive or recognition for accomplished goals; to address the need for power, the company may hold events or conventions where the workers could volunteer to organize the event or moderate the discussions; and to address the need for affiliation, a cafeteria or canteen could be implemented for lunchtime, so that

the personnel could socialize and return to work in a more relaxed and motivated mood.

- Regarding Atkinson's model, this theory may be applied in organizations by implementing training programs (master's degrees) for employees. Thus, workers may have a reason to make an effort, comply successfully and feel happy with themselves. Their expectancy would be to pass or complete the training program, and the incentive value would be the meaning that each individual gives to having a new academic degree (master's).
- Regarding Herzberg's theory, it is possible to apply it in organizations by assigning new duties to workers in accordance with their position, by establishing a range of achievable promotions, and by providing bonuses for productivity or accomplished goals.
- Finally, the application of Lewin's model in organizations has been helpful because it explains why the field (work environment) should be optimal and stress-free to result in excellent job performance. According to the author, if there is no variation in the field, there will be no change in the individual's behavior.

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**Competing interests**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

**Authors' Contribution**

Robin Alberto Acuña Benites (lead author): Conceptualization, research, supervision, writing (original draft, review and editing).