Organizational behavior is not a designated function or area. Rather, it is a perspective or set of tools that all managers can use to carry out their jobs more effectively.

The ability to use the tools of organizational behavior to understand behavior in organizations is one reason for studying this topic. A second reason is to learn how to apply these concepts, theories, and techniques to improve behavior in organizations so that individuals, groups, and organizations can achieve their goals. Managers are challenged to find new ways to motivate and coordinate employees to ensure that their goals are aligned with organizational goals.

A manager supervises one or more subordinates. Managers include CEOs, who head top-management teams of high-ranking executives responsible for planning strategy to achieve top-level managers might be responsible for thousands of workers. But managers are also found throughout the lower levels of organizations and often are in charge of just a few subordinates. All managers face the challenge of helping the organization achieve its goals. Knowledge of organizational behavior increases effectiveness by providing managers with a set of tools. Managers can raise a worker’s self-esteem and increase worker productivity by changing the reward system or the job design.

Understanding the Basics of Human Behavior

An organization’s human resource policies and practices represent important forces for shaping employee behavior and attitudes. In this chapter, we specifically discussed the influence of selection practices, training and development programs, performance evaluation systems, and the existence of a union. Human resource policies and practice influence organizational effectiveness. Human resource management includes: employee selection, training performance management, and union-management relations and how they influence organizations effectiveness.

Biographical Characteristics

1. Finding and analyzing the variables that have an impact on employee productivity, absence, turnover, and satisfaction is often complicated.
2. Many of the concepts—motivation, or power, politics or organizational culture—are hard to assess.
3. Other factors are more easily definable and readily available—data that can be obtained from an employee’s personnel file and would include characteristics such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status
- Length of service, etc.

A. Age

1. The relationship between age and job performance is increasing in importance.
   - First, there is a widespread belief that job performance declines with increasing age.
   - Second, the workforce is aging; workers over 55 are the fastest growing sector of the workforce.
2. Employers’ perceptions are mixed.
   - They see a number of positive qualities that older workers bring to their jobs, specifically experience, judgment, a strong work ethic, and commitment to quality.
• Older workers are also perceived as lacking flexibility and as being resistant to new
technology.
• Some believe that the older you get, the less likely you are to quit your job. That
collection is based on studies of the age-turnover relationship.

3. It is tempting to assume that age is also inversely related to absenteeism.
• Most studies do show an inverse relationship, but close examination finds that the age-
absence relationship is partially a function of whether the absence is avoidable or
unavoidable.
• In general, older employees have lower rates of avoidable absence. However, they have
higher rates of unavoidable absence, probably due to their poorer health associated with
aging and longer recovery periods when injured.

4. There is a widespread belief that productivity declines with age and that individual skills
decay over time.
• Reviews of the research find that age and job performance are unrelated.
• This seems to be true for almost all types of jobs, professional and nonprofessional.

5. The relationship between age and job satisfaction is mixed.
• Most studies indicate a positive association between age and satisfaction, at least up to
age 60.
• Other studies, however, have found a U-shaped relationship. When professional and
nonprofessional employees are separated, satisfaction tends to continually increase
among professionals as they age, whereas it falls among nonprofessionals during
middle age and then rises again in the later years.

B. Gender

1. There are few, if any, important differences between men and women that will affect their
job performance, including the areas of:
• Problem-solving
• Analytical skills
• Competitive drive
• Motivation
• Sociability
• Learning ability

2. Women are more willing to conform to authority, and men are more aggressive and more
likely than women to have expectations of success, but those differences are minor.

3. There is no evidence indicating that an employee’s gender affects job satisfaction.

4. There is a difference between men and women in terms of preference for work schedules.
• Mothers of preschool children are more likely to prefer part-time work, flexible work
schedules, and telecommuting in order to accommodate their family responsibilities.

5. Absence and turnover rates
• Women’s quit rates are similar to men’s.
• The research on absence consistently indicates that women have higher rates of
absenteeism.
• The logical explanation: cultural expectation that has historically placed home and
family responsibilities on the woman.

C. Marital Status

1. There are not enough studies to draw any conclusions about the effect of marital status on
job productivity.

2. Research consistently indicates that married employees have fewer absences, undergo fewer
turnovers, and are more satisfied with their jobs than are their unmarried coworkers.

3. More research needs to be done on the other statuses besides single or married, such as
divorce, domestic partnering, etc.
D. Tenure

1. The issue of the impact of job seniority on job performance has been subject to misconceptions and speculations.

2. Extensive reviews of the seniority-productivity relationship have been conducted:
   - There is a positive relationship between tenure and job productivity.
   - There is a negative relationship between tenure to absence.
   - Tenure is also a potent variable in explaining turnover.
   - Tenure has consistently been found to be negatively related to turnover and has been suggested as one of the single best predictors of turnover.
   - The evidence indicates that tenure and satisfaction are positively related.

Individual differences can be divided into personality and ability differences. Understanding the nature, determinants, and consequences of individual differences is essential for managing organizational behavior. An appreciation of the nature of individual differences is necessary to understand why people behave in certain ways in an organization.

1. Organizational outcomes predicted by personality include job satisfaction, work stress, and leadership effectiveness. Personality is not a useful predictor of organizational outcomes when there are strong situational constraints. Because personality tends to be stable over time, managers should not expect to change personality in the short run. Managers should accept workers’ personalities as they are and develop effective ways to deal with people.

2. Feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors in an organization are determined by the interaction of personality and situation.

3. The Big Five personality traits are extraversion (positive affectivity), neuroticism (negative affectivity), agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Other personality traits particularly relevant to organizational behavior include locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem, Type A and Type B personality, and the needs for achievement, affiliation, and power.

4. In addition to possessing different personalities, workers also differ in their abilities, or capabilities. The two major types of ability are cognitive and physical ability.

5. Types of cognitive ability can be arranged in a hierarchy with general intelligence at the top. Specific types of cognitive include: verbal, numerical, reasoning, deductive, ability to see relationships, memory, spatial, and perceptual.

6. There are two types of physical ability: motor skills (the ability to manipulate objects) and physical skills (a person’s fitness and strength).

7. Both nature and nurture contribute to determining physical and cognitive ability. A third, recently identified, ability is emotional intelligence.

8. In organizations, ability can be managed by selecting individuals who have the abilities needed to accomplish tasks, placing workers in jobs that capitalize on their abilities, and training workers to enhance their ability levels.

The Ability-Job Fit

1. Employee performance is enhanced when there is a high ability-job fit.

2. The specific intellectual or physical abilities required depend on the ability requirements of the job. For example, pilots need strong spatial-visualization abilities.

3. Directing attention at only the employee’s abilities, or only the ability requirements of the job, ignores the fact that employee performance depends on the interaction of the two.

4. When the fit is poor employees are likely to fail.

5. When the ability-job fit is out of sync because the employee has abilities that far exceed the requirements of the job, performance is likely to be adequate, but there will be organizational inefficiencies and possible declines in employee satisfaction.

6. Abilities significantly above those required can also reduce the employee’s job satisfaction when the employee’s desire to use his or her abilities is particularly strong and is frustrated by the limitations of the job.