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# Research on organization culture and undoing's of these findings

## Organizational Behavior

### Introduction to Organizational Behavior (OB)

OB research has exploded. It has turned from prescription to theory and experiment, from induction to deduction, and from humanism to scientism. So far as application goes, these research findings have had a curiously negative impact (Organ, 1983): OB has succeeded in refuting what we now realize to be intuitive errors, yet has offered precious little to fill the void. The quality control far surpasses the production. Blanchard's best seller, *The One Minute Manager* (1983), is notable for its brevity and good sense. But what is really remarkable is that much of OB's body of applied knowledge can be found in its thin pages.

Even though popularizations can and do oversimplify, they are an indication of real world influence. OB has imparted a healthy skepticism and open mindedness to everyday organizational relationships. Today's "B" school students and recent graduates share a bond with behaviorists across the campus at least in terms of jargon, interests and precepts. Maybe, just maybe, we will find that OB's contribution has been to reintroduce some of the values of the social sciences to the business school where language and action are closely linked together. Whether current catchwords like "congruence, dyad, dysfunction or paradigm" will have more meaning as arbiters of action than yesterday's "maximization, burden, overhead or utility" remains to be seen. But if the vocabulary and values of today's students are any portent, tomorrow's workers should enjoy a more humane and effective existence even though OB's contribution to that end would seem less direct than OB specialists may care to admit.

OB is also changing: partly in pursuit of meaning; partly in response to social change; partly to explore more trendy topics.

OB changes in accordance with the enactments of influential scholars. A delay of several years is not as crucial as it would be in, say, chemistry. True "breakthroughs" and landmark contributions are rare events in the behavioral sciences. Nevertheless, an OB text needs to be timely to be accepted and the textbooks to be reviewed here are as current as any. As for OB texts as expository vehicles, they follow separate paths that remind me of map-making (in the cartographic sense). In their extended explorations of our behavior, many OB scholars earn their reputations through precise, sometimes elegant, even sterile research. There are compelling reasons to believe that raising the quality of knowledge will improve an organization's sustainability.

In the longer term, it may be far more difficult for an organization to adjust to the consequences of environmental damage or losses sustained by other entities in the system. Because relatively small changes in the balance of the overall system can cause catastrophic changes in other parts of the system—especially with respect to issues of sustainability—an important managerial question emerges: How can such problems be identified and prevented? System dynamics methodology is well suited for improving organizational performance and sustainability of the

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complex system in which the organization exists. There are precedents for combining system dynamics and knowledge-based methods (e.g., Barton 1999; Firestone and McElroy 2003; Morecroft and Sterman 1994). However, these studies do not concentrate solely on learning as the key to the knowledge construction process.

## **Conceptualization of Organizational Sustainability and Success**

In its essence, sustainability implies a system in a steady state, a dynamic equilibrium in which the inputs equal the outputs. For our purposes, we chose a more relaxed definition of sustainability provided in Brundtland 1987. A complex environment provides managers with few heuristics for achieving the desired states of sustainability. Ascher observes, “In many instances, complexity challenges the organization’s efforts to understand how the ecosystem and social system will behave in reaction to the organization’s level of control and creates additional cause for intra-organizational conflicts” (2000, 2). However, learning from trial and error under real world conditions is slow, and the tuition is painfully expensive.

According to Wiig, “Organizational effectiveness is determined by many factors, the most important being the quality and availability of pertinent knowledge at points of actions used to handle situations—that is, to make sense of information, innovate, decide what to do, act, and evaluate the implications of approaches and actions” (2004, 33). Organizations with a sustainability goal but low quality knowledge of how to achieve it are likely to be ineffective.

McElroy (2006) proposes that achieving sustainability is contingent on unfettered knowledge of the human impact on the world and on the capacity to learn. In organizations where low-quality knowledge is ubiquitous, achieving highly effective actions is unlikely. Effective actions flow from high-quality knowledge produced by robust knowledge-processing systems. Our strategy for improving the quality of knowledge needed for achieving greater effectiveness is to increase an organization’s capacity for knowledge processing.

Without a rigorous methodology for discovering new patterns and sense making, managers tend to become passive observers of organizational phenomena and devolve into relying on their own habits of thought and perception. Without a common methodology for conducting inquiries and experimentation, knowledge processing efforts cascade between unbounded problem statements and conflicting worldviews. Managers with insufficient skills in conducting action research become dependent on having others to direct them through the phases of the knowledge life cycle (KLC). Such dependencies are expensively inefficient and place managers in the awkward position of having their private knowledge deficits made public. So managers allocate their time to solving problems they understand and are confident they can solve, and little knowledge is created, with the result that actions to address important problems are deferred.

System dynamics methodology provides a powerful means for understanding complex problems and a framework for guiding inquiry and action research (see, e.g., Sterman 2000). A facilitated system dynamics engagement can test the viability of policies and help participants to learn the feedback nature of sustainability issues. The system dynamics simulation model generated as part of the engagement can be used to test alternatives, providing an inexpensive means of experimentation. The insights generated in the engagement can be preserved across the organization through the sharing of simulation models (Thompson 2009, chap. 6). There is an

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established tradition of using system dynamics to address sustainability issues. Forrester (1971) first established the potential of applying system dynamics to finding fundamental solutions to the sustainability concerns of what he termed the “world system” caused by the unrestrained forces of growth and the limits of nature. Vennix et al. (1994) and Ford and Sterman (1998) propose that a structured approach to knowledge elicitation is one of the methodology’s greatest benefits.

Andersen et al. (1994) suggest critical factors for selecting the type of knowledge Dynamic Knowledge, Organizational Growth, and Sustainability elicitation techniques to use in a system dynamics group model-building effort. “Engaging in a system dynamics modeling process encourages participants to examine their own beliefs and assumptions about how the behavior of a system is caused” (Senge et al. 2007). While system dynamics is not the only methodology with the potential to enforce a requisite discipline on managers that is sufficiently rigorous to call into question prevailing assumptions about causality, it is one of the more advanced approaches for analyzing complex systems. Senge et al. (2007) propose that system dynamics offers a framework that can accommodate fluid cross-disciplinary discussions by practitioners around the issues of sustainability “issues like sustainability requires systems-thinking skills that are not widely shared. When effective collaboration is the aim, developing a shared conceptual ‘systems sense’ is even more important” (Senge et al. 2007, 45).

## **Management and Human Resources Sustainability**

There is a confluence of interests among those managers concerned with sustainability, action research, knowledge, and system dynamics. However, the mechanisms for learning are not well established. Thus, we examine the case of Prestwick Memory Devices in which system dynamics was combined with principles of knowledge management to improve a firm’s sustainability.

One of the greatest historic concerns about the workplace is how to improve and sustain productivity growth. In public school education this concern relates to programs to enhance the daily outcomes of the teaching and learning processes. The quality of the school environment determines greatly how teachers and students achieve.

For many decades there have been ideological conceptions and movements to effectively enhance the human resources (HRs) function and improve the school environment to create effective teaching and learning situations. In recent years the primary focus was on the development and implementation of regulations and policies to improve HRs administrative practices as evidenced by the mushrooming of HRs law. These practices have become fully established and treated as if they are the best-established administrative methods for fostering a conducive organizational environment in the public schools. The general belief is that these regulations, policies and their associated practices drive the wheels of the HRs function and lead its engine to accomplish the desired administrative tasks.

These observations have revealed the true value of their contributions and established that scholars have made significant contributions toward the evolution of personnel administration. From the scholarly efforts of this honorable gallery of academicians who contributed copiously to the scientific management movements, we gain deeper insights into their contributions toward the significance of the human dimension and institutional aspects of employee

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effectiveness in organizational settings. It is unfortunately disheartening to know that almost everything the HRs function is concerned with today is aimed exclusively at strengthening the institutional (i.e., legal) aspects of people's performance to the gross neglect of the need to improve the quality of the human factor. HRs administration ignores or pays cursory attention to the development of the positive qualities of the human factor. HRs development programs focus solely on training in human capital (i.e., knowledge and skills) acquisition. Unfortunately this is not sufficient because human capital is just but a small aspect of the human factor.

## **The Significance of Human Factor**

The full dimensions of the human factor are classified into six categories as "spiritual capital, moral capital, aesthetic capital, human capital, human abilities, and human potential" (Adjibolosoo, 2005, pp. 45-51). Unfortunately empirical evidence from personnel management neither validates Weber's view nor corroborates today's HRs administrative practices. For example, today new HRs regulations and policies are being made and implemented indiscriminately to prop up old and failing ones. Yet the more of these HRs regulations and policies we actuate, the more failures we experience with HRs administrative policies. Thus we unsuspectingly find ourselves in the strangulating meshes of the web of austere human factor. As a result, the more we fail in our HRs practices as revealed in the proliferation of HRs law, the more regulations and policies we make, implement, and aggressively enforce. In our attempts to enforce these impotent HRs regulations and policies, we act like a blind and naïve school of fish trapped in the meshes of nets laid across the length and breadth of the deep oceans. Unfortunately, the development and applications of HRs law does not improve the quality of the workplace or minimize the intensity of workplace problems which produce a growing number of lawsuits and court battles. At best it supports HRs practices aimed at accommodating the pertinent problems.

If we are to improve the effectiveness of the existing HRs administrative practices, it is imperative that we revisit the works of scholars from scientific management schools and associated movements to re-educate ourselves regarding their contributions to the science of HRs administration and management. The primary objective of this scholarly activity is to guide us to discover better procedures and techniques for dealing with the neglected human factor dimension of HRs administration. That is, we must become aware of the fact that the institutional development paradigm (i.e., the applications of legal authority) has not worked as effectively as we had hoped. There is definitely a better alternative. This long-neglected option is the human factor model of HRs administration. The primary focus of the human factor model of administration is about concentrating the available scarce FEET resources on developing and improving the quality of people's human factor.

## **The Significance of the Scientific Management and Other Movements**

In the early 1900s the leaders of the scientific management and other movements brought ideas that made a permanent imprint on personnel administration and employee performance (Taylor, 1911; Gantt, 1961; Griffin, 1987; and many others). Webb and Norton (2003, pp. 8-11) also note that scientific management was introduced into educational administration during the beginning decades of the 1900s.

Scholars pioneering work which influenced personnel management and development in

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education include, but are not limited to, Weber (1910); Urwick and Gulick (1937); and Fayol (1949). In Fayollian terms, for example, the key activities of administration are planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. According to Fayol, therefore, these activities are to be carried out in an integrated fashion with the primary objective of achieving high productivity in the organization. The Gulickian view of personnel management extends the Fayollian perspective by adding two additional dimensions to the personnel management activities: reporting and budgeting (See details in Webb and Norton, 2003, p. 9).

Regardless of the beauty and intensity of the works of the scholars of the scientific management movements, it is obvious that the individual whose scholarly work exerted the greatest impact on the present day HRs administrative function is Max Weber (1864-1920). Writing about his own concept of what actually determines the ideal organization, Weber (1910) argues that promotion must be tied to performance and individual employee's security must be ensured through established (i.e., proven) bureaucratic practices. Such practices, according to Weber, would shelter employees from unfair dismissal schemes and other capricious personnel practices. To Weber these kinds of bureaucratic protection minimize disharmony at the workplace. And by so doing, lead to the attainment of optimal employee efficiency.

In Weberian terms, there exist three types of organizational authorities. These are the charismatic, traditional, and legal authorities. Among these three, Weber made the case that it is the legal authority that provides the strongest and most powerful foundation to the ideal bureaucratic organization. Viewed in this light, we might argue that Weber's conclusion regarding the supremacy of legal authority has both surreptitiously and powerfully influenced, shaped, and directed HRs administrative practices ever since.

A detailed thorough analyses of the contents of Chapter 10 of Webb and Norton (2003, pp. 319-362) also reveal that the HRs programs aimed at maximizing employee performance concentrate mostly on institution building as is reflected in regulations and policies rather than human factor engineering. In general the primary objective is to find programs and remuneration packages to motivate employees to perform at their best.

A careful and diligent analyses of the Weberian view about the primacy of legal authority reveal that educational administration and the HRs function today draw numerous inspirational ideas from Weber (1910). Thus as Webb and Norton (2003, p. 10) observe, the primary emphasis HRs administrators today place on "...accountability, teacher evaluation, merit pay, teacher selection, scientific supervision, on-the-job training, and job analysis..." is a direct offspring of the scientific management epoch. Scholars such as Follett (1924), Mayo (1933), and Lewin, Lipitt, and White (1939) contributed significantly to the human relations movement. The proponents of the behavioral science movement highlighted the significance of the interactions between the institutional dimension and human element to productivity growth.

They also argued that the ongoing symbiotic relationships between institutions and human beings impact behavior and the degree to which organizational goals and objectives can be achieved. The key scholars of this paradigm include Barnard (1938), Maslow (1954), Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959), McGregor (1960), Trist (1963), Scott (1970), and Kempton (1995).

As is obvious from the definition of HRs administration, it is "important to recognize that everyone involved in the HRs function impacts greatly the performance of employees" (Senge

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et al. 2007). As such, it is imperative that any purposed plan aimed at the maximization of the HRs function and its associated administrative practices must do everything possible to create an environment that is conducive for optimal employee performance. The plan must focus on how to improve the quality of the climate within which people function in their employment. Unfortunately the growing interest in institutional development as is evident in the creation of regulations and policies may not necessarily foster the maximization of employee effectiveness on the job. Though the establishment of the law may temporarily provide sufficient incentives and motivations for employers and employees to be on their guard, it will not lead to the development of the positive qualities of the human factor in the long term. Any uncompromising belief in the power of HRs law to foster effective human factor development will lead to disastrous results. Historical evidence and real life cases have confirmed the conclusion that the legal solution has not worked well and will never do so.

## **Human Resource Laws and Organizational Behavior**

In fact, since law is usually made for the lawless, the legal solution will be more effective in environments within which the positive qualities of the human factor are well developed. Similarly, in an environment where the positive qualities of the human factor exist, there will be no need for too many laws in the first place. Today we are somehow stuck with the legal solution. Until we are successful in our human factor engineering programs, this will be our combined plight for centuries to come unless we become more open to human factor-based transformational development education programs.

Getzels and Guba (1957) came closest to understanding that institutional and personal factors (i.e., personality) exert extraordinarily great impact on human attitudes, behaviors, and actions. Unfortunately, Getzels and Guba failed to recognize that the quality of institutional factors is a direct reflection of the quality of personal factors. If we are to recognize that the efficiency of social systems and any other institutionalized structures is only as great as the quality of the human factor of the people who design and operate them, we will be better-positioned to achieve greater results with the HRs and its administrative practices rather than to be locked up in the false and foolhardy paradigmatic mode of thinking that institutions, organizations, and systems are sine qua non to the optimal performance of HRs. The truth is that they are not.

Truly, observed human behavior as is evident in attitudes and actions is representative of the quality of the human factor rather than the existing institutions, organization, and systems. However, when behavior is temporarily faked, it does not necessarily reflect the individual's human factor quality. Thus, while improvements in the quality of the human factor are tantamount to enhanced institutional and organizational efficiency in the long-term, transformations in institutions, organizations, and systems will not necessarily lead to improved human performance in the absence of the positive qualities of the human factor. Though such institutional changes may produce some temporal relief in the short-term, these gains will fizzle away in the long-term as a result of excessive human factor decay.

Maximizing the human potential of faculty, staff, and students of the school system will never happen outside human factor engineering. In addition to this conclusion, the view of Getzels and Guba (1957, p. 430) that the integration of institutional and individual demands to achieve organizational productivity is misleading. The gross miss-applications made of human motivational theories during the past and current decades have misled lawmakers and HRs

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administrators to focus on the wrong solutions—the legal authority as Weber (1910) suggested (See also Barnard, 1938; Skinner, 1938, 1953, and 1969; Maslow, 1954; Brayfield and Crockett, 1955; Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959; McGregor, 1960; Vroom, 1964; Alderfer, 1972; and Webb and Norton, 2003). We must move away from this misleading perspective and frail solution it breeds and mandates.

## **Human Resource Administration**

To bring positive and long-term transformation into the school environment, HRs administrators need to only comprehend human behavior through and through and also be willing to devise effective and efficient techniques to be used to improve the quality of the human factor.

In comprehending culpability of enterprise demeanor, the beginning issue remains the authority features that are in the domain of individual mind-set and beliefs. These are the deep seated individual features that change and develop only gradually over time.

Management abilities stand in compare to authority features in that they can be educated and evolved over the short term. They comprise specific aspects of administration perform for example stakeholder dialogue and building partnerships.

The reflexive natural forces recognized through this study comprise a combination of authority features and administration skills. They can be described as the key competencies needed to incorporate communal and environmental concerns into centre enterprise conclusion making. They comprise:

- Systemic thinking
- Embracing diversity and organizing risk
- Balancing international and localized perspectives
- Meaningful dialogue and evolving a new language
- Emotional awareness.

The development of "high potentials" to competently conquer the present authority when their time arrives to go out their places is renowned as succession planning. This kind of authority development generally needs the comprehensive move of an one-by-one between departments. In numerous multinationals, it generally needs worldwide move and know-how to construct a future leader. Succession designing needs a pointed aim on organization's future and dream, in alignment to align authority development with the future the firm aspires to create. Thus successive authority development is founded not only on information and annals but furthermore on a dream. For such a design to be thriving, a screening of future authority should be founded not only on "what we understand and have" but furthermore on "what we aspire to become". Persons engaged in succession designing should be present authority comprising the dream and HR bosses having to convert it all into a program. Three critical proportions should be considered: 1. Skills and information 2. Role insight and stage of acceptance of premier function 3. Self-efficacy (Albert Bandura). These three proportions should be a cornerstone of

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any authority succession program (Webb and Norton, 2003).

Without effective human factor engineering programs, it is not possible to achieve and sustain the optimal human potential in the long-term. As noted earlier, though some short term results may be achieved through institutional changes, such changes will never be sustained in the long term. For many centuries humanity has desired to create workable solutions to its pertinent SEPE, religious, family, legal, and technological problems. These attempts have carried the human race in many dangerous directions. The search still continues nonstop today in the wrong directions. From the human factor perspective, therefore, it is arguable that HRs administrators who focus essentially on the institutional dimension to the total neglect of the human dimension will fail in the long-term. This result is what has been proven through many years of empirical evidence from our reliance on legal developments in the HRs arena.

While the satisfaction of individual motives does not necessarily guarantee the attainment of optimal organizational capacity in terms of productivity, the development of the positive qualities of the human factor will. Unfortunately, HRs administrators and lawmakers have ignored the HF model because they prefer the applications of quick fix methods and problem accommodation measures. In their attempt to achieve instant results, they jeopardize the long-term future of everyone involved in personal development, institutional improvement, the founding of the organization, and nation building.