



Knowledge of Organizational Behaviour and Enhancement of Corporate Performance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to do a critical examination of the knowledge of organizational behaviour and how its application could enhance corporate performance in Nigeria. It is found, among other things, that all the theories of organizations are based on a philosophy of science and on a Theory of Society. These philosophies of Science diverge on the answer of Ontology, Epistemology, human nature and methodology. It was recommended, among other things, that the individual, the group, the form of inexplicable dynamics, the shape the main organization. Reality different modes of thoughts have been advanced by a variety of thinkers. Models of organizational behaviour are pivotal to the employer's ability to intensely understand the employees for organizational goal attainment. The individual, the group, the formal organization and the environment are unexcitable dynamics that shape the organizational behaviour for these components, even with their distinct identities, interact in a synergic manner to bring about the concept of organizational behaviour.

Keywords: organizational behaviour, corporate performance, goal attainment and

INTRODUCTION

An intimate understanding of the concept of organizational behaviour is indispensable towards exploring the nature of people working in an organization, and the way in which to harness their efforts towards achieving organizational goals. However, it would seem a misnomer to say organization behaves. Fallacies of reification – giving human attributes to non – human objects, tend to be committed. Yet, an organization is made up of people, who constitute building blocks, giving it life and essence. The sum

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of the desirable behaviour of individuals within the organization which facilitates the achievement of organizational goals constitutes the basic theme of organizational behaviour. In any case, to understand organizations, it is necessary to deal with the meta theories and philosophies that provide a background for the study of organizations. Burriel and Morgans advanced the proposition that all approaches to the study of society are located in the frame of reference of one kind or another. Different theorist tend to reflect different perspectives, issues and problems that are worthy of study and generally based upon a whole set of assumption which reflect a particular view of the nature of the subject under investigation.

Evidently, all the theories of organization are based on a philosophy of science and a theory of society. These philosophies of science diverge on the answer they provide to a number of questions. The questions related basically to four different issues.

- Questions of Ontology
- Questions of Epistemology
- Questions of Human Nature
- Questions of Methodology

Ontological Questions: deals with the very essence of nature of the subject or object under investigation. For example, whether reality exists outside an individual in the world out there or on the other hand, within the individual and determined by the consciousness of the individual. Opinions diverge among scholars as to this question.

Epistemology Questions: deals with the issues of how truth, knowledge can be validated. In what form does the individual's knowledge exist? How does he know what he knows is true? Knowledge is validated on the individual's consciousness not on hard data. Again, views on how knowledge can be validated diverge.

Questions on Human Nature: this view relates to what determines human nature. Some thinkers believe that the individual is determined by the environment, that is, the nature of human's environment determines what man can be. Other thinkers hold that man determines the environment. This latter view is associated with voluntarism as opposed to the earlier view which is based on determination.

Methodology Questions: for social scientists reflect answers provided to the first three questions, and at the end there are two basic positions: some philosophers believe that the methodology of social sciences must approximate that of the natural sciences, while other believe that the universal laws applicable to natural sciences are not freely permissible in a strictly social science setting. A thorough understanding of the foregoing issue will enlarge our understanding of organizational behaviour. Thus the role and expectations of the individual, the group, the organization and the

environment vis-a-vis the attainment of organizational goals is understood and applied towards enhancing corporate performance.

A Paradigm Approach To Understanding Organizations

In order to clearly understand the organizational phenomena or reality different modes of thoughts have been advanced by a variety of thinkers. We shall briefly examine these modes of thoughts so as to enlarge our perception and understanding of the concept of organizational behaviour. Therefore, its application of corporate performance. These modes of thought are broadly categorized into:

- The Rational Paradigm on organization
 - The Systems Paradigm on organization
 - The Political Paradigm on organization
 - The Radical Paradigm on organization; and
- Following Thomas Kahn's definitions, a paradigm is:

- (a) A "scientific achievement" that is sufficiently unprecedented as to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing models of scientific activities and is at the same time sufficiently open-ended as to have all sorts of problems for a re-defined group of practitioners to resolve.
- (b) Some accepted example of actual scientific practice examples which includes law, theory, application and instrumentation together and provides a model for which springs coherent tradition of scientific research. The concrete scientific achievement as a locus of professional commitment is prior to the various concepts, laws, theories and points of views that may be abstracted from it.

THE RATIONAL PARADIGM

The rational paradigm describes what organizations are, how they should be studied, and also, purpose that the organization should serve. The major contributors to the mode of thought include Bernard (1973, Taylor, Webber, 1974 and Iyayi, 1998).

Their basic assumptions include:

1. Organizations are based on consensus. They are a voluntary association of individuals who come together of their own free will. That people come together into organizations because left alone, they are incapable of achieving their goals.
2. Organizations are rational. This rationality implies that decisions with the organization are based on objective criteria as well as rationality in terms of decision making behaviour is idealism in a bureaucratic form of organization.

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3. Conflict does not and cannot occur in the organizations.
4. Scientific methods approximating to those of natural sciences should be used in studying organizations.

CRITICISMS

- a. things that are external to the organization are not considered. This is unrealistic because the external government exerts a great deal of influence on the internal organization.
- b. they do not indicate how individuals come together to form organizations in the first instance.
- c. relation to question of rationality. Its assumption of rational organizations is faulty. If organizations are so rational, what explains the various acts that demonstrate non-rational acts within the organization?

THE SYSTEM PARADIGM

The system paradigm is located firmly within the outer side of the debate between change and order. It is concerned with the maintenance of the status quo, and assumes that, systems have needs and systems to the action of satisfy these needs. For example, the needs for survival and attainment of goals are quite basic to the nature of organizations. The major contributors to this approach include Katz and Kahn (1965), and Parson (1951). The views can further be summarized as follows:-

- Reality is not only knowledge but it exists as an external facility outside the individuals.
- Theory can be apprehended using the method of natural sciences
- The basic factors in the explanation of behaviour within organizations reside in the environment of the organization.
- The organization is an open-system made up of parts of sub-systems which are interdependent.
- Every organization is characterised by what is called permeable boundaries.

These processes are then introduced for explaining what happens in organizations to include:

- a. Input
- b. Throughputs
- c. Outputs

The input relate to things which came into the organization which are then converted through the process of throughput to the output. The environment is further held to determine the input and outputs.

Other concepts used to explain the systems paradigm include:

- a. the concept of dynamic homeostasis. This holds that the system maintains a balance irrespective of changing environment.

- b. entropy and negative entropy. This indicates the tendency for organization to disintegrate while negative entropy deals with how organizations are able to regain their health.
- c. differentiation and integration. Tendency for the parts to be further subdivided to allow for growth and integration.
- d. equifinality multi-means of achieving the same and are available.
- e. system evolution indicates that systems grow and evolve from simple to complex forms.
- f. contingencies. Indicates different actions need to be taken in reaction to difficult segments of the environment.
- g. negative feedback
- h. requisite variety, etc.

Limitations

- 1. The idea that organizations are given system with permeable boundaries or indeterminate creates the problem of indeterminacy. That is, it is difficult to locate the boundaries of organizations within the systems' framework.
- 2. The idea that organizations have needs and take action to fulfill these needs amount to giving non-human objects human attributes. A fallacy of "reification".
- 3. since organizations may never adhere to a common idea of a logical consensus that prevails in the construction of organizations as system fails.
- 4. It suggestion that conflict arise as a result of the parts to adjust to each other is inconsistent with reality. In reality, conflicts arise because of differences in interest and contributions between the people who make up the organization.

THE POLITICAL PARADIGM

This view holds organizations as characterised by lack of co-incidence of interest as individuals are guided by their interest. Thus, conflict result as an inevitable feature of the organization. In Garrick Morgan asserted that in constraint to the view that organizations are integrated rational enterprises pursuing a common goal; the political paradigm encourages us to see organization a lose network of people with divergent interest who gather together for the purpose of expedience. This position is further supported by the views of Inyang, (2001) in opining that: let us view the organization as a coalition. It is a coalition of individuals some of them into sub-coalitions.

The views of this mode of thought can be summarised viz:

- Organizations are made up of coalitions organized into sub-coalition.
- As coalitions, individuals are characterised by a divergence of interest.
- Conflicts necessarily arise as a result of the divergence of interest.

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- These conflicts are resolved through processes of bargaining, lobbying, side payments etc.

THE RADICAL PARADIGM

The radical paradigm insists that all other statements are ideological constructions whose main interest is to opaque for some organizational members the reality of organizational life. Masking that reality in systems rational or political jargons only enables the owners to continue with the structure of the organization.

Janet Wolfe and general Webber theory.

The high points of their contributions can be captured viz:

- That previous construction of the organization as either system, rational or political phenomenon is historical in the sense that it avoids dealing with the relevance of history in covering the nature of the phenomenon under investigation.
- That organization is structures e.g. domination characterised by two distinct classes: owner (or owning) class and non-owner (or non-owning) class.
- That organization is constructed by the owner class in its own image and likeness. Therefore, the idea that individuals voluntarily join the organization is very far from the truth because the organization is given to the individual as an “external facility” which the individual must live.
- Organizations therefore, are built on conflict because they are established on the principle of one class being sub-ordinate to the other.
- Any conception of the organization that suggests a common ideology or that does question the issue of organizational goals is in itself ideological.
- Rules and regulations are made so that the owner class will have control.
- The basis of the organization is the labour power: the capacity for labour of the individual who collectively comprise the creativity of the organization.

Indeed, Karl Marx’s writing that “men make history but they do not make it by themselves but under the circumstances chosen and transmitted from the past” fits the foregoing frame of reference. Having explored the concept of organizations, it is pertinent that we examine the different models the attempts to explain organizational behaviour.

MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Models of organizational behaviour are pivotal to the employer’s ability to intensely understand the employees for organizational goal attainment. The models selected for discussion are based on Keith Davis conceptualization in

which he identified four models of organizational behaviour viz: “autocratic”, “custodial”, “supportive” and “collegial”. Each of the models is briefly discussed hereunder:

(A) Autocratic Model

This model derives its essence from the scientific management theory of Frederick Taylor. It is based on power and authority because as McGregor’s theory X assumes, people hate work and to be corrected by management into sublime obedience. The employee here is strictly dependent on the boss who has to be task-oriented in his leadership style. Employee’s needs are only met at the subsistence level leaving out other needs like belongingness, esteem and self actualization. Further cooperation is forced and usually minimal.

(B) Custodial Model

The model focuses on the use of economic resources and security. Its posture is rather paternistic, according with McGregor’s theory X, motivational climate is intrinsic, and the orientation of employees is that of passive cooperation. The leadership is much less of task-orientation and averages in the area of employees’ welfare. Thus, the employee is particularly psychologically pre-occupied with his or her security and benefit and less with performance.

(C) The Supportive Model

Likert (1961) summarises the principle of supportive model thus: that the leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and all relationships with the organization, each member will in the light of his background, values and expectations, view the experience as supportive one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance.

The manager here is more interested in enhancing the psychological well-being of his subordinates rather than relying solely on economic incentives as the only motivators. The managerial style is participative and consistent with McGregor’s theory Y view on individuals as being hardworking, trustworthy and capable of self direction. Thus, a supportive manager is one who strives to get workers to work smarter, rather than harder.

(D) The Collegial Model

This model depends on the building of team-spirit at work and partnership among employees. The orientation of employees is one of responsibility and dependability consistent with McGregor’s theory Y view. Employees’ responses are characterised by eagerness, enthusiasm, commitment and

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discipline motivation is purely intrinsic as self-actualization becomes the target of each employee.

No coercion or threatening is employed and decision making is participatory. All become involved as partners in the pursuit of the organizational objectives, and the social, esteem and self-actualization needs of the workers are maximised.

Therefore, we can observe in this model the culmination of the drive towards a wider distribution of power, greater concern for intrinsic motivation, a very positive attitude towards people, and an overriding concern for both individual's needs and those of the organization, particularly its need for effectiveness and efficiency (Davis 1977:449).

HOW KNOWLEDGE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR CAN ENHANCE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

This section deals purely with the usefulness and applicability of the knowledge of organizational behaviour to enhance performance in Nigeria. In pursuit of this task, the many interrelated levels of influence or organizational behaviour would be identified and briefly adumbrated upon. Further, the exact usefulness of organizational behaviour to corporate performance in general and the Nigerian organizations in particular is itemised.

The basic level of influence in organisational behaviour analysis includes:

- The individual
- The group
- The organization, and
- The environment

THE INDIVIDUAL

The focus is to understand the interrelationships between psychological factors and work roles so as to gain a complete picture of organizational behaviour.

Individual's personality characteristics which he brings to the work place are studied vis-a-vis the organisational factors that affects individual's attitudes, values, perception, learning, motivation and job satisfaction. Given incompatibility in individual's and organizational needs, conflicts may result. Thus, management has a responsibility to create the right environment to enhance individual need satisfaction and organizational goal attainment.

The Group

Both formal and informal groups are studied in terms of groups' structure, process, development, and cohesion. The group personality is called "syntality". Groups are facts of organizational life with distinct characteristics from that of the sum of personal attribute making up the group.

Thus, knowledge of group dynamics is indispensable to the understanding of organizational behaviour.

The Formal Organization

Formal organization is which the individual and the group functions has its distinct characteristics. The understanding of these characteristics is necessary for achievement of an effective level of operation. Characteristics such as structure, organizational climate, technology, environment, decision making etc are unique to the organization. Organizations also have permeable walls and easily influenced by the environment in which they operate. This in turn influences the internal operations of the firm and the employees. Organizations also affect the individual and then in turn affect the organization. This needs be understood within the context of organizational behaviour.

The Environment

The organization as a unit of analysis functions as part of the large external environment of which is part. The environment affects the organization through processes like technological and scientific development, economic activities, socio – cultural influences and government (political) actions.

The environment induces change which understood the need to study the organization historically and the processes by which organization attempts to adapt to the external demands placed on it.

The points following can be adopted as presenting ways in which knowledge of organizational behaviour can enhance corporate performance in Nigeria:

1. it would help managers to learn about and abnormal ranges of behaviour with respect to subordinates in the organization.
2. it provides insights into what causes behaviour why particular antecedents cause behaviour? Which antecedents of behaviour can be controlled directly and which are beyond control.
3. it would help the managers to predict human behaviour in the organization by drawing a clear distinction individual and group behaviour. Thus, a more refined workable set of assumptions which are directly relevant to the manager's interaction.
4. the study and understanding of human behaviour helps the manager make useful predictions in organizational setting which would enhance effectiveness and efficiency.
5. organizational behaviour enables the manager know the factors that enhance the job performance.
6. organizational behaviour help management to determine the effectiveness of policies, procedures or strategies and methods adopted.
7. knowledge of organizational behaviour enables management to discern what motivates to work harder and attain their optimum results.

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8. management would be able to satisfy the needs, wants, desires or objectives of members of the organization for improved work performance with knowledge of organizational behaviour.
 9. Knowledge of organizational behaviour would bring about increased productivity and industrial harmony.
 10. Knowledge of organizational behaviour would facilitate effective communication system with a good feedback mechanism in organization.
- In fact, the benefits of organizational behaviour knowledge to corporate performance in Nigeria are almost inexhaustible.

CONCLUSION

The individual, the group, the formal organization and the environment are unexcitable dynamics that shape the organizational behaviour for these components, even with their distinct identities, interact in a synergic manner to bring about concept of organizational behaviour.

Now, Nigeria Corporate not being too distinct from other bureaucratic organizations in other parts of the world stands to gain immensely in terms of efficiency and effectiveness with knowledge of organizational behaviour. The management would better analyse, predict and manage the various dynamics of the organizational life.

This way goal congruency is achieved between the employees and the organization which guarantees higher productivity for the organization and increased satisfaction/happiness for the workers.

The benefits then derived from the application of the knowledge of organizational behaviour to enhance Corporate performance cannot be overemphasised.

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