

Fundamentals and Practices in Organization Development

In Part I of this handbook, a framework of organizational change and development is presented. In this framework, the history and development of theories on organizational change and development are described, the implications of these theories are discussed, and a critical overview is given of widely used methods and tools. Helpful insights are given for choosing change strategies and intervention methods in specific situations and organizational contexts.

In Chapter 1, Thomas Cummings describes the roots of Organization Development (OD). OD is an evolving field of applied social science with an increasing diversity of concepts and applications. In more than 50 years, OD has evolved a complex and diverse body of knowledge. This expertise derives mainly from reflections by practitioners and action research. The enormous growth of new approaches and methods has broadened the scope of organization change and development. OD can be defined as a systems-wide process of applying behavioural-science knowledge to the planned change and development of policies, business strategies, design components, and processes that enable organizations to be effective. OD treats change as a process, not a discrete event. It involves an ongoing series of diagnostic, action-planning, implementation, and evaluation actions. It rests on a core set of psychological concepts that guide how it is conceptualized and applied. The focus of OD has expanded beyond social processes that occur mainly between individuals and between groups to include strategies and design components of the total organization. It draws on a variety of disciplines and concepts, including social processes, work designs, human relations, structuring of organizations and work processes, relations between organization and environment, and organization learning. The application of OD closely follows its historical roots and psychological foundations. According to Cummings, and many other scholars, the processes and activities used to initiate and carry out organizational change are deeply embedded in values of openness, trust, and collaboration among organization members; they are grounded in the belief that members should be actively involved in change. Action research and action learning are helpful because they serve as methods for action and change, and also produce new knowledge about organizations and change.

The implications of the theoretical and historical roots of OD are elaborated by Merrelyn Emery in Chapter 2. The choice of a theoretical framework has momentous implications for the management of change, particularly the psychological aspects of it, as nothing less than the very definition of a human being and human behaviour is at stake. Conceptual frameworks and assumption of human behaviour underlie the choice of methods, tools, and practices. In this chapter, Emery suggests examining the systems of ideas and the assumptions which lie behind change strategies and intervention methods, before applying them in practice. She elaborates on diagnosing organizational problems, with respect to human behaviour, human motivation, leadership, communication, organization design, relationships in interactions, and the strategy process. To redesign and change organizations effectively and with humility, change strategies and intervention methods must be carefully considered. Changing organizations in an unpredictable environment requires active adaptive change strategies, which are not top-down

or expert-driven. From Emery's epistemological point of view, learning is essential to effective and sustainable change. For sustainable systematic change, all levels and functional areas must be involved in the same sort of processes, and everybody must learn what is involved in the change, conceptually, as well as methodologically. This chapter concludes with a searching description of action research and action learning. Action research and action learning could be enablers of sustainable change and learning in organizations.

In Chapter 3, Morten Levin conceptualizes organizational developmental processes. He presents strategies for managing participative change processes, and describes several intervention methods to effect sustainable change in organizations. Special attention is given to the role of change agents and professional outsiders. Participation is understood as the core value in OD. The driving force in participative change processes is experimentation and learning. From the core value of participation, local knowledge is utilized during change and implementation. The fundamental choice of participation generates new local insights and shared understanding through collective reflection and learning during the change process. In OD the change process is conceptualized as a continuous cycle of problem identification, experimentation, reflecting, and learning. External facilitators may participate in these change processes. In Levin's opinion, these facilitators play a role in promoting change that will increase the ability of members of the organization to enhance the learning abilities of the organization and its members. In fact, the outside facilitator must integrate with the insiders in a joint reflection and learning process. The phase of problem identification is obviously most difficult because insiders and outsiders do not know each other, and their world-views and values are probably very different, and there is no basis for mutual understanding, while open dialogue may not be developed. In this phase, it is crucial to find a common point of departure that is meaningful for all participants. Experimenting, reflecting, and learning could be initiated and stimulated through several change strategies and intervention methods. Attention is given to search conferences, dialoguing conferences, mutual gains bargaining, conventional meetings, and task forces. Choosing a suitable arena for collective reflection is crucial in OD. In this arena, problem-owners and outside facilitators share reflection and learning opportunities and give shape to transformative activities.

In the reflective chapter of this Part of the handbook, the effectiveness of change strategies and intervention methods is questioned. In Chapter 4, Marc Buelens and Geert Devos reflect on the effectiveness of change efforts, and underline the importance of understanding the context of a change process and deliberately choosing the most appropriate change strategy depending on this context. Change strategies are seen as the overall approach of the change process, and a pattern in a stream of decisions and activities, reflecting consistency of behaviour over time. These authors steer clear of general change theories that can be applied to all change efforts. The internal and external environments of organizations can be so different that a clear understanding of the specific situation is essential when choosing an appropriate change strategy. They discuss the central value of participation in OD. Although participation can be crucial in some change efforts, it could impede change in other environments. The change environment is described in terms of two general dimensions: power distance and uncertainty. In a context with high power distance and low uncertainty, a change strategy based on action planning seems most appropriate, with a top-down approach, strong leadership, and participation in the implementation process. Situations of low power distance demand the negotiation approach. In contexts of high uncertainty, a change strategy of information registration and experimentation is needed. Because organizational change is complex and diverse, there are many reasons for failure. Specific change failures are discussed in traditional environments, high-pressure environments, professional environments, and experimental environments. This chapter concludes with the proposition that effective integration of different change strategies adapted to the change environment will determine the success of change efforts.

Organization Development and Change

Foundations and Applications

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Organization development (OD) applies behavioral-science knowledge and practices to help organizations change to achieve greater effectiveness. It seeks to improve how organizations relate to their external environments and function internally to attain high performance and high quality of work life. OD emphasizes change in organizations that is planned and implemented deliberately. It is both an applied field of social practice and a domain of scientific inquiry. Practitioners, such as managers, staff experts, and consultants, apply relevant knowledge and methods to organization change processes, while researchers study those processes to derive new knowledge that can subsequently be applied elsewhere. In practice, this distinction between application and knowledge generation is not straightforward as OD practitioners and researchers often work closely together to jointly apply knowledge and learn from those experiences (Lawler et al., 1985). Thus, OD is an 'action science' where knowledge is developed in the context of applying it and learning from the consequences (Argyris et al., 1985).

This chapter provides an overview of the theory and research underlying OD. First, OD is defined in the context of recent changes and developments in the field. Then, a brief history of OD is provided to show how the field has evolved. Next, the psychological foundations of OD are discussed, and, finally, how OD is applied in organizations is presented.

DEFINITION OF OD

OD encompasses a diversity of concepts and methods for changing organizations. Although several definitions of OD have been presented (Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; French, 1969; Beer, 1980; Burke, 1982), the enormous growth of new approaches and techniques has blurred the boundaries of the field and made it increasingly difficult to describe. The following definition seeks to clarify emerging aspects of OD while drawing on previous definitions of the field: *organization development is a system-wide process of applying behavioral-science knowledge to the planned change and development of the strategies, design components, and processes that enable organizations to be effective.*

OD addresses an entire system, such as a team, department, or total organization. It also deals with relationships between a system and its environment as well as among the different features that comprise a system's design. This system-wide application follows from an open-systems approach to organizations (Thompson, 1967; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Cummings, 1980). Organizations are viewed as open systems with multiple levels and interrelated parts that exist in the context of a larger

environment. Thus, change at one level of the organization—individual member, work team, or total organization—can affect other levels. Change in one part or design feature of the organization, such as a reward system, work design, or organization structure, can require supporting changes in other parts. Change in the organization's environment can necessitate change within the organization, and so on.

OD treats change as a process, not a discrete event or end state. Organization change involves an ongoing series of diagnostic, action planning, implementation, and evaluation actions. These activities overlap and feed back on each other, so that initial diagnosis informs action planning and implementation while evaluation guides subsequent diagnosis and modification of the changes. Consequently, this process is highly adaptive and changes as new information is encountered and new events are experienced.

Like most applied sciences, OD draws on a variety of disciplines and concepts to guide practice and research. Because organizations are complex social systems, OD uses ideas from several behavioral sciences, including anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. At the micro-level of application, OD relies on knowledge about individuals and their relationships within organizations. This includes concepts having to do with motivation, communication, conflict, group dynamics, leadership, and work design. At the macro-level, OD applies knowledge of how organizations develop strategies, divide and coordinate labor, and relate to external forces. This includes ideas about corporate strategy, organization design, international relations, and strategic alliances. OD applies this broad knowledge base to diagnose how organizations function and to develop interventions for improving them. These applications, in turn, can result in new knowledge about processes of organization change and effects of particular interventions. Moreover, OD practice can produce 'generative' knowledge by creating entirely new forms of organizing and changing that current knowledge does not yet address or anticipate (Gergen, 1994).

OD involves both planned change and development of the organization itself (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Planned change includes processes and techniques for helping organizations implement particular changes. It is highly pragmatic and focuses on implementing changes that promote organization effectiveness. Development is concerned with improving organizations' capacity for problem-solving and improvement. The more developed an organization, the more able it is to solve its own problems and to implement change and improve itself. Thus, in addition to helping organizations implement specific changes (planned change), OD is concerned with transferring skills and knowledge to organizations so they are more able to manage change in the future (development). Consistent with this developmental perspective, OD places a strong value on human potential, participation in the workplace, and interpersonal relationships based on openness and trust.

OD focuses on changing and improving three key aspects of organizations: strategies, design components, and processes. Strategies have to do with how organizations use their resources to gain competitive advantage. This includes choices about the functions an organization will perform, the products or services it will provide, and the markets and customers it will serve. Design components include decisions about organization structure, work design, measurement systems, and human resources practices. Processes have to do with how organizations go about doing things and include how members relate to each other and their tasks and how different functions, such as communication and decision-making, are performed. OD seeks to bring congruence or fit among strategies, design components, and processes so they mutually guide and reinforce organizational behavior in a strategic direction.

Finally, OD focuses on improving organization effectiveness. This includes helping organizations achieve high performance, good quality of work life, and capacity for continued problem-solving and improvement. Effective organizations perform at high levels while meeting the needs of various stakeholders, including owners, customers, employees, suppliers, and government regulators. They have a high quality of work life that enables them to attract and retain talented members.

Effective organizations are able to solve their own problems while continually improving and renewing themselves.

HISTORY OF OD

In a little over 50 years, OD has evolved a complex and diverse body of knowledge and practice. Because this expertise derives mainly from helping organizations change and improve themselves, the history of OD can be understood in terms of the kinds of changes that organizations have implemented over this time period. These include changes aimed at: (1) social processes; (2) work designs; (3) human resources; and (4) organization structures. Although these changes are interrelated, each represents a distinct background in the growth of OD.

SOCIAL PROCESSES

The earliest applications of OD involved helping organizations improve social processes including relationships among members, communication, group decision-making, and leadership. These process changes started in the early 1950s and were largely in response to emerging social problems that organizations experienced as they became larger and more bureaucratic. During the first half of the twentieth century, organizations grew increasingly large with numerous departments, levels of management, and rules and procedures. Management was largely responsible for commanding and controlling the enterprise typically in an authoritarian or paternalistic manner. Over time, these organizational conditions generated a host of unintended social problems as members found it increasingly difficult to communicate both laterally and vertically, to resolve problems within and across groups, and to respond energetically to managerial directives.

OD's response to these social problems started in the late 1940s with the work of Kurt Lewin and his colleagues in laboratory training. It began with a training program for community leaders which included both cognitive learning about leadership as well as informal feedback about participant behavior (Bradford, 1967). Unexpectedly, the feedback aspect of the training was found to be a rich source of leadership expertise. This led to the development of laboratory training, commonly called a T-group, where a small, unstructured group of participants learn from their own interactions about group dynamics, leadership, interpersonal relations, and personal growth. T-groups expanded rapidly with the formation of the National Training Laboratories (part of the National Education Association) whose members increasingly applied these methods to helping organizations improve social processes (Argyris, 1964b; Marrow, 1967). In the 1950s, this included ground-breaking work by Douglas McGregor at Union Carbide, Herbert Shepard and Robert Blake at Esso Standard Oil, and McGregor and Richard Beckhard at General Mills (French, 1985). These early applications of T-group methods to business spawned the term 'organization development'. They led to an impressive array of interventions for improving social processes in organizations, such as team building (Patten, 1981; Dyer, 1987), process consultation (Schein, 1969, 1987, 1998), organization confrontation meeting (Beckhard, 1967), and, more recently, large-group interventions such as search conferences and open-space meetings (Bunker & Alban, 1997).

Early OD applications were also guided by work on action research and survey feedback. Action research started in the 1940s with applied studies by John Collier, Lewin and his colleagues, and William Whyte and Edith Hamilton (Collier, 1945; Lewin, 1946; Whyte & Hamilton, 1964). They showed that research could be used in the service of organization improvement if it was closely tied to action. Action research is highly collaborative, involving both OD practitioners and organization members; it is cyclical with initial research guiding action, and further research directing additional action, and so on. Action research has become a key process in applying OD to organizations, and will be discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter.

Survey feedback also started in the 1940s and has become a major component of most company-wide OD interventions. It involves systematically collecting survey data about the organization and feeding them back to members so they can discover sources of problems and devise relevant solutions. Based on the work of Rensis Likert, Floyd Mann, and their colleagues, survey feedback resulted in a variety of instruments for assessing member attitudes towards organizations (Seashore, 1987). It showed how feeding back that information to members can motivate and guide them to create meaningful change (Mann, 1962). This initial work in survey feedback also directed attention to how organizations were managed. It provided evidence that participative systems of management were more effective than traditional authoritative or benevolent systems (Likert, 1967). This encouraged the growth of participative management in organizations, which today has evolved into popular interventions for enhancing employee involvement or empowerment at the workplace (Lawler, 1986; Spreitzer, 1996).

WORK DESIGNS

This branch of OD history involves designing work to make it more motivating and fulfilling. Traditionally, work was designed to promote technical rationality, resulting in jobs that were highly specified, fragmented, and repetitive. In the 1960s, the benefits of such work designs came more and more under question. Employees complained that work was boring and meaningless; they felt alienated from their jobs and the organizations that employed them. Organizations experienced growing problems with absenteeism, turnover, quality, and productivity. These problems spawned widespread calls for government, labor, and business to work jointly to improve the quality of the work life of the employees.

OD sought remedies for these problems in new work designs that were more geared to employee needs and aspirations than to traditional designs. These interventions were based on the work of Eric Trist and his colleagues in socio-technical systems and of Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues in job enrichment (Herzberg et al., 1959; Trist et al., 1963). The socio-technical approach, which originated in Europe and Scandinavia in the 1950s, structured work to better integrate technology and people. It resulted in work designs that enhance both productivity and employee satisfaction. Socio-technical systems also showed that when tasks are highly interdependent and require significant decision-making, teams comprised of multi-skilled members who can make relevant decisions are the most effective work design (Cummings & Srivastva, 1977). Today, such self-managed work teams are the cornerstone of work design in many organizations.

Like socio-technical systems, job enrichment aimed to make work more productive and humanly rewarding. It approached work redesign from a motivational perspective, showing how traditional jobs could be enriched to make them more motivating and satisfying. This required expanding jobs both horizontally and vertically by providing a greater variety of tasks to perform and greater amounts of discretion and decision-making. It also involved giving more direct feedback of results to job holders. Early success with job enrichment at such prominent companies as AT&T led to rapid diffusion of this OD intervention to work redesign in business, government, and the military (Ford, 1969).

HUMAN RESOURCES

This background of OD involves integrating people into organizations so they join, remain, and produce at high levels. Concern for human resources has traditionally been associated with the personnel function in organizations. Starting in the 1970s, however, OD's interest in human resource practices grew rapidly. Many organizations faced serious global competition for the first time. They needed to produce at higher levels at lower costs. This placed heavy demands on human resources to achieve exceptional performance; however, organizations increasingly questioned whether their traditional human resource practices were up to the task. Answers to this question showed that many practices

were not performance driven, particularly the way organizations rewarded employees. Because people generally do those things for which they are rewarded, rewards can play a powerful role in promoting performance. Unfortunately, many of the reward systems in use at the time were not linked closely to performance; employees were typically paid for a particular job level, time at work, or seniority.

Based on the work of Edward Lawler and his colleagues, OD examined how rewards affect organization performance (Lawler, 1981, 2000); this led to interventions aimed at making rewards more contingent on performance. One method that has grown in popularity over the past two decades is called 'gain sharing'. It involves paying organization members a bonus based on measurable gains in performance over some baseline standard. Gain sharing typically covers all members of a particular business unit and includes only performance measures that members can control. To achieve gains in performance, members are given the freedom to innovate and to discover more effective ways of working. They are encouraged to work together because their personal rewards are based on the performance of the total business unit. Another reward system intervention that has achieved widespread application is 'skill-based pay'. Traditionally, organizations pay members for the jobs they perform. Skill-based pay rewards members for the number of different jobs they can perform. This encourages members to learn new skills and to broaden their expertise. It creates a highly skilled, flexible workforce that is essential to high performance in today's rapidly changing environments.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES

The most recent applications of OD involve structuring organizations so they are better aligned with their strategy and environment. Such large-scale change has become more prevalent in the past two decades as organizations have increasingly faced complex, rapidly changing environments that often demand radical changes in how they compete and design themselves (Mohrman et al., 1989). To help organizations make these transformations, OD has expanded its focus to the total organization and its competitive environment. Drawing on a variety of perspectives in corporate strategy (Miles & Snow, 1978; Porter, 1980; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Grant, 1998), OD has created interventions for assessing an organization's competitive situation and making relevant changes in strategy if necessary. This typically includes a so-called 'SWOT analysis' where the organization's strengths and weakness are compared to opportunities and threats in its competitive environment. Then, a strategy is created to build on the strengths and to take advantage of the opportunities, while accounting for the weaknesses and threats.

OD has also generated applications for designing the various features of an organization so they promote and reinforce strategy. Based on a growing literature in organization design (Galbraith, 1977; Nadler et al., 1992; Galbraith & Lawler, 1993), OD has created new structures that fit better to today's situations than traditional bureaucratic designs. These include: 'high-involvement organizations' that push decision-making, information and knowledge, and rewards downward to the lowest levels of the organization (Lawler, 1986); 'boundaryless organizations' that seek to eliminate unnecessary borders between hierarchical levels, functional departments, and suppliers and customers (Ashkenas et al., 1995); and 'virtual organizations' that focus on the organization's core competence while outsourcing most other functions to other organizations who do them better (Davidow & Malone, 1992). All these structures are extremely lean and flexible; they enable organizations to respond rapidly to changing conditions.

Consistent with these new structures, OD has applied recent work on organization learning and knowledge management to organization change (Senge, 1990; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). These interventions help organizations gain the capacity to continually learn from their actions and to make effective use of such knowledge. Such learning capability is essential if organizations are to continually change and renew themselves. It can provide strong competitive advantage in complex, changing environments (Teece, 1998).

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF OD

OD is an evolving field that draws on a diversity of theories. Its focus has expanded beyond social processes that occur mainly among individuals and within groups to include strategies and design components for the total organization. This evolution has added theoretical complexity to OD and made it increasingly difficult to define its conceptual boundaries and to develop a unified theory of changing and developing organizations. Despite this proliferation of knowledge, OD rests on a core set of psychological concepts that guide how it is conceptualized and applied. These psychological foundations have to do with: (1) the nature of human beings in organizations; (2) motivation that drives their behavior; (3) resistance of such behavior to change; and (4) groups as the focus of organization change.

NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS IN ORGANIZATIONS

All approaches to changing people and organizations include, either implicitly or explicitly, assumptions about the nature of human beings. These beliefs affect how people's behavior is explained, changed, and developed. OD draws heavily on humanistic psychology to understand behavior in organizations (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1972; Ellis, 1973). Often referred to as the 'third force' in psychology, humanistic psychology provides a more complex and positive view of human behavior than those offered by the other two dominant forces in the field: behaviorism which emphasizes environmental influences on behavior, and depth psychology which focuses on unconscious drives. Humanistic psychology calls attention to people's subjective experiences and the values, intentions, and perceptions that guide their choices about how to behave and interact with the environment. It proposes that people are inherently good and have a substantial capacity for self-determination, creativity, and psychological growth. Moreover, human beings are not only driven to gain things they lack, but also to seek opportunities to experience new things and to develop their full human potential. Although humanistic psychology has been criticized as more a value orientation than a rigorous science, there is growing evidence to support its views of human beings (Reason, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Wertz, 1995).

This positive view of human beings is deeply embedded in OD theory and practice. It guides how OD addresses a fundamental issue underlying all cooperative social action: How to integrate the personal interests and needs of individuals with the collective interests and needs of organizations? For OD, the answer lies in how well organizations enable members to develop towards psychological maturity which is essential if they are to achieve their full human potential (Argyris, 1962, 1964a). When organizations promote psychological maturity, members are likely to be self-controlling, to take responsibility for their actions, to have deeper, more stable interests, to take longer-term perspectives, and to be aware of how others see them. They are likely to expend psychological energy towards realizing their potential while meeting the challenges facing the organization. Thus, providing opportunities for members to behave maturely and to self-actualize benefits both the organization and its members. It integrates members' interests with those of the organization, providing mutual rewards for both.

Unfortunately, organizations are often structured and managed in ways that thwart members' psychological maturity and the positive behaviors that result from it. Pyramid or command-control structures, which have dominated organizations for much of the last century, seek to control and coordinate members through highly routine tasks, hierarchical lines of authority, centralized decision-making, and formal rules and procedures. Inherent in these structures are certain values and assumptions about organization members and how they should be managed (McGregor, 1960; Likert, 1961; Argyris, 1962, 1964a). Members are seen as lazy, self-centered, and resistant to change. Thus, management must actively motivate, direct, and control them. Such managerial practices make it almost axiomatic

that members will behave immaturely and expend minimal energy on behalf of organizations. Because members are treated as immature adults, they are likely to behave accordingly, becoming apathetic, short-sighted, and irresponsible.

Pyramid structures also include assumptions about human relationships in organizations (Argyris, 1962). Relationships among members are expected to focus on organization goals and to be rational, logical, and formal. Emotions and informal relations are considered extraneous and ineffective. Because of these assumptions, interpersonal competence tends to be relatively low in most organizations. Members are often self-centered and ignore how their behaviors affect others; they suppress or deny interpersonal problems and the feelings underlying them. This reduces information sharing, risk taking, and trust among members. It results in conflicts and rigidity that impede the problem-solving capacity of organizations.

Given the prevalence of pyramidal structures and the management practices and interpersonal problems associated with them, OD focuses on helping organizations create conditions that promote members' psychological maturity and interpersonal competence. These, in turn, contribute to organization effectiveness. This humanistic perspective is evident in the values that underlie OD and the normative interventions that derive from them (Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969). OD strongly values human development, democratic principles, and open inquiry. It seeks to develop organizations that encourage an open, problem-solving climate, trust, collaboration, and teamwork among members, and opportunities for members' self-control. OD interventions contribute to these ideals (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Human process interventions, such as process consultation, team building, and conflict resolution, increase members' interpersonal competence. Techno-structural interventions, such as job enrichment, self-managed teams, and employee involvement, enhance members' self-control. Human resource management interventions, such as performance management and career development, help members develop their full potential. Strategic interventions, such as culture change, organization transformation, and organization learning, help organizations change themselves from traditional pyramid structures to more organic forms that promote flexibility, innovation, and rapid response. The managerial values inherent in these new structures promote members' psychological maturity and interpersonal competence.

MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

A key aspect of organization effectiveness is how well organizations motivate members to perform at high levels. OD draws mainly on three psychological theories to help organizations understand and improve motivation: (1) need theory; (2) job characteristics model; and (3) expectancy theory. Consistent with OD's humanistic roots, these approaches explain motivation in terms of members' psychological states, expectations, and values. They provide insights into individual differences among members and the kinds of organizational conditions that motivate behavior.

Need theory

This approach explains motivation in terms of satisfying people's needs. It argues that motivation is energized and directed by unfulfilled needs. When a need is unsatisfied, it creates tension within people which, in turn, releases and directs energy toward satisfying the need. Although several need theories of motivation exist (McClelland, 1961; Alderfer, 1969), the one most closely associated with OD is based on the work of Maslow (1954), a pioneer of humanistic psychology. His model of motivation is based on a five-level hierarchy of human needs, starting at the bottom with physiological needs and progressing upward to safety, social needs, esteem, and self-actualization. It suggests that as each level of need becomes relatively satisfied, the next higher level of need emerges to energize and direct behavior, and so on up the hierarchy.

Although Maslow's need hierarchy has received limited empirical support, it is used widely in OD primarily because of its humanistic origins, intuitive appeal, and ease of understanding for organization members. When applied to organizations, the theory sensitizes managers to the full range of needs that can motivate members, particularly those needs at higher levels such as social needs, esteem, and self-actualization. It encourages them to consider more alternatives for motivating members than the traditional incentives of money and job security which mainly satisfy needs at the lower end of the hierarchy. This has led to a variety of OD interventions aimed at satisfying members' higher-level needs including job enrichment, self-managed teams, employee involvement, and career development. There is considerable evidence to suggest that when organizations provide opportunities for satisfying all levels of members' needs, they are more likely to attract and retain talented people who perform at high levels (Pfeffer, 1998).

Job characteristics model

This theory of motivation focuses on the jobs that members perform. It is based on the work of Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1980), and examines jobs in terms of their motivating potential. The theory proposes that jobs affect members' motivation through their impact on three psychological states: (1) experienced meaningfulness of work; (2) experienced responsibility for the work; and (3) knowledge of results. The more that jobs are designed to enhance these states, the more motivating they will be, especially for people with strong growth needs.

Hackman and Oldham's approach has considerable empirical support (Fried & Ferris, 1987); it is used in OD to assess jobs and to redesign them if necessary. In many organizations, jobs are traditionally designed to maximize efficiency and control; they are highly specified, routine, and repetitive. Because such jobs have little motivating potential, OD has applied the job characteristics model to enrich them along a variety of dimensions. Designing jobs with high levels of skill variety, task identity, and task significance increases members' experienced meaningfulness of work. Providing members with greater autonomy over work methods and scheduling enhances their felt responsibility for work outcomes. Designing jobs that provide members with direct and clear feedback about performance increases members' knowledge of the actual results of their work activities. Together, these enriched features provide a strong motivational base for how jobs are designed and performed.

Expectancy theory

This approach explains motivation in terms of choices that members make about how much effort they will expend on performing organizational tasks. Drawing on the work of Vroom and others (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968), expectancy theory proposes that decisions about work effort are based on certain beliefs or expectations that members hold about the likely consequences of their efforts. People are likely to exert high levels of effort when they believe that it will result in good performance, that good performance will be rewarded, and that those rewards are personally valued. Moreover, the linkages between these beliefs and values are multiplicative, so that if one is low, overall motivation will be low. For example, if members do not believe that their effort will result in good performance, then motivation will be low even if they believe that good performance will result in valued rewards. Or, if members do not believe that good performance will result in valued rewards, then motivation will be low even if they believe that their efforts will result in good performance. Thus, to be highly motivated, members must strongly believe that their efforts will result in valued rewards.

Expectancy theory has a strong research base (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996) and is increasingly used in OD to help organizations enhance member motivation. This is especially prevalent in reward system interventions that seek to obtain more motivational benefits from rewards by linking them more directly to members' performance and skill learning (Lawler, 1981, 2000). These variable or contingent reward practices, such as gain sharing and skill-based pay, help to strengthen members'

beliefs that their efforts will lead to valuable rewards. To the extent that members value money, these reward systems are likely to encourage members to put forth high amounts of effort to perform (or learn) organization tasks (or skills).

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

All approaches to change must address a key issue inherent in organizations: why they are so stable and resistant to change. Knowing how to change organizations starts from understanding the conditions that promote the status quo or no change. OD has discovered a long list of causes for resistance to change, such as structural inertia, work habits, fear of the unknown, powerful interests, and members' security needs. It has also identified a variety of forces that promote organization change, such as competitive pressures, performance problems, workforce changes, and new technologies. The work of Lewin and his colleagues provides the underlying framework for explaining resistance to change (Lewin, 1947, 1951; Coch & French, 1948; Marrow, 1969). It shows how forces for resistance and change combine to create a status quo and how to change it effectively.

According to this approach, organization change is directed at processes, not things. The targets of change, such as performance levels and work methods, are the result of ongoing social processes occurring in organizations. For example, the level of a team's performance is the product of a myriad of behaviors, decisions, and interactions occurring among team members over time. Forces in the situation that drive and restrain change influence those social processes. In the team example, new work technologies might push for change while team performance norms might resist it. When these opposing forces are roughly equal, targets of change and the social processes underlying them are relatively stable and resistant to change, a condition called 'quasi-stationary equilibrium'. This stability is not static but dynamic, like a river flowing in a particular direction at a certain velocity. Driving and restraining forces, like the banks of a river, shape how social processes evolve over time. They affect the degree those processes are stable and hence resistant to change.

To change organizations, driving and restraining forces that affect the change target must first be identified and their strength assessed. Then, depending on the results of this analysis, the strength of these opposing forces can either be increased or decreased to achieve desired changes. Increasing driving forces or decreasing restraining forces may result in the same degree of change. The secondary effects of these two change strategies are likely to be quite different, however. Organization changes that result from increases in driving forces are likely to be accompanied by relatively high levels of tension as restraining forces rise to push back against the changes. Such tension can lead to higher aggressiveness and emotionality, and lower levels of commitment to change. The more effective change strategy is to reduce restraining forces, and thus let driving forces promote change while facing less resistance. This low-pressure method results in greater acceptance of the changes and more positive reactions to them. In the team performance example described above, improvements in performance are likely to be more successful if team performance norms (restraining force) are modified first and then new technologies (driving force) are introduced.

GROUPS AS FOCUS OF CHANGE

Organization change involves, either directly or indirectly, changes in individual behavior. New structures, work methods, and performance goals, for example, all require adjustments in the way organization members behave. To change individual behavior, however, may require changes in the groups to which people belong. Drawing heavily on the field of group dynamics (Lewin, 1947; Cartwright & Zander, 1953, 1960), OD has long discovered that individual behavior is firmly grounded in groups. Whether groups emerge formally to perform organization tasks or informally to meet members' social needs, they can have powerful effects on members' behaviors, beliefs, and values. In organizations, for

example, groups can influence members' performance levels, task methods, and work relationships. They can exert pressure on members to conform to norms governing group behavior. This can make changing individual behavior extremely difficult, as members are likely to resist organization changes that run counter to group norms and expectations. To overcome such resistance may require changing the group itself, thus making it the focus of change.

Initially referred to as 'participative management', this group approach to organization change is used extensively in OD. It includes getting members directly involved in understanding the need for change, developing appropriate changes, and implementing them. When members perceive the need for change, pressure for change is likely to arise from within the group (Kirkpatrick, 1985). A key method for creating shared perceptions of the need for change is to engage members in analyzing their own situation. This can create ownership over the diagnosis and the conclusions drawn from it, therefore promoting a shared readiness for change among members (Burke, 1987). Similarly, member participation in developing organization changes can help to assure commitment to implementing them. When group members are involved in making decisions about what changes are most appropriate to their situation, their interests are likely to be taken into account in those changes. Consequently, members will be committed to subsequently implementing the changes because it is in their vested interest to do so (Cummings & Molloy, 1977). Moreover, such involvement can bring more diverse and local knowledge to decisions about change, thus improving their quality and practical relevance (Vroom & Jago, 1988).

APPLICATION OF OD

How OD is applied in organizations closely follows its historical roots and psychological foundations. The processes and activities used to initiate and carry out organization change are deeply embedded in values of openness, trust, and collaboration among organization members; they are grounded in beliefs that members should be treated maturely and actively involved in change. Based on these fundamentals, applications of OD have evolved to meet the emerging demands of organizations and their environments. As shown in the history section of this chapter, OD interventions have grown larger and more complex; they have become more strategic, involving a greater array of stakeholders and organization design components. These changes are reflected in how OD is carried out and practiced in organizations today. To understand this evolution of OD practice requires knowledge of three general approaches to change: (1) Lewin's three steps; (2) action research; and (3) action learning.

LEWIN'S THREE STEPS

This approach to organization change derives from the work of Lewin and his colleagues on how to overcome resistance to change and how to sustain change once it is made (Lewin, 1951). It starts from the premise that targets of change and the social processes underlying them are relatively stable when forces driving for change are roughly equal to forces resisting change. To change this status quo requires a three-step process: (1) 'unfreezing' the balance of forces that keep the change target stable; (2) 'moving' the change target to a new level or kind of behavior; and (3) 'refreezing' the balance of forces to reinforce the new behaviors and to keep them stable. This simple yet profound framework has guided OD practice for over half a century. It has led to numerous techniques for leading and managing change.

Unfreezing

This step underscores the need to assess the present situation before change is contemplated. Referred to as a 'force field analysis', this diagnosis examines the driving and restraining forces in the change

situation that maintain the status quo. It can reveal which forces are strongest (or weakest) and which are easiest (or hardest) to modify. Such information is essential for unfreezing the current situation and creating a readiness for change among organization members. For example, a force field analysis might discover that the key forces restraining change are members' lack of understanding about the need for change and strong group norms about task performance. Techniques to overcome these resistances, and thus to unfreeze the status quo, might include clearer and more direct communication about the rationale underlying the proposed changes and member participation in the change process itself.

Moving

This stage involves intervening in the situation to change it. OD includes a variety of interventions for improving organizations. These change programs address organization issues having to do with human processes, strategic choices, human resource management, and work designs and structures (Cummings & Worley, 2001). To implement these changes effectively, OD has devised methods for creating a compelling vision of the desired changes (Collins & Porras, 1994), developing political support for them (Greiner & Schein, 1988), and managing the transition from the current to the desired situation (Beckhard & Harris, 1987).

Refreezing

This final step involves making changes a permanent part of the organization's functioning. When this stage is ignored, organization changes rarely persist but regress to their previous stable state. Thus, refreezing calls for re-balancing the driving and restraining forces in the changed situation so it remains relatively stable. OD has discovered a variety of practices that can contribute to such permanence. Generally referred to as 'institutionalizing' change, these methods include: reinforcing organization changes by making rewards contingent on them; socializing existing members and newcomers into the beliefs, norms, and values underlying the changes; diffusing changes throughout the organization to provide a wider base of support for them; and sensing and calibrating the changes to detect deviations from desired changes and to take corrective actions (Goodman & Dean, 1982).

ACTION RESEARCH

This approach to organization change shows that research can be practical; it can serve as an instrument for action and change. Action research applies scientific methods to help organizations identify problems, discover their underlying causes, and implement appropriate changes. It can also produce new knowledge about organizations and change that can be applied elsewhere. In addition to its problem-solving focus, action research is highly collaborative, involving both OD practitioners and organization members in the research and action process. Such participation gains members' input and commitment to the changes, thus increasing the chances that they will be implemented. It can also result in higher quality, more situation-relevant changes. Although several variants of action research have been developed (Lippitt et al., 1958; Shani & Pasmore, 1985; Argyris & Schön, 1989), applications to OD generally involve the following cyclical activities: (1) preliminary data gathering and diagnosis; (2) action planning; (3) implementation; and (4) assessment. In practice, these activities result in an iterative process where initial research informs action, and additional research informs further action, and so on.

Preliminary data gathering and diagnosis

Action research typically starts with a pressing problem that organization members are motivated to resolve. Based on this presenting issue, preliminary data are gathered to determine whether the

problem has been correctly identified and to diagnose its underlying causes. This initial research is generally informed by diagnostic models that show what features of the organization to examine and what data to collect to discover the source of organizational problems. OD practitioners use a plethora of diagnostic models to assess various aspects of organizations, from members' individual motivation to relationships between the organization and other organizations in its environment (Lawler et al., 1980). They use a variety of methods to collect diagnostic data, from informal interviews with a few people to formal surveys of the total organization (Nadler, 1977). When these data are collected and analyzed appropriately, they provide valid information about causes of organization problems.

Action planning

Based on this preliminary research, participants develop action plans specifying what organization changes will be made and how they will be implemented. The choice and design of change interventions depend on a variety of factors having to do with the target of change and the change situation itself. In selecting a change target, participants can draw on a large diversity of OD interventions to improve various aspects and problems of organizations. Indeed, OD is known primarily for its interventions, such as team building, self-managed teams, and high-involvement organizations. The preliminary diagnosis guides which of those interventions are most relevant for the organization. Moreover, it helps participants choose interventions that are likely to succeed in their specific change situation. Researchers have identified key situational contingencies that can affect intervention success, such as individual differences among members and the nature of the organization's technology and competitive situation (Porras & Berg, 1978; Nicholas, 1982). Knowledge of these contingencies can help to assure that action plans fit well with the change situation.

Implementation

Implementing action plans involves making changes that move the organization towards its desired future. Such change does not occur instantly but requires a transition period during which members learn how to enact the changes and make them work. OD has identified activities and structures that can facilitate this transition phase (Beckhard & Harris, 1987). These include specifying the change tasks that need to occur, temporally ordering them, and monitoring their progress. It also involves identifying key stakeholders whose commitment is needed for change to occur and gaining their support. In cases where change is large scale and involves several features and levels of the organization, special structures for managing the change process may need to be created. These structures mobilize resources for change, coordinate the changes, and account for progress. Members who have both the power to make change happen and the respect of key stakeholders lead them.

Assessment

This final phase of action research involves gathering and analyzing data to determine the effects of the changes. Such information is used to decide whether the changes are having their intended results, and, if not, how they can be modified to be more effective. Assessment tends to occur at different stages of the change process both during implementation and after it is completed (Cummings & Worley, 2001). During implementation, evaluation provides timely feedback about whether the changes are being implemented as intended. Because organization change generally involves considerable learning and experimentation, such information is vital to members learning new behaviors and procedures needed to implement change. Assessment that occurs after implementation provides feedback about

the overall impact of the organization changes. It helps members determine whether the changes should continue to be supported or whether other possible interventions should be tried.

ACTION LEARNING

Action learning has been variously referred to as ‘participatory action research’ (Greenwood et al., 1993), ‘action inquiry’ (Fisher & Tolbert, 1995), and ‘self-designing organizations’ (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). It is a relatively new and still evolving form of planned change. Action learning moves beyond the problem-solving focus inherent in traditional applications of OD, and treats change as a continuous learning and transformation process. It responds to the enormous pressures for change facing organizations today (Vaill, 1989). They are experiencing competitive demands to perform more quickly and efficiently at lower cost and higher quality. They are being forced to adapt to turbulent environments where technological, economic, and cultural forces are changing rapidly and unpredictably. To respond to these forces, organizations are radically transforming themselves into leaner, more flexible structures capable of continuous adaptation and change. Such change involves considerable learning and innovation as members try new behaviors, structures, and processes, assess the results, make necessary adjustments, and so on. It also requires significant support and commitment from key stakeholders including managers, employees, and staff experts.

Action learning addresses these issues. It helps members acquire the skills and expertise to design their own innovations, to manage their own change processes, and, perhaps most important, to learn how to do these things more effectively and efficiently. It identifies key stakeholders and gets them actively involved in analyzing the organization and its environment, designing appropriate changes, and implementing them. It builds the capacity to change and to improve continually into the organization so it becomes part of normal functioning.

Action learning involves a number of interrelated actions that comprise an iterative learning process. As members move through these activities, they learn how to change and improve the organization, including their own work behaviors and interactions. This learning feeds into the next cycle of action learning and so on, thus enhancing members’ capacity to change both the organization and themselves. Action learning generally includes the following steps: (1) valuing; (2) diagnosing; (3) designing; and (4) implementing and assessing.

Valuing

Action learning generally starts with clarifying the values that will guide the change process. Organization values influence members’ behaviors and decision-making; they affect which innovations and changes are seen as good or bad. Because organization values are tacit and rarely questioned, they tend to perpetuate the status quo (Mohrman & Cummings, 1989). Thus, valuing seeks to make explicit the organization’s values and to judge their relevance to competitive conditions. This may result in modifying or replacing certain values, or considering entirely new ones. Moreover, because stakeholders often have diverse interests, valuing attempts to uncover underlying value conflicts and to resolve them so they do not adversely affect subsequent design and implementation activities. Unless organization changes take into account the interests of different stakeholders, there is likely to be differential support and commitment for them.

OD practitioners have developed various methods for resolving value conflicts, including collaborating, compromising, and negotiating (Walton, 1987). The key objective is to achieve sufficient value agreement among stakeholders so they can proceed with changing the organization in a shared and committed direction. A common outcome of valuing is a ‘vision statement’ that explains the values that will guide organization change, including valued human and performance outcomes and valued

organizational conditions for achieving them (Mohrman & Cummings, 1987; Collins & Porras, 1994). Although valuing occurs early in action learning, members may periodically reassess and modify the values as they continually move through the cycle of learning activities.

Diagnosing

This phase of action learning involves assessing the organization against the values. This can reveal value gaps where the organization is not functioning or performing consistent with the values. Such inconsistencies direct the subsequent design of organization changes to close the gaps. Thus, action learning is aimed at continually assessing and improving the organization in a valued direction.

Designing

This step involves developing specific organization changes to reduce value gaps and to move the organization in a valued direction. Depending on the diagnosis, members may determine that limited change is necessary and existing conditions only need to be fine tuned; or that more extensive change is needed requiring innovations that either imitate what other organizations are doing or that are entirely new and original. Thus, designing is not deterministic but involves considerable creativity and choice. Members explore new ways for organizing that are consistent with the values. They iterate back and forth between the values which serve as design guides and the designs themselves.

Designing typically results in organization changes that are minimally specified and flexible (Cummings & Srivastva, 1977). This enables members to adjust the changes to fit situational contingencies during implementation. It provides members with sufficient freedom to modify the changes as they learn how to enact them behaviorally and how to modify and improve them as the circumstances demand.

Implementing and assessing

In this phase, members implement and assess organization changes. This involves learning by doing. Members take action to implement or modify the changes. They periodically assess whether the changes and implementation process are progressing as intended, and, if not, make plans to modify them. This feedback–adjustment process enables members to learn how to change the organization and themselves. It continues indefinitely as members learn how to improve the organization continuously.

Implementing and assessing can involve three levels of learning (Bateson, 1972; Argyris & Schön, 1996). At the most basic level, which is referred to as ‘single-loop learning’, members concentrate on getting the changes implemented in accordance with the values. They seek to reduce deviations from the changes’ underlying values. This learning occurs continuously and involves considerable problem-solving and trial-and-error as members learn to move the organization closer to its values. Single-loop learning is involved in all approaches to organization change, including Lewin’s three steps and action research. It enables members to implement planned changes as intended.

Action learning goes beyond these other approaches, however, to also include higher levels of learning. Called ‘double-loop learning’, the next level involves changing the values themselves. Members learn how to confront value inconsistencies and conflicts and modify values accordingly; they learn how to change values that may no longer support the organization’s strategy and competitive situation. This level of learning occurs periodically and generally requires members to return to the valuing and designing phases. They may learn that the values set initially need to be modified and that renewed designing, implementing, and assessing activities need to occur.

At the highest level, action learning involves ‘deutero learning’, or learning how to learn. This is the most difficult yet important level of action learning. Because organization learning processes tend to be tacit and taken for granted, members are not accustomed to examining or questioning them. This can

lead to repetition of learning mistakes and disorders. Thus, deutero learning is aimed at the learning process itself. Members examine values, organizational conditions, and behaviors that inhibit single- and double-loop learning; they design more effective learning processes. Members then engage in implementing and assessing the new learning behaviors. Over time, deutero learning enables members to enhance their capacity to learn, and thus become better at implementing changes and improving the organization.

CONCLUSION

OD is an evolving field of applied social science with an increasing diversity of concepts and applications. From its traditional roots in small groups and social processes, OD has grown to include the total organization and work designs, human resources, and organization structures. This development closely parallels the changing needs of modern organizations. It moves beyond solving the unintended social problems inherent in large bureaucracies to helping organizations become leaner, more flexible, and more performance driven, so they can compete in today's complex, rapidly changing environments. To guide these applications, OD draws on a core set of psychological concepts. They include humanistic perspectives of human beings, resulting in organization changes that enhance members' maturity and interpersonal competence; motivation frameworks that promote changes satisfying a wide array of members' needs; process views of change that account for driving and restraining forces; groups as the focus of change, and the need for members to participate in developing and implementing change. These psychological foundations influence how OD is applied in organizations. They result in change processes that are cyclical and collaborative, and that closely tie research to action. Such change applications can help organizations address specific problems, or, more radically, help them learn how to continuously transform and renew themselves.

Because OD is an action science, it will continue to grow and evolve as it helps organizations change and improve. As organizations face new challenges, OD will create new methods and applications. It will draw on new concepts and approaches to guide future practice. OD's success will depend largely on how well those ideas and innovations account for the fact that organization change is essentially a social process requiring human beings to change their behavior. Continued attention to the psychological foundations of OD can help this occur.

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