

Chapter 1

The Evolution of Organizational Development Towards a Positive Approach

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ABSTRACT

Organizations should be able to cope with uncertainty and also adapt to technological, economic, political, and cultural changes in order to maintain their existence and to provide negative entropy. The main reason for organizational development is to help organizations respond to the new work life conditions. From a classical management approach to today's positive organization approach, numerous studies indicate that organizational development that ensures managers and employees perform their tasks more effectively is not an option; rather, it is a necessity for organizations. Organizational development predominantly provides the necessary atmosphere for conflict management, problem solving, and effective communication. Organizational development provides for anticipation of the organization and effective adaptation. This also makes organizational success possible by increasing the individual development and performance of employees.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational development (OD) interventions are affected by a series of theoretical approaches. One of the main approaches that guide the practices related to OD is the bureaucracy approach of Weber, known as the classical period theorists, emphasizing the organization of fair and rational rules and ensuring the chain of command. Afterwards the contingency approach can be listed as a contribution to the nonexistence of “a single correct” organizational structure and Lawrance and Lorsch’s view on differentiation and integration. Another striking study is Zimbardo’s test at Stanford University in 1971 (an experiment that is not approved by the ethics committee of any university at this time) showing that people’s behavior and behavior in an organization are decisive rather than their personalities. Also, motivation theories, especially Maslow, provide an important infrastructure for OD (Tosey, 2017).

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Additionally, the leading thinkers of organizations who are McGregor, Mayo, Argyris and Bennis multiple contributions and differentiations are summarized in Pietersen's study. According to this study, the main focus of Argyris's work is the individual well-being of the employees. Additionally, he defined McGregor as an action-oriented management theorist and mentioned his contributions as assumptions and values of human nature in parallel with the work of Argyris. Bennis convinced both managers and government leaders that organizational change is not a desire, but a necessity. And Mayo, whose works are in the focus of large scale but received long-standing methodological criticism, remembered the importance of socio-psychological factors. In summary of Pietersen, Mayo is a 'reform management researcher', McGregor a 'reform management theorist', Argyris a 'reform management consultant and therapist' and Bennis a 'fervent management reformer' (Pietersen, 2016).

The most popular work in the first evolution of OD is the Hawthorne research conducted by Mayo and his colleagues. The main finding of this widely known study is that the productivity of employees is influenced by social and human factors rather than monetary and business conditions (Tosey, 2017).

The researchers concluded that the increase in output was partly due to such experimental setups and experimenters. In the initial tests, some workers were defensive or skeptical, and therefore limited their production, while others were over-motivated to cooperate and increased their production. When planning the next tests, the researchers wanted to establish a relationship with the participants in order to enable them to carry out their work at a 'natural pace'. At the end of the study, however, the researchers had come to the conclusion that there could be involuntary manipulations causing the subjects to develop their overall productivity, giving birth to what was called the Hawthorne effect. The term Hawthorne effect was first introduced by French in 1953 and according to him the most interesting finding was only a significant increase in the production of private social status and social treatment (Wickström & Bendix, 2000). Although the Hawthorne effect is speculative, it has maintained its importance for many years in areas such as organizational psychology and sociology of the organization (Gillespie, 1993), the beginning of which has been many questions that need to be answered in the organizational field.

As a result of the mentioned (and also non-mentioned studies) organization development activities started in the 1960s, after which The American Education and Development Association opened the Department of Organizational Development in 1968. Following, Pepperdine University's first master's program, Case Western Reserve University's first doctoral program OD started to announce it as a scientific discipline that resulted in the teaching of leading figures such as Shein, Bennis and Argyris. (Cummings & Worley, 2014).

This paper is a review of OD literature focused on interventions and development in the historical process. Overall during the last century the concept has become very popular and essential for organizations. All interventions have some strengths and weaknesses and also contribute to new perspectives. In recent years books and journals have discussed the issue but few argue the causality from start to finish. For his purpose the chapter is designed to (1) summarize and explain the most known OD interventions (2) understand the difference between the interventions (3) to provide clues to practitioners in which conditions intervention is more effective.

CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT: THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Classical period definitions related to OD have primarily focused on the concepts of change and improvement. Warner Burke (1997) described OD as the process of planned change in organizational culture

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