Chapter 8

Aligning Organization Development Initiatives With Organizational Philosophical Perspectives

ABSTRACT

Organization development (OD) initiatives should align with the philosophical perspectives of the organization. Cognitive philosophical perspective organizations should use cognitive OD initiatives within its organizational culture to develop people and technology. Some cognitive OD initiatives include teaching, training, learning, procedures and processes, and motivation. Organizations that operate within the behavioral philosophical perspective focus more on the technology impact rather than employee role. The ethical and legal implications of behavioral OD initiatives are important. Organizations that operate form the cultural philosophical perspectives should consider how cultural OD initiatives are influenced by both internal and external cultures. Ethical employees, ethical workplace environments, and ethical use of technology are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Employees' value to organizations is a source of debate. The Great Resignation is a current example. Whomever introduced the terms essential and nonessential

worker created millions of workers' discontent. All people or essential. The work they do may or may not be essential. Intertwining and combining the employee and the work as one thing created the animosity from and among some workers. It also spurred entrepreneurship from many workers who were offended by their mistreatment by leaders within their organizations.

The voice of the employee (Morrison, 2023) is critical within organizations that depend on the cognitive ability of the employees to be effective. Morrison (2023) defined employee "voice as informal and discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, problems, or opinions about work-related issues, with the intent to bring about improvement or change" (p. 80). Underestimating the cognitive value that employees place on being able to express and display their knowledge can cause problems for organization leaders (Peng & Wei, 2020). Employees leave or seek change within organizations that do not respect their cognitive value. They form new or join existing unions; change positions, leave the workplace, display quiet quitting tendencies, etc.

Myers (1925) questioned the development of new workers who were learning bad habits from employees with longer duration with the organizations. He asked: "Who can doubt the importance of determining such undeniably wasteful methods of movement and of preventing the novice from falling into such bad habits of work? Yet how little provision is made of training the worker scientifically, i.e., systematically" (p. 100)! He advised organizations to use professional trainers and used some sport analogies to support his suggestion.

In the case of sport, e.g., … in riding, skating or golfing, few of us would dispense with the instruction of a professional expert. But in the case of industrial work, the novice has in by far the majority of cases to pick up his methods as best he can, perhaps learning from a worker of experience who may, nevertheless, have acquired bad habits of movement, or from one who, if he has acquired good ones, may be quite useless as an instructor. (Meyers, 1925, p. 100)

One should acknowledge that organizations still have similar training problems today (Bell et al., 2017; Carolan et al., 2014; Clark, 2004; Martin, 2010). Some organizations still do not place enough emphasis on training or may have someone who has the knowledge but does not know how to deliver or transfer that knowledge to trainers or other workers.

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