OB: Current directions and past history

Overview

- Goals
  - What is OB? Why is it important?
  - What were some major milestones in its development?

Basic definitions

- ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR (OB): the study of human behavior in organizations
- ORGANIZATION: a bounded system of social interaction, with two or more people engaged in cooperative action, trying to achieve a common goal or purpose.
  - Artifacts
  - Goal-directed
  - Social entities
  - Structured activity
  - Identifiable boundaries
Why study organizations?

- Prevalence of organizations
  - Strong motivations social motivations to form/join organizations
  - Define large parts of everyday life

- Explaining and predicting behavior
  - Good for managers, consultants, AND researchers!

Levels of analysis

- Micro
  - Individual level
  - Learning, motivation, attitudes, etc.

- Meso
  - Group and team level
  - Coordination, group dynamics, team effectiveness, etc.

- Macro
  - Organizational level
  - Culture and climate, organizational development, etc.

Recent directions in OB

- “Multilevel” analysis and theories
- Stress and health research
- Performance models
History

- Adam Smith (1776)
  - Economist
  - Advantages (and disadvantages!) of the division of labor
  - Early proponent of "job fit"

- Max Weber (1922)
  - Sociologist
  - Bureaucracy, causes and effects of org structure
  - Types of leadership and sources of power

- Wilhelm Wundt
  - "Father of experimental psychology"
  - Outlines of Psychology (1897)
  - Huge range of influential students
    - James Cattell
    - Hugo Munsterberg
    - Charles Spearman
History

- Harlow Gale
  - Early empirical work on advertising and social influence
  - “On the Psychology of Advertising” (1900)

- W. L. Bryan (1897, 1904)
  - Invented term “industrial psychology”
  - Conducted, encouraged applied research into real-world phenomena

- Walter Dill Scott
  - Influential work on advertising, social influence, selection
    - “The Theory and Practice of Advertising” (1903)
    - “The Psychology of Advertising” (1908)
    - “Increasing Human Efficiency in Business” (1911)
    - “Influencing Men in Business” (1911)
History

- Frederick Taylor
  - Scientific management
  - “The Principles of Scientific Management” (1911)
    - Science, not rules of thumb
    - Scientific selection and training
    - Cooperation
    - Strict division of responsibility
  - “Time and motion” studies

History

- Hugo Munsterberg
  - “Our aim is to sketch the outlines of a new science, which is to intermediate between the modern laboratory .... and the problem of economics.” (1913)
  - “Psychology and Industrial Efficiency” (1913)
    - Selection and training
    - Attention, motivation, and fatigue
    - Social influence
  - Responsible for the concept of a “job analysis”

History

- Henri Fayol
  - “General and Industrial Management” (1916)
  - Universal, rational management functions
    - Planning
    - Organizing
    - Commanding
    - Coordinating
    - Controlling
  - Top-down focus
History

- The “Human Relations” approach
  - Mid 1920s
  - E. W. Mayo
  - Hawthorne Studies

- Hawthorne Studies (1924-1932)
  - “Illumination” studies
    - Famous “Hawthorne Effect”
  - “Relay assembly test room” studies
    - Group cohesion, social identity, and performance
  - “Bank wiring room” studies
    - Group conflict, social influence, group norms, in-group/out-group behavior

Current approaches to OB

- Contingency approach (1960s)
  - No universal “roadmap of behavior”
  - Behavior is contingent on the situation

- Systems approach (1950s)
  - General Systems Theory (GST)
  - Organizations as organisms, not machines
    - Multiple internal, external parts
    - Complex, non-linear relationships between parts
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