

## **Hawthorne's Contributions to Organizational Behavior**

To understand how the Hawthorne Studies contributed to organizational behavior (OB) we must first examine precisely what the research entailed. According to author Nicolas Humeau (2017), Elton Mayo conducted a study involving the employees of the Hawthorne factory that belonged to the Western Electric Company. This study took place at the end of the late 1920s (Humeau, 2017). Several thousand workers were observed and interviewed in hopes of improving the facility's production. Four separate sections of the study took place over several years (Humeau, 2017). Each part of the survey made its point and provided a conclusion, the overall effect of the experiment would end up being the foundation of what we know today as organizational behavior (Humeau, 2017).

The first area of observation involved the lighting within the factory (Humeau, 2017). Mayo wanted to try and prove that there might be a correlation between certain levels of illumination and the production of the workers. However, what he observed was that no matter how bright or dim the lights were, the employees were continually delivering higher production levels than the test group (Humeau, 2017). His conclusion for these findings determined that it was not the mechanisms of the experiment, but it was merely the fact there was an experiment that was driving increases (Humeau, 2017). The second part of the research involved separating six production workers into their own continuously changing production environment. During the modifications to the working environment, good or bad, the amount of work the employees completed seem to increase. He then derived the same conclusion that the first experiment yielded (Humeau, 2017).

The third study concentrated on interviews and was intended to observe a significant number of employees, approximately 20,000 people (Humeau, 2017). This experiment

examined the personal and professional motivations that were driving the employees. The workers were asked specific questions over a vast amount of categories. Many of the topics related to work-life balance and others were arranged more professionally and asked about formal and informal groups within the company (Humeau, 2017). Mayo concluded that in the working environment, the forces surrounding the social nature of the employees were vastly important to the workers (Humeau, 2017).

Finally, the fourth study was known as the observation room. This experiment was utilized to establish formal grounds for the prior conclusion in experiment number three. During this experiment, 14 workers known as bank wires were divided up into three small groups, and each division had a controller to supervise the group (Humeau, 2017). Mayo soon realized that two types of informal networks were developing and these groups were divided by affinity and by their level of influence. Over time, these groups started to form social norms within individual groups separate from the original experimental divide (Humeau, 2017). This experiment concluded that organizational behavior developed within the system (Humeau, 2017).

Now that we have taken a closer look at the Hawthorne studies let us take a more in-depth look at organizational behavior. So, what is organizational behavior (OB)? OB is a type of social science which is a form of discipline that will help establish a truth and aid in validating theories (Miner, 2005). The theory behind OB first surrounds itself with the behavior of the people within an organization, and secondly with the behavior of that company. OB, simply put, is how people conduct themselves with one another in a group setting (Miner, 2005). Organizations use this type of approach for creating a more efficient working environment. The primary focus of organizational behavior within a facility surrounds the idea that managing its

employees can be done scientifically (Miner, 2005). Over the years people have created many models and philosophies relating to OB. In today's world, many things get considered when dealing with modern-day employees; things like how to improve job performance, satisfaction, and job safety just to name a few (Miner, 2005).

Some different types of organizational behavior in the workplace would include managerial control, ethics, accountability, and harassment (Root, 2018). One of the most critical aspects of any organization is its administrative control, and this can come in a couple of different forms. The first form is known as autocratic control, and this is where a group of managers will dictate a team of employees. The other type of control is known as interactive, and this is where the staff will have some control over how the company is run (Root, 2018). An organization will show a direct relation to how it maintains policy and the type of managerial control it chooses to use within the organization (Root, 2018).

When the facility takes a firm ethical approach to the organization, they can expect to see substantial ethical effects on its organizational behavior. This type of structure is where the management team is asked to use a moral code of conduct and enforce it among the employees, vendors, and overall business (Root, 2018). This type of system can be challenging to maintain, especially if there are high turnover rates and a steep learning curve among new employees. Accountability can create a stable organizational structure that will help maintain positive organizational behavior (Root, 2018). Companies often add a level of responsibility to their employees and the projects they are responsible for completing. If the workers are not held accountable, there would be no way to reward or punish production gains or losses. The company can expect to see positive staff behavior if it can establish a rooted corporate structure where the workers are accountable for their actions (Root, 2018).

Finally, let's take a look at harassment. Harassment in the workplace is a type of negative organizational behavior that executives and managers must deal with through training, policies, and other intense applications. Harassment is better known as unwanted behavior amongst employees or other staff (Root, 2018). Several federal laws mandate that employers must control harassment in the workplace. Some of the different types of harassment would include mental, physical, sexual, and discrimination of age (Root, 2018). It is in a company's best interest to develop defined legal policies to prevent this type of behavior, and to create a training program that will teach their staff how to correctly deal with situations surrounding this type of negative organizational behavior (Root, 2018).

Several questions or issues must get raised about organizational behavior in today's modern business world. According to author Diana Wicks (2018), one of those problems is the ever-increasing diversity of our working environments. There are many people from different races, sexual and cultural backgrounds, and ages. The primary challenge for executives and managers from an OB standpoint is how to lead these individuals in a manner that will have a positive impact on the organization (Wicks, 2018). Today, it does not work to treat each employee the same because each employee's background and cultural needs are different. It is essential that the company creates a positive HR system to help train executives, managers, and employees to deal with the various diverse backgrounds (Wicks, 2018).

Another problem that exists today is globalization. Many companies that once considered themselves local have now become global to stay relevant. This expansion means leaders and managers are dealing with different cultural barriers, ethics, and values (Wicks, 2018). These differences will give managers the added challenges of diagnosing the OB in each of an organization's subsidiaries. The managers have to use their day-to-day problems to gain

data which will help them improve the behavior within the branches of different cultures. But, this is where the issues can arise; leaders can see great resistance surrounding this type of improvement as the different cultures may not want to do things according to company policy (Wicks, 2018).

Finally, we must consider technology and innovation, and how it can play an essential part in workplace communication. This type of communication influences how employees function within an organization (Wicks, 2018). Even though technology creates efficiency, it can also alienate employees such as the elderly, or the global manager that is repeatedly forced away from their home base. Organizations face the challenge to find ways that look in the last full book for you technology promotes communication throughout the company, and creates a state of inclusion instead of exclusion (Wicks, 2018).

## References

- Humeau, N. (2017, July 20). The Hawthorne Studies and the Birth of Organizational Behavior. Retrieved April 12, 2018, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hawthorne-studies-birth-organizational-behavior-nicolas-humeau>
- Miner, J. B. (2015). Organizational Behavior 1: Essential Theories of Motivation and Leadership. Retrieved April 12, 2018, from [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=YXOsBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=define organizational behavior&ots=3B3T4C0hif&sig=P-52kkqxtSqUay2ctzdMtZCSWxY#v=onepage&q=define organizational behavior&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=YXOsBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=define+organizational+behavior&ots=3B3T4C0hif&sig=P-52kkqxtSqUay2ctzdMtZCSWxY#v=onepage&q=define+organizational+behavior&f=false)
- Root, G. N., III. (2018). Types of Organizational Behavior in the Workplace. Retrieved April 14, 2018, from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/types-organizational-behavior-workplace-11188.html>
- Wicks, D. (2018, January 16). What Are the Challenges Faced by Organizational Behavior? Retrieved April 14, 2018, from <https://bizfluent.com/info-11369752-challenges-faced-organizational-behavior.html>