

Course Learning Outcomes for Unit I

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate a variety of views about human resource behavior in public organizations.
 - 1.1 Support your opinion on the selected article with course-related terminology.
 - 1.2 Assess how a selected article relates to personal experience in the public or nonprofit sector.
 - 1.3 Evaluate how the points and/or arguments of the author(s) can be applied to the public sector.

Course/Unit Learning Outcomes	Learning Activity
1.1	Unit Lesson Chapter 1, pp. 1-16 Chapter 2, pp. 17–37 Video: <i>Problems with Management</i> Video: <i>Management at Google</i> Unit I Article Critique
1.2	Unit I Article Critique
1.3	Unit I Article Critique

Required Unit Resources

Chapter 1: Organizational Behavior as a Way of Thinking and Acting, pp.1–16

Chapter 2: Knowing and Managing Yourself, pp. 17–37

In order to access the following resources, click the links below.

Watch the following segments from the full video referenced below: [Problems with Management \[Segment 1 of 6\]](#) and [Management at Google \[Segment 2 of 6\]](#).

Chain, E. (Producer), Du Verne, H. (Executive Producer), & Pirot, A. (2016). [Management has its own revolution](#) [Video]. Films on Demand.
<https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlayerlists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=150146>

The transcript for these video segments can be found by clicking on “Transcript” in the gray bar to the right of the video in the Films on Demand database.

Unit Lesson

Welcome to Unit I! In this course, we will be discussing a number of major themes that relate to how people act within public and third-sector work environments. In addition, we will look at what motivates public sector workers in how they communicate with others, respond to conflicts, and give and receive orders, amongst a number of other topics. These observations and analyses extend beyond the scope of individual workers and employees and into how groups interact to resolve problems and to develop effective strategies. Also, this course will pose questions related to how well organizations are structured to address specific organizational missions and objectives, along with whether or not personnel departments are utilizing appropriate hiring standards.

Of course, we will also be discussing some of the core tenants of *organizational behavior*. Denhardt et al. (2016) define organizational behavior as “the study of individual and group behavior in organizational settings” (p. 3), and organizational behavior can be applied in a number of professional or work settings. Are you working in a public or nonprofit organization right now? If so, this content will apply to you. Are you thinking about working in a public or nonprofit organization in the future? If so, this content will apply to you. Do you work in a private sector organization? If so, this content will apply to you as well.

A Working Relationship

The relationships between workers in these settings should not be viewed as being only one-way (i.e., relegated to a single direction). Studying organizational behavior involves looking at the effects of organizational structure and systems on individual behavior as well as the effects of individuals on wider organizational characteristics and associated attributes and policies. We all know how tenuous one-sided relationships can be, and we also know that talking for hours as the one person struggles to get a word in is not a conversation. Our behavior and actions involve and affect so many other people. Remember, the starting point of any study of organizational behavior will be with the individual, and analyses conducted on organizations and management are conducted from the perspective of individual people (Denhardt et al., 2016).

In studying organizational behavior in the context of the public sector, there are additional considerations that must be kept in mind regarding motivating others and leading in a manner that is consistent with the public interest and democratic values (Denhardt et al., 2016). Perry (1997) lists five major antecedents associated with public sector motivation: parental socialization, religious socialization, professional identification, political ideology, and demographic correlates. The nature of these antecedents implies that when motivating others, there are a number of deeply ingrained factors to contend with. In modern times, as professionals are becoming firmer in identifying with many of these antecedents, it is useful to consider our own motivators. It is also useful to consider that the amount of emphasis that one places on a particular antecedent may change over time. Did you have strong motivations from your parents or your childhood religion when you were younger that faded as you developed your own political beliefs and attachment to one or more of your demographic characteristics? If so, you can probably identify how your motivations changed as a result. Ultimately, by gaining a better understanding of personal behaviors, the behaviors of groups, and the influences of organizational and environmental factors, we can better fulfill tasks as they relate to best serving public interests.



Management perspectives over time

Scientifically Speaking

Historically, organizational behavior is a relatively new field of study with employees; before studying organizational behavior became more popular, it was viewed as an extension of work, tools, and machines. Another general finding shows that employees find work to be unpleasant, hence the need to be compensated for their labor. In considering the evolution of behavioral theories, it is important to consider the separate evolutions and effects of scientific-analytical mindset approaches as well as technological progress and developments as they relate to each successive movement (Adams, 1992).

Frederick Taylor theorized that if management was committed to studying work tasks in a scientific manner, then best practices would be developed that would ultimately benefit both the employee and the organization, implying that the obligation of employee motivation was with management as opposed to with individual workers. Workers were still assumed to be naturally lazy and were expected to respond to orders without questions (Denhardt et al., 2016). How do you fit into Taylor's model? It is doubtful that you are very lazy or that you would approve of strict punishments for not immediately engaging in course tasks.

Another approach with some similar tenets is the public choice movement. Rubenstein et al. (2004) expand on this model, attributing to the model assumptions that humans are motivated primarily by self-interests and that organizations, incentives, and institutions should be designed to accommodate such interests. Can we believe that public sector workers are motivated primarily by self-interests when they can make more money in certain private sector positions, or can self-interests run deeper than monetary interests?

Although more human-centered approaches were present at the turn of the 20th century, more extensive study into the motivating desires of individuals and groups were not studied with greater frequency until the publication of the Hawthorne studies during the 1930s. These studies revealed that workers change their behavior, generally in a more positive or productive manner, when they know that they are being observed

and that relationships between humans influence workers' behavior, thus leading researchers to conclude that a human solution is required to solve human problems (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939).

Research Says

Chester Barnard's studies emphasized the importance of individual participation for organization cooperation as well as cooperation between organizational units; Herbert Simon focused more closely on relationships between incentives and employee output. Douglas McGregor began to look more closely at the needs of individuals within work environments as well as the importance of developing morale within the workforce in order to achieve greater efficiency. His Theory X that people are lazy and motivated only by money and the optimistic Theory Y that focused on inherent human worth within organizations were paramount in debunking previous beliefs on employee behavior (McGregor 1960).

Abraham Maslow's needs hierarchy also addressed values in a more general sense. It is also important to note the impact and influence the fields of sociology, anthropology, and political science have had on the study of organizational behavior with each field providing relevant and valuable insight in its own unique manner.

Looking more closely at Maslow's hierarchy, can you identify which position you may currently classify yourself in or other positions that you may have occupied in the past?



Maslow's hierarchy
(FireflySixtySeven, 2014)

You can thank a psychiatrist and psychology scholars for the break from some of the more traditional theories and influences. More recent studies of organizational behavior focus heavily on individual behavior and are greatly influenced by psychological theory with emphasis placed on behavioral psychology and social psychology. Positive organizational behavior is a sub-field of psychology that focuses on positive aspects of human behavior as opposed to negative traits and how these aspects can be channeled into creating positive institutions and positive environments for individuals and groups (Denhardt et al., 2016). Also, greater efforts have been placed on studying different brain patterns and structures and their effects on employee behavior.

What are the effects of these developments? According to Asplund and Blacksmith (n.d.), employees who are engaged with their work are twice as likely to be successful than less engaged employees. Fernandez and Rainey (2006) concluded that when two aspects of a course of action are vital for organizational change in the public sector, one must be specific to the strategy and extent to which the strategy rests on sound causal theory. This implies that mission clarity and strategy based on appropriate theory also leads to greater degrees of organizational success. Also, Dobuzinskis (1997) attests that modern workers are less interested in managerial hierarchies and strict control structures, further emphasizing the need to clarify more updated organizational strategies. Think about common office settings today. Can you imagine the workers from years past working in one giant, wall-less room, tossing footballs and blasting music? Welcome to 21st century hierarchies and structures. Apparently, the combination of engagement and strategy crafted from appropriate theories will, in fact, lead to greater productivity and positive organizational change.

Additionally, the presence of higher-performing managers is correlated with increased productivity. Have you ever worked for an awful supervisor? Think about how you would do anything to subvert his or her authority, doing the bare minimum at most. Now think about when you have experienced the presence of a good supervisor. Have you been willing to put in extra, often unsolicited, effort? This presence includes conscious participation by higher ranking employees to provide role-expanding opportunities to lower ranking employees in an attempt to help them to develop greater voices in relation to general organizational performance, which can lead to more productive outcomes (Glew et al., 1995).

Having knowledge of oneself is extremely important for one's general livelihood, and it also plays a major role in one's workplace satisfaction and success. Sluss and Ashforth (2007) separate the *self* into three levels: individual, which is focused on the unique nature of the individual and on specific attributes and abilities; interpersonal, which is focused on relationships between roles that the individual holds in relation to others; and collective, which is focused on how the individual fits into the social order of a group. *Self-esteem* can be described as our feelings about our personal competence, ability to cope, self-worth, and perceived worthiness of our lives, amongst other considerations (Leafgren & Sullivan, 1999). Self-esteem is closely

related to the levels of the self. The manner to which each of these levels is competently developed and managed is believed to have an effect on how we respond to emotional challenges or any perceived threat to security, self-image, or self-worth. Do you feel more confident in your ability to express your needs and to cope with setbacks when your self-perception is more positive and when you are more in touch with how you react to personal, interpersonal, and group considerations? Considering the theory that organizational behavior is merely the result of interlocking choices by individuals emphasizes the importance of the self (March & Olsen, 1984).

Without proper knowledge or realization of oneself, it is more difficult to work with or effectively manage others, which, in the public sector, can have a negative impact on the public's collective livelihood. In order to gain a better understanding of themselves, people should engage in different development exercises that are intended to raise self-awareness and knowledge (Denhardt et al., 2016). Such exercises can include developing cognitive knowledge or an understanding of basic skills associated with certain tasks and behavioral skills, which ensure that these tasks will be appropriately addressed every time they are acted out. Furthermore, emotional intelligence is required in order to supplement these factors, particularly for public sector managers, as it surpasses technical skills and intelligence to allow for appreciation of others' feelings and desires in applying the more base-level tools. Pulkkinen et al. (1999) expand on this notion, finding that high career orientation is linked to high self-control personality characteristics (e.g., stability, compliance) while low career orientation is linked to low self-control emotions such as anxiety or aggressiveness.

According to Denhardt et al. (2016), emotional intelligence is comprised of four major components:

- *self-management*, which is the ability to control behavior and impulses while actively pursuing goals;
- *self-awareness*, which is the ability to recognize the effects of one's emotions or moods on others;
- *social awareness*, which is the ability to understand others' emotions and to respond to them appropriately; and
- *social skills*, which is the ability to build relationships, find common ground, and manage conflicts.

In attempting to develop these components with the overall goal of improving emotional intelligence, leaders and managers must be mindful of possible barriers that they may be putting up that hinder their ability to properly apply emotional intelligence. Morriss et al. (2011) identified the barriers as described below:

- overemphasizing personal goals over organizational goals,
- being overly concerned with individual self-image,
- turning competitors into enemies,
- believing that one must lead by himself or herself, and
- requiring patience that may stand in the way of personal promotion or progress.

Overcoming these barriers can be aided by regular sessions of self-evaluation and the development of self-knowledge. Important considerations to take into account when inventorying oneself in this way are exploring one's personal values, personality style, interpersonal orientation, locus of control, career orientation, and self-disclosure. When applying these considerations, whether to ourselves or to others, it is of utmost importance to do so in an ethically appropriate manner that does not discriminate against unique or perceived undesirable personality characteristics or attributes.

References

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Learning Activities (Nongraded)

Nongraded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Do you believe that you can develop your emotional intelligence or that with some concerted work that you can overcome the barriers mentioned in the lesson? Why not put some of the exercises from the course textbook to the test and find out for sure? You can start with this personality assessment to help prepare you for this unit’s discussion. You can let some of the rebels and imperials help you sort your type out.

Visit the [Star Wars personality chart](#) to visit the Star Wars personality chart to discover where the Force places you. Do you feel that this chart helped accurately describe you? Explain.