Some New Theoretical and Methodological Dimensions for Organizational Behavior

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《CONTENTS》

Organizational behavior is a relatively new academic and applied field. Because of this newness, there have been some growing pains. However, recently there have been exciting new breakthroughs in both theory building and research methods. The purpose of this paper is to give a brief overview of some of the major breakthroughs and new dimensions of organizational behavior.

I. New Theoretical Dimensions

The old human relations movement was largely dominated by a humanistically-based foundation probably best represented by the work of Douglas McGregor (1960). His now famous Theory Y served a useful purpose of gaining the attention of both academics and practicing managers of the importance and complexities of the "Human Side of Enterprise." However, it was still much too simplistic.

In the 1960's, behavioral scientists such as Victor Vroom (1964) began to propose more sophisticated explanations of human behavior at work. Taken largely from cognitively-based expectancy theories, these new foundations of organizational behavior tried to spell out a complex process that involved

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valences, instrumentalities, expectancies, effort, performance, satisfaction, role perceptions, and abilities. The widely recognized Porter and Lawler (1968) model probably best represents this approach.

Centainly these models proposed by Vroom and Porter and Lawler were a more realistic theoretical position representing the complexities of organizational behavior than were those offered earlier by McGregor or Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959). But, by the same token, maybe these theories had strayed too far from application and a parsimonious explanation. These expectancy theories certainly help better *understand* organizational behavior, but they fell short on predicting and controlling employee behavior at work.

Goal Setting Theory and Operant Theory

In the past decade two new theortical frameworks have emerged to better meet the objectives of parsimony and practical application (prediction and control). These are goal setting theory (Locke, 1968) and operant theory (Skinner, 1953).

Goal setting theory is based on the cognitive concept of "intention". That is, goals serve the purpose of directing behavior and making it intentional. Locke and his colleagues (Locke, Shaw, Saari, and Latham, 1981) have done considerable research that generally supports the importance of this theory as an explanation for organizational behavior and, of course, has led to the very successful application technique of goal setting. In fact, the application has been much more important to the field than has the theory upon which it is supposedly based. There is no question that setting specific, relatively difficult goals leads to performance improvement.

Operant theory emerged at about the same time as goal setting theory as a theoretical foundation for organizational behavior. Whereas goal setting is a cognitively-based theory, operant theory is an environmentally-based theory. Operant theory goes way back to Skinner's important distinction between respondent and operant conditioning. That is, behavior is a function of its contingent consequences. This, of course, is the most parsimonious explanation of organizational behavior and through the technique of organizational behavior modification or O.B. Mod. (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975) has proven it can also be successfully applied. We have clearly demonstrated the causal impact that an O.B. Mod. approach can have on the improved performance of manufacturing (Luthans, Maciag and Rosenkrantz, in press; Luthans and Schweizer, 1979; Ottemann and Luthans, 1975), service (Luthans and Maris, 1979; Luthans, Paul and Baker, 1981) and nonprofit (Snyder and Luthans, 1982) organizations.

In summary, the relatively simplistic human relations theories of McGregor and Herzberg were replaced by the relatively complex expectancy theories of Vroom and Porter and Lawler. However, to meet a more parsimonious and applications oriented theoretical foundation for organizational behavior, goal setting theory and operant theory emerged. Most recently, however, some extensions of theses theories have just started to become important in organizational behavior. In particular, attribution theory and social learning theory are the newest, and potentially, the most important new theoretical dimensions for the field of organizational behavior.

Attribution Theory

Very recently, organizational behavior scholars have perceived a need and made a call for a more mid-range, compromising theoretical stance between the seemingly diametrically opposed expectancy theories on the one hand and the operant theories on the other. Attribution theory and social learning theory have arrived to meet this need and answer this call.

Learning toward the cognitive end of the continuum, attribution theory is concerned with the relationship between an individual's perception and interpersonal behavior. In other words, it is a more comprehensive theory of behavior than just a framework for motivation. Kelley (1967) stresses that attribution theory incorporates cognitive processes by which an individual interprets behavior as being caused by (or attributed to) parts of the relevant environment. Fritz Heider (1958), the generally recognized pioneer of attribution theory, believed that both internal forces (e.g., personal attributes such as ability or effort) and external forces (e.g., environmental attributes such as rules or the weather) combine additively to determine behaivor. He stresses that it is the perceived, not the determinants, that are important to behavior. Thus, attribution theory assumes humans are rational and motivated to identify and understand the causal structure of their relevant environment.

Applied to organizational behavior, attributions so far have mainly been divided into internal (i.e., ability or effort) and external (i.e., luck or task difficulty) locus of control (Rotter, 1966). A number of studies are coming up with some very interesting and relevant findings. For example, one study found that employees under internal control are generally more satisfied with their jobs, are more likely to be in managerial positions, and are more satisfied with a participatory management style than are employees who perceive external control (Mitchell, Smyser and Weed, 1975). Other studies have found internal managers to be better performers (Anderson, Hellriegel and Solcum, 1977; Anderson and Schneier, 1978), more considerate with subordinates (Pryer and Distenfano, 1971), and tend to follow a more strategic style of executive action (Miller, Kets de Vries and Toulouse, 1982). In addition, attribution theory has been shown to have relevance in explaining goal setting behavior (Dossett and Greenberg, 1981), leadership behavior (Calder, 1977; McElroy, 1982) and the poor performance of employees (Mitchell and Wood 1980). A recent review article concludes that locus of control is related to the performance and satisfaction of organization members and may moderate the relation between motivation and incentives (Spector, 1982).

Attribution theory seems to hold a great deal of promise for the better understanding of organizational behavior. However, for the future, other dimensions besides the internal and external locus of control will have to be accounted for and studied. Weiner(1972), for example, suggests that a stability (fixed or variable) dimension must also be recognized. An experienced employee will probably have a stable internal attribution about his/her ability, but an unstable internal attribution concerning effort. By the same token, this employee may have a stable external attribution about task difficulty, but an unstable external attribution about luck. Besides the stability dimension, Kelley (1973) suggests that dimensions such as consensus (do others act this way in this situation), consistency (does this person act this way in this situation at other times) and distinctiveness (does this person act differently in other situations) will affect the type of attributions that are made. In other words, attribution theory recognizes the complexity of human behavior and this must be part of a theory that attempts to *explain* and *understand* organizational behavior. But unlike some of the predecessors in the cognitive approach, it does seem to have more potential for application and relevance instead of being a purely academic exercise in theory building.

Social Learning Theory

Whereas attribution theory leans toward the cognitive approach, the newly emerging social learning theory leans toward the operant end of the continuum. Mainly steming from the work of Albert Bandura (1976, 1977), social learning theory or SLT accepts the principles of operant theory and the importance of environmental contingencies, but then goes further. In particular, the individual (including internal cognitive processes), the environment (both overt and covert), and the behavior itself are viewed as interacting, reciprocal determinants in SLT.

In SLT there is more than direct learning via antecedent cues and reinforcing consequences as in operant theory. Vicarious processes or modeling are also important explanations for learning. According to Bandura, subprocesses such as attention, retention, motoric reproduction, and reinforcement are important to learning. Through these subprocesses learning can take place by observing or modeling other persons in the social environment. In other words, the person learns by observing how others act and then acquires a mental picture of the act and its consequences. Next, the person acts out the newly acquired image.

Similar to operant theory, if the consequences are reinforcing, the behavior will be strengthened and tend to increase in subsequent frequency. This extended explanation of learning seems to be especially applicable and relevant to organizational behavior. For example, modeling has been successfully applied to employee training programs (Burnaska, 1976; Kraut, Latham and Saari, 1979).

Besides modeling, SLT goes beyond operant theory by emphasizing the importance of self control. By recognizing mediating cognitions, self regulatory processes become an important part of SLT. In particular, SLT recognizes cognitively-based antecedents (e.g., goals or expectancies) and consequences (self evaluative rewards and/or punishers). As Bandura (1976) explains:

> "The notion that behavior is controlled by its consequences is unfortunately interpreted by most people to mean that actions are at the mercy of situational influences. In fact, behavior can, and is, extensively self-regulated by self-produced consequences for one's own actions.... Because of their great representational and self-reactive capacities, humans are less dependent upon immediate external supports for their behavior (p. 28)."

In other words, self control processes do not negate the importance of environmental contingencies, but instead allow the person to analyze and alter external regulatory contingencies rather than just mechanistically respond to them.

This self control theoretical development has relevant linkages to practical application. In a recent article we suggest that self-management may be the "missing link" in managerial effectiveness (Luthans and Davis, 1979). This paper reports that self management procedures were successfully used to increase the effectiveness of managers in three case studies and there is a growing literature on its applicability to the work setting (Brief and Aldag, 1981; Manz and Sims, 1980).

In total, social learning may prove to be the most important theoretical development to date for the field of organizational behavior. It blends the need for understanding the complexities of human behavior at work with the pragmatism of relevance and applicability to human resource management. However, by stressing the *interactive* nature of organizational behavior, new research perspectives and techniques are required. The last half of the paper will explore some of these new methodological dimensions for researching organizational behavior.

II. New Methodological Dimensions

If the theoretical framework for organizational behavior recognizes person-situation-behavior *interactions* in *real* (i.e., natural) environments as being the most appropriate unit of study, then the traditional research perspectives, designs and data gathering techniques are no longer as useful. In particular, Figure 1 shows some new methodological dimensions that are more compatible with the new theoretic assumptions brought out in the first half of the paper.

〈Fig. 1〉 Some New Methodological Dimensions for Researching Organizational Behavior

Traditional Approaches	New Approaches
Etic	Emic
Nomothetic	Idiographic
Quantitative	Qualitative
Questionnaires	Observations

Etic to Emic Research Perspectives

In a recent paper we have made a distinction between etic and emic research perspectives that come out of anthropology (Morey and Luthans, 1982). These terms were first used by Kenneth Pike who took the suffixes of the terms phon*emic* and phon*etic* from linguistic analysis. The term emic is used in anthropological research to denote the native or "insiders" view of the situation. Etic is the "outsider's", i.e., the researchers, definition of the situation.

In traditonal research in organizational behavior, an etic perspective has prevailed. The researcher formulates the research questions and defines the situation (e.g. through the assignment to experimental and control groups and the identification of independent and dependent variables or through the response choices on questionnaire surveys). An emic perspective has largely been ignored. A new methodological dimension for organizational behavior research would be to have the insider's, i.e., the subject's, definition of the situation. When dealing with real people in real organizations, such an emic perspective for research can yield some very rich, and perhaps heretofore overlooked, research questions and data for understanding.

Nomothetic to Idiographic Research

In another paper we have recently made the distinction between nomothetic and idiographic research in organizational behavior(Luthans and Davis, 1982). About 45 years ago Gordon Allport introduced the terms to contrast the methodologies for doing research in psychology. Through the ensuing years there has been a continual debate in the behavioral sciences of which approach should be taken. This methodological debate has not spilled over into organizational behavior because there has been almost a singular preoccupation with the nomothetic approach.

In brief, nomothetic research is characterized by group-centered, standardized, and controlled environmental contexts, and quantitative methodologies. Idiographic research, on the other hand, is individual-centered, uses naturalistic environmental contexts, and depends more on qualitative methodologies. The nomothetic approach is appropriate under the theoretic assumption that people are basically the same and operate in a constant environment. However, when interactive theoretic assumptions are made, then an idiographic approach becomes more useful.

Quantitative to Qualitative Techniques

In still another paper, we have made a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research (Davis and Luthans, 1981). This distinction is more familiar to organizational behavior researchers than is the etic-emic and nomothetic-idiographic distinctions. The argument between quantitative and qualitative research in organizational behavior has been more prevalent over the years (e.g., see: Behling, 1980; Susman and Evered, 1978). However, with only a few recent exceptions (the 1979 special issue on qualitative methods in the *Administrative Science Quarterly* and the work of Van Maanen and his collegues, 1982), quantitative research totally dominates the field of organizational behavior.

Although the precise definition of qualitative research is quite vague, Van Maanen explains that the approach "is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (1979, p. 520). The quantitative approach, on the other hand, is heavily influenced by the natural science model and depends on inferential statistical analysis techniques. Quantitative research divides up the research problem into variables that use data collection techniques (e.g. questionnaires) allowing quantifiable analysis. In general, the quantitative approach concentrates on measurement and systematic evaluation; hypothetico-deductive testing of research questions; and gives careful attention to the criteria that may invalidate the findings (Campbell and Stanley, 1966; Cook and Campbell, 1979).

Quantitative techniques flow from the etic, nomothetic approaches that have dominated the field of organizational behavior. Similiar to the emic and idiographic approaches, qualitative techniques offer a new methodological dimension for researching organizational behavior. It should be pointed out that these new techniques are not a throw back to the old case approach, but instead offer the opportunity to obtain needed, rich data of interactive human behavior in real, complex organizations.

Questionnaires to Observation Techniques for Data Collection

In line with our proposals of moving from etic to emic, nomothetic to idiographic and quantitative to qualitative, is the movement from questionnaires to observation techniques. In particular, a few years ago I suggested that we need observation measures of leader behavior in natural settings, especially if a social learning theoretical perspective is taken (Luthans, 1979). Since that proposal I have been actively involved in a basic research project funded by the U.S. Office of Naval Research (ONR) to develop a reliable and valid measurement system for leader behavior in natural settings (Luthans and Lockwood, 1981, in press; Luthans, Lockwood and Conti, 1981).

Questionnaires, of course, have almost been solely used as the data gathering technique in organizational behavior research. For example, Martinko and Carter (1979) found that practically all the studies reported in the *Academy of Management Journal* in a recent ten year period used questionnaires. Despite their prevalent usage, questionnaires are recognized to have serious problems for measurement, not the least of which is the lack of demonstrated validity for the widely used standarized questionnaires (Schreisheim and Kerr, 1977; Schreisheim, Bannister and Money, 1979). Observation techniques, on the other hand, although often talked about, have, with but a few exceptions (see McCall, Morrison, and Hannan, 1978 for a review of the few observation studies of managerial work, most notably Mintzberg's, 1973 study), been almost totally ignored in organizational behavior research.

Although observation techniques are difficult to use relative to questionnaires, and are not free of all measurement problems, our leadership observation system or simply LOS has been demonstrated so far to be a reliable and valid way of measuring leader behavior in natural settings. The LOS consists of broad categories of leader behavior such as the following: (1) planning/coordinating, (2) staffing, (3) training/developing, (4) decision-making/problem solving, (5) processing paperwork, (6) exchanging routine information, (7) monitoring/controlling performance, (8) motivating/reinforcing, (9) disciplining/punishing, (10) interacting with outsiders, (11) managing conflict, and (12) socializing and politicking within the organization. Each of these broad categories is defined by specific behaviors. For example, training and developing is described behaviorally for observers as orienting employees; clarifying roles, duties and jobs; coaching and mentoring; walking subordinates through tasks; and counseling employees about careers. Socializing and politicking within the organization is described behaviorally for observers as work or non-work related "chit-chat"; informal "joking around" and "B.S.ing"; discussing rumors, hearsay and the grapevine; complaining, griping and putting others down; and politic-king and gamesmanship.

The behavioral categories in the LOS came from 440 hours of free observation (10 hours of observation of 44 managers in a wide variety of organizations) that then used the Delphi method to reduce the behavioral data down into the categories and their behavioral descriptors. There was a 93.5 percent agreement between the participant and the outside observers in a reliability study. (Luthans, Lockwood and Conti, 1981) and when only agreement on observed behaviors (leaving out agreement on behavioral categories that did *not* occur) was calculated, there was 87.4 interrater reliability. Cohen's (1960) kappa statistic, which specificaliy represents the proportion of joint judgments in which there is agreement after chance agreement is excluded, yielded a highly significant ($p < .001$). 81.

In addition to reliability, our work (Luthans and Lockwood, in press) has yielded at least preliminary support for the validity of the LOS. A multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) analysis found support for both convergent and discriminant validities when multiple rater sources were treated as more than one method. The validity did not faire as well in the MTMM analysis when standardized questionnaires such as the LBDQ-XII and the LOS were treated as multiple methods. However, when directly comparable categories from a self estimate of time usage questionnaire were analyzed in relation to the LOS, the MTMM yielded more support for validity.

Although the evidence so far demonstrates that our observation system can measure the frequency of leader behavior in natural settings more work on of the validity of such a measurement approach is needed. Validation, of course, is a never ending process. We are currently heavily involved in this process and are also using this method of measuring manager behavior to assess/analyze its impact on performance, satisfaction, commitment and subordinate variables. The key once again is that if the theoretical assumptions outlined in the first part of this paper are taken, especially the interactive notion of organizational behavior, and the proposals for emic, idiographic, and qualitative research methods are followed, then the observation techniques of measurement make sense. In fact as Kerlinger (1973) points out that: "Observations must be used when the variables of research studies are interactive and interpersonal in nature" (p. 554).

III. A Final Word

The intent of this paper is not to create controversy or polarize the field of organizational behavior. In fact, the opposite is intended. The new theoretical and methodological dimensions brought out here are intended to be additive and supplementary rather than polar alternatives to the more traditional theories and methods. However, despite this conciliatory plea, I do strongly believe that the new attribution and social learning theories and the emic, idiographic, qualitative and observation methods discussed in this paper can make a significant contribution to our never ending search for knowledge in the field of organizational behavior.

〈國 文 要 約〉

本 論文은 組織行爲領域에 있어서 최근에 부각된 理論的 및 方法論的인 몇몇 새로운 次元에 대해서 概括해 보고 이를 分析하는 데 그 目的을 두고 있다.

I. 새로운 理論的 次元

古典的인 人間關係論은 맥그리거(D. McGregor)와 허어쯔버그(Herzberg)의 理論들에서 잘 整理되어 있으나, 이들 理論이 人間行爲를 說明함에 있어서 지나치게 單純하다는 虛點

을 극복하기 위하여 브룸(V. Vroom)과 포터(Porter), 로울러(Lawler) 등에 의하여 새로운 理論들이 나오게 되었다. 그러나 이들 理論 역시 '理解'라는 측면에서는 도움이 되지만 '適用'과 정확한 '說明'이라는 측면에서는 부족한 점이 많은 것으로 나타났다.

그리하여 豫測과 統制라는 목적에 기여하기 위한 보다 精密한 理論들이 나오게 되었는데 그 代表的인 것이 60年代末 以後 거의 同時에 發表되기 시작한 目標設定理論과 作動理論 및 더욱 최근에 나타난 歸屬理論과 社會的 學習理論 등이다.

目標設定理論(Goal-Setting Theory)은 로크(Locke)와 그의 동료들에 의해 제기된 것으로서 '意圖(intention)'라는 認知的 概念에 기초를 두고 있으며 理論的 側面에서 뿐 아니라 應用의 技術的 側面에서도 매우 뛰어난 것으로 평가되고 있다.

한편 作動理論(Operant Theory)은 스키너(Skinner)의 被動的 條件化(respondent conditioning)와 行動的 條件化(operant conditioning)의 구분에 입각하여 行爲는 狀況的 結果의 함수라는 命題를 기초로 하고 있다. 이는 위의 目標設定理論이 認知論的 배경을 가진 데 비하여 環境的 배경을 가진 것으로서 서로 對照的이며, 應用의 面에서는 組織行爲修正(O. B. Mod)이라는 技法을 전개하고 있다.

이와 같이 目標設定理論과 作動理論은 각각 認知論과 環境論이라는 相反된 兩極의 立場을 취하고 있으므로 이를 극복하는 보다 統合的인 理論을 모색하는 움직임이 생겨났으며 그 대표적인 것이 바로 歸屬理論과 社會的 學習理論이다.

歸屬理論(Attribution Theory)은 하이더(F. Heider)에 의해 비롯된 것으로서 認知論과 環境論의 連續線上에서는 보다 認知論 쪽에 치우친 이론이다. 이 理論은 個人의 認識과 對人間 行爲와의 關係에 촛점을 두고 있으며, 人間은 理性的인 存在로서 環境의 因果構造를 이해하려 한다는 기본가정을 갖고 있다. 한편, 응용적 측면에서는 統制의 位置(locus of control)라는 개념을 내놓고 있는데 이는 켈리(Kelly)와 와이너(Weiner) 등에 의해 補完되어 있다. 結論的으로, 歸屬理論은 人間行爲의 複雜性을 이해하고 있는 것으로서 純粹한 理論的 發展보다는 應用의 可能性이 보다 높이 평가되고 있다.

社會的 學習理論(Social Learning Theory)은 밴두라(A. Bandura)에 의해 제시된 것으로서 作動理論을 擴張시킨 것이다. 이 理論에서는 個人, 環境 및 行爲라는 3者間의 相互作用을 重視하고 있으며, 특히 다음의 2가지 점에서 作動理論을 擴張하고 있다. 첫째, 作動理論에서 말하는 直接的 學習過程에 더하여 模倣的 學習이라는 개념을 내세우며, 둘째 行爲는 結果의 함수라는 데 대한 지나친 誤解를 없애고 人間에게는 環境을 自主的으로 解釋할 力量(self-reactive capacity)이 있다는 점을 강조하기 위하여 自制(self-control)의 개념을 제

시하고 있다.

간단히 말해서 現在로서 組織行爲의 分野에서도 가장 發展의 可能性이 큰 理論은 社會的學習理論으로 평가되고 있다.

II. 새로운 方法論的 次元

앞에서 소개한 組織行爲論의 새로운 이론적 경향들은 하나같이 組織行爲의 相互作用的本質을 강조하고 있기 때문에 새로운 調査方法論에 대한 要求가 發生하게 되었다. 여기서는 이러한 새로운 方法論的 次元에 대해서 고찰하기로 한다.

方法論의 새로운 전개는 대체로 4개의 方向에서 살펴볼 수 있다. 첫째, Etic에서 Emic에로의 변화이다. 이들 用語는 人類學에서 따온 것으로서 前者는 局外者 혹은 觀察者, 後者는 內部人 혹은 原住民을 의미한다. 따라서 이 변화는 과거에 硏究者가 그의 硏究對象인 組織 밖에서 이를 바라보던 方法을 넘어서서 組織과 密着하여 이를 內部로부터 理解하는 데로 轉換하는 方法論的 경향을 일컫는 것으로 볼 수 있다.

둘째, Nomothetic에서 Idiographic에로의 변화이다. 이들 用語는 心理學에서 따온 것이며, 前者는 集團中心的, 標準的인 實驗設計나 統制된 狀況設定을 위주로 하는 것을, 그리고 後者는 個人中心的인 실험설계와 自然스러운 狀況設定을 중시하는 것을 뜻한다. 따라서 이는 과거의 실험을 주도했던, 人間은 同一하며 狀況은 安定的이라는 가정이 붕괴되고, 복잡다양한 人間性과 부단히 변하는 狀況을 고려해야 하는 현시점에서 절실히 요구되는 方法論的 轉換이라 볼 수 있다.

세째, 量的技法에서 質的技法에로의 변화이다. 質的技法의 중요성에 대해서는 오래전부터 논의가 있어 왔으나 아직도 그 개념조차 희미한 형편이다. 이것은 앞서 소개한 Emic, Idiographic의 方法論과 분리될 수 없으며 따라서 이들과 함께 점점 널리 적용되도록 해야 할 것이다.

끝으로, 質問紙法에서 觀察法에로의 변화이다. 이들 方法論은 특히 資料蒐集에 관계되는 것으로서 전통적으로는 오직 질문지법만이 사용되어 왔다. 관찰법은 아직도 그 적용범위나 신뢰성이 限定되어 있긴 하지만, 組織을 있는 그대로의 狀態대로 이해하려 할 때, 그리고 무엇보다도 社會的 學習理論의 視角을 도입하려 할 때에는 이는 필수적인 方法論的 요청이 될 것이다.

以上에서 새로운 理論的·方法論的 次元을 살펴보았지만 이들은 傳統的 接近法과 相極的인 性格을 지닌다기 보다는 오히려 補完的인 役割을 하는 것으로 생각해야 할 것이다.