

Individual and Group Behavior within Organizations

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Abstract

Organizational behavior is the study of performance and action, both in groups and individually, within an enterprise. This field of study scans human behavior in its work environment.

Organizational behavior determines the effect on job structure, performance, communication, motivation, leadership, decision-making skills, etc. The way the individual behaves and the behavior as a group has two perspectives - internal and external.

The aim of the paper is to define the theoretical concepts underlying individual behavior and group behavior in organizations and the theoretical and practical basis of the contribution of group efficiency assessment by identifying group dimensions that need to be improved to increase individual effectiveness.

To exemplify these theoretical notions, we applied a questionnaire to a number of 102 subjects, aged between 18 and 65 years and from different social classes. The questionnaire examined the effectiveness of the group from the perspective of eight dimensions: purpose and objectives, roles, team processes, team relationships, intergroup relationships, problem solving, passion and commitment, skills and learning.

Key words: teamwork, behavior, organization, decision-making skills, performance

J.E.L. classification: M 50, M 54, M59

1. Introduction

Organizational behavior is the study of the performance and action, both in the group and individually, within an enterprise. This field of study considers human behavior in its work environment.

Organizational behavior has an effect on job structure, performance, communication, motivation, leadership, decision-making skills, etc. The way in which the individual behaves, and the group behavior have two perspectives - internal and external.

Most of the time, in an organization, we cannot choose the teams we want to be a part of or the people we would like to work with, the establishment of the teams being a management decision. And because, in this way, we are often placed in a situation which involves working with people we do not know very well, it is important from the first moments to establish the rules according to which we will carry out our teamwork. Another important aspect which helps us achieve our goals is maintaining a constant relationship with the management of the organization. Most of the time, communication is performed via the team leader, who must be constantly up to date with the stage of the activity's development, the resources necessary to achieve the objectives, changes of plans which occur along the way, the needs of the team members.

If the meetings and teamwork do not take place in a climate of collaboration and openness, the leader will not be able to identify the real problems within the team, communication with the management team will not be objective, and support from the management will be delayed, a fact that, most of the times, leads to the failure of the team. As long as the change in the attitude of each member towards the team and towards the organization will be delayed, the effectiveness of teamwork, personal and group satisfactions will also be delayed.

2. Theoretical aspects regarding individual and group behavior

The evolution of groups can be analyzed, according to Tuckman and Jensen (Tuckman&Jensen, 1977, pp. 419-427), from the perspective of five stages, namely:

Table no. 1. Stages of group development

Stage 1 „Forming”	Stage 2 „Storming”	Stage 3 „Norming”	Stage 4 „Performing”	Stage 5 „Adjourning”
when tasks, rules and methods are discovered, information and resources are obtained and the leader is the support;	when internal conflicts arise and evolve and group members emotionally reject the task;	when the conflict settles and cooperation occurs, opinions are exchanged and new standards and rules emerge;	when working in a team, roles are flexible, solutions are found and implemented;	when the group dissolves and people disperse after completing the task.

Source: Adapted from (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977)

Analyzing the steps described above, one can see that a prerequisite for the functioning of the group is the establishment and acceptance of the rules according to which the group will operate. The ideal situation for the organization is when the informal (unofficial) rules of the group coincide with the formal (official) rules of the organization. The responsibility for ensuring the existence of this harmony between the informal and formal rules of the group rests with the manager, in exercising his/her functions, the compatibility of the two types of rules being essential not only for the group's functioning, but also for its performance.

The group influences effectiveness by size, members' characteristics, individual objectives and roles and the group's stage of development (Macarie&Moldovan, 2018, pp. 71-87). Each individual belongs to an age, sex, religion, social category, family, group of friends, etc., which are assimilated in the form of cognitive-affective structures, which are part of the self-image and determine, mediate the behavior.

In other words, the group is the natural framework of people's life and activity, the community which performs a secure function, a support in situations of stress, problems, etc. Supplementary, the group also fulfills a formative function - in which the personality is formed. Ultimately, society influences the individual primarily through the group that encompasses him/her.

An interesting fact is that until preadolescence the reference group is the family, which offers models of behavior, clichés of appreciation and reaction, opinions, knowledge about nature and society (family being the first socio-cultural matrix); during (and after) preadolescence the reference group is the same age group. The „in group” and the reference group may not coincide, the individual being axiologically anchored to another group. The distinction between in group and reference group reveals the continuous correlation between reality and aspiration, present and future.

Organizational behavior is the study of individuals and groups in organizations. It involves understanding, predicting and controlling human behavior.

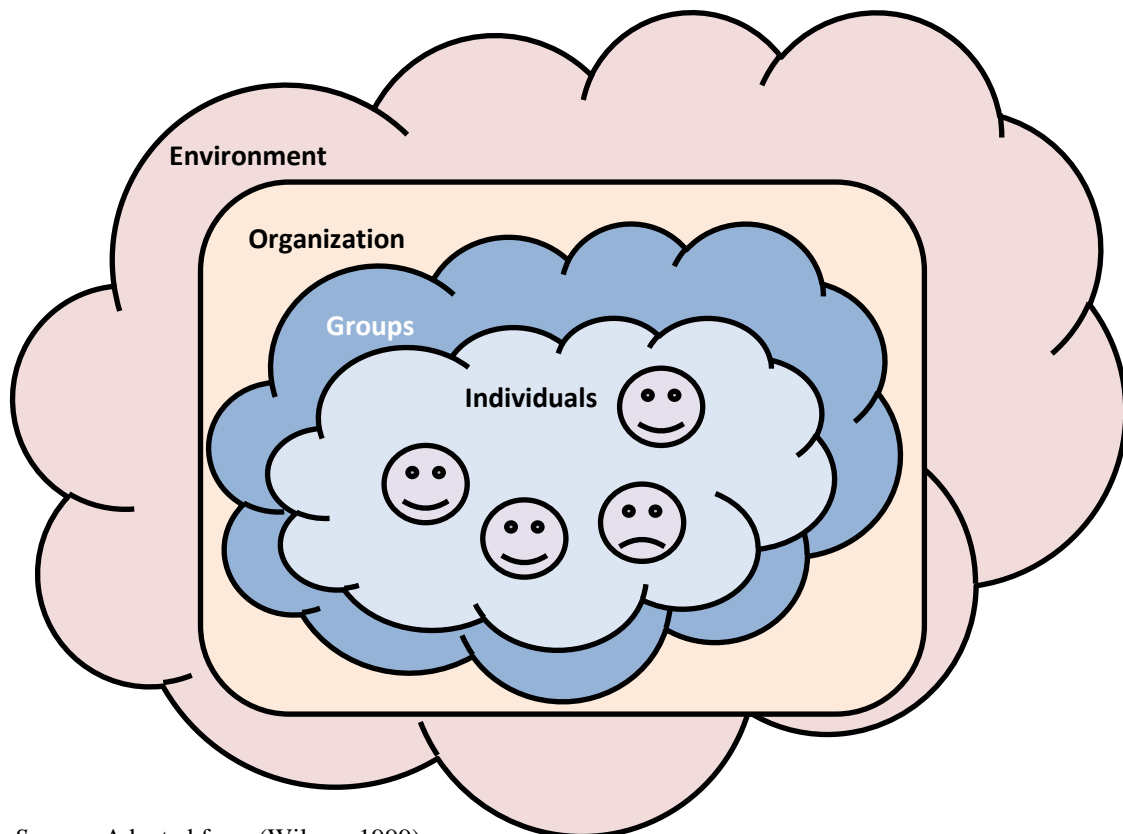
The field of study of the organizational behavior is to understand people's behavior and relationships with other variables which are included throughout the organization. The study of organizational behavior involves understanding (Dindire, 2012, pp. 16-32):

- people's behavior;
- the management process;
- the organizational context in which the management process takes place;
- organizational and work processes;
- interactions with the external environment of which the organization is a part.

There is a cooperation relationship between what happens inside organizations and what happens outside. Fiona Wilson believes that we also need to look beyond what we normally consider an organization and think about the work process in broader terms (Wilson, 1999). Starting from the variables described above, we can identify four dimensions which collectively influence behavior in organizations:

- The individual;
- Group;
- Organization;
- Environment.

Figure no. 1. Dimensions of influence behavior in organizations



Source: Adapted from (Wilson, 1999)

Analyzing the above figure, we see that the individual is a central component of organizational behavior and a necessary part of any behavioral situation, whether acting individually or as part of a group, in response to organizational expectations, or as a result of environmental influences. Each individual brings to the organization a history of attitudes, values and experiences.

Individuals have unique personalities which create predispositions for certain behaviors. Where the needs of the individual and the requirements of the organization are incompatible, situations of frustration and conflict may arise. It is the task of the managers to create an environment which allows the needs of individuals to be met and at the same time to achieve organizational goals (Vlasceanu, 2003, pp. 131-133).

3. Research on individual behavior versus group behavior within organizations

The research was, from a methodological perspective, a questionnaire applied to 102 subjects, with ages between 18 and 65 and from different social classes.

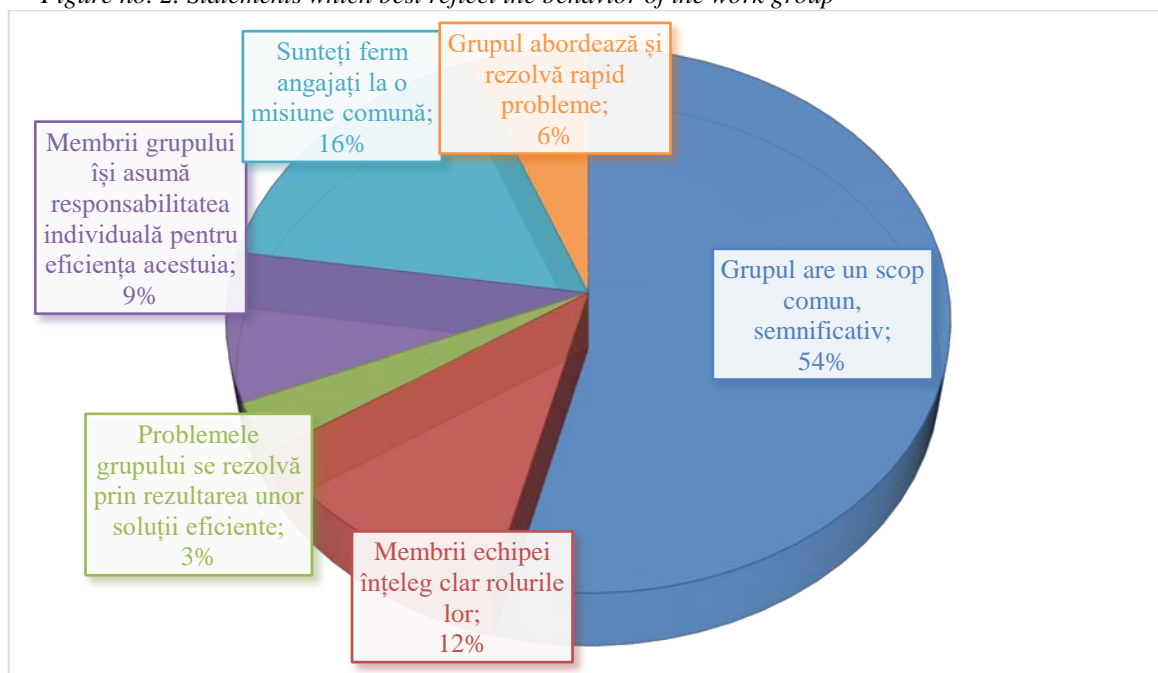
The research instrument used was the questionnaire, limited to 20 questions. The main topics covered, regarding individual and group behavior, were:

- group membership;
- sharing the group of common rules of conduct;
- teamwork and individual drive;
- arranging the priorities in view of fulfilling the group's needs;
- the feeling of accomplishment within the group;
- individual efficiency versus group efficiency;
- the efficiency of communication within the group;
- appreciation of other members' efforts;
- taking the initiative within the group.

People live organized in groups because they are social beings, who bring with them interests, experiences, knowledge. By belonging to a group we agree to submit to its influences and habits. Sometimes, we make these choices based on what defines us, or for the simple reason that we want to be accepted in another framework. Within the studied community, out of 102 surveyed people, 9 answered that they do not belong to a social group, which means a percentage of 8.82%. The remaining 91.18% consider that they belong to a social group.

Each person, depending on their character and behavior, sees the role of the group he/she is a part of in a different manner from the other members of the group, thus the 102 respondents stated that:

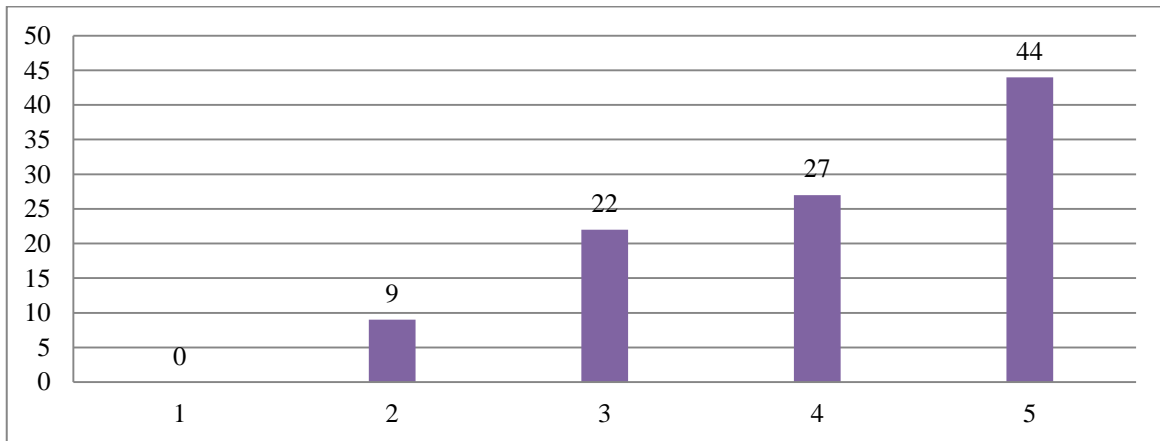
Figure no. 2. Statements which best reflect the behavior of the work group



Source: Own interpretation

Individual reinforcement is a phenomenon of encouragement produced by the feeling of belonging to the group and of achievement within the group. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the minimum, 5 being the maximum), the feeling of accomplishment within the work group in relation to the work carried out is divided among the 102 respondents as follows:

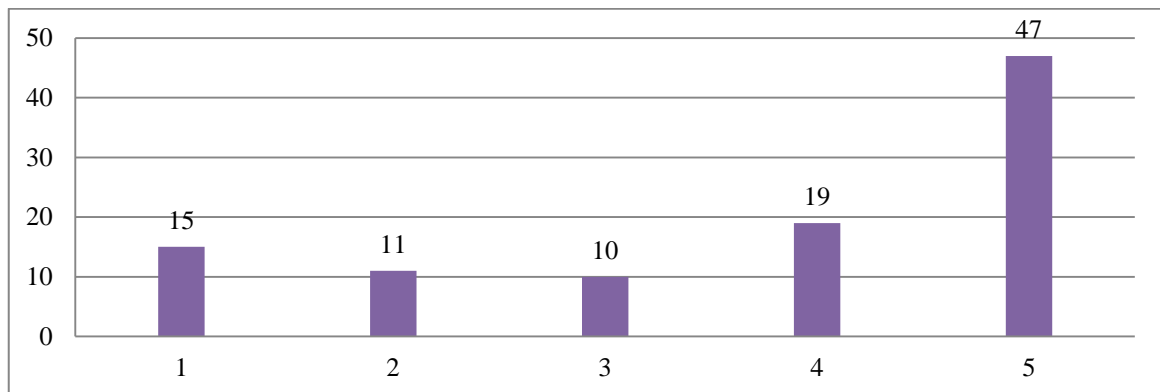
Figure no. 3. The feeling of accomplishment within the work group in relation to the work carried out



Source: Own interpretation

Even if at first sight the members of a team do completely different things from each other, they all need the information of their colleagues, thus a chain forms. And the elimination of any element which forms it, leads to the fall of the whole. Only when things are put together and the purpose of the team is fulfilled, the importance of each member is seen and we appreciate the efforts of the other members of the work group:

Figure no. 4. Do you appreciate the effort of the other members who contribute within the group?



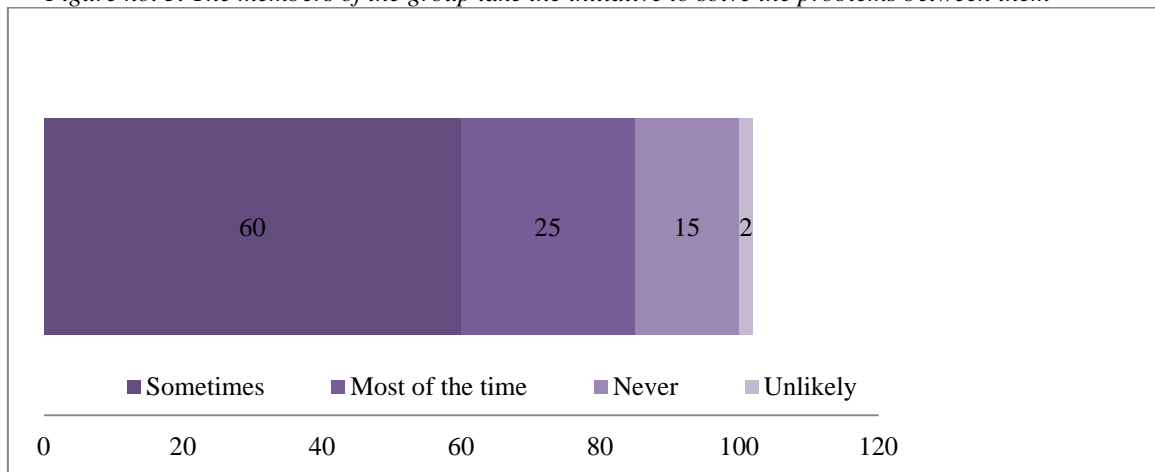
Source: Own interpretation

According to the collected results, within the created community, over 50% of the respondents appreciate the efforts of the other team members, being aware that only together they can fulfill the team's goal.

Communication within the group is another topic tackled in the questionnaire which needs to be addressed and analyzed, allowing exchanges of ideas and emotions, providing conditions for sharing experiences, discussions in order to solve conflicts or to identify problem-solving solutions.

The research emphasized the fact that over 80% of the study's participants are satisfied with the communication within the work group, which allows solving problems between them much faster and without involving the team leader.

Figure no. 5. The members of the group take the initiative to solve the problems between them



Source: Own interpretation

4. Conclusions

The analysis undertaken in this paper details persuasive results and has shown that: the membership of individuals in a social group is greater than 90%; the work group, in a 50% proportion, sometimes shares the same rules of conduct within it; the feeling of accomplishment within the group in relation to the work carried out is present more within the masculine community than the feminine one; the ability to be more efficient alone and not within a team is a characteristic usually encountered in individual male behavior; the work / reward ratio is better seen by men than by women; age influences individual behavior and group behavior, as well as norms of behavior within the group.

Making some correlations between most of the answers collected we can briefly conclude that almost all people are part of a social group, a group which appreciates the unique individual qualities and shares approximately the same behavioral norms. The work group is a fairly common group, created in order to solve significant common projects / problems / situations, where each member makes additional efforts, boosting the individual capacity of each member.

From a professional point of view, if work is carried out in a team, it goes without saying that the priorities of the group / work team are arranged according to its needs, limiting the importance of daily activities to some extent.

The undertaken research shows that the creation of the group is a beneficial, but extremely dynamic process, and in order to maintain the effectiveness of the group, its members must be aware of their role and abilities. Human behavior in the work environment has effects on: the structure of the group to which it belongs, the individual, but also the group performance, the development of communication, the increase in motivation, the development of decision-making skills, etc. Activity in a group can increase job satisfaction and motivation, especially for those who value social interactions.

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