Roots of Organizational Behavior

Organizational behavior (OB) is a field that was built from the framework of many different social sciences. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and management are the foundations of OB. Each of these disciplines is comprised of many levels, and degrees are available in each one. The following provides an overview of each of these disciplines and how they relate to the study of OB.

Psychology is the social science study of the mind and behavior. Key terms in this study are nature verses nurture, sensation and perception, and personality. As the biggest building block of OB, psychology can be focused on employees' individual personality strengths.

Sociology is the study of society and social problems. When studying the behavior of a company, OB specialists may view that company as a small society and evaluate what types of issues may arise, from cultural to educational differences between the employees.

Anthropology is the study of all humans, past and present. When evaluating a company, someone in the field of OB might look at the historical roots of that organization. Organizations evolve through the changes in ownership and other leadership roles. The changing culture of their market can evolve. For example, healthier eating practices can dramatically change the menu at a fast-food restaurant, which can create a significant impact on an organization and its culture.

Political science is the study of governmental systems. This requires organizational behaviorists to understand the laws and regulations that govern their particular industry. For instance, a manufacturing firm that produces industrial waste must adhere to disposal procedures that were set up by their state, as well as comply with governmental laws.

Economics is the social science that deals with the flow of business through an organization from the production to distribution of goods. As a root of OB, economics has a place in all businesses, from manufacturing to the service industry.

Management is the final social science building block of OB. Management is the study of how to control or lead people. In an organization, OB specialists may not be managing directly but may be consulting within organizations to evaluate their management processes and style.

The study of organizational behavior provides a well-rounded approach to the study of an organization. This approach allows an individual in this field to look at an
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organization from many perspectives, thus helping to make it a happy and healthier environment.