

A REVIEW STUDY ON THE APPROACHES AND CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt has been made to review and examine systematically the underlying concept, various approaches and models proposed to understand the organisational effectiveness. A number of criteria have been given for the assessment and measurement of organisational effectiveness. It has been stated that different approaches to assess Organisational Effectiveness are products of different arbitrary models of organisations and effectiveness has been explained as a product of individual values and preferences. Therefore the best criteria for assessing effectiveness cannot be identified and singled out. The multiple models of organisation with their own espoused criteria of effectiveness need to be systematically compared and integrated with one another.

INTRODUCTION

Organisational effectiveness is as old a concept as an organisation. It is the extent to which an organization, given certain resources and means, achieves its objectives without placing undue strain on its members. Effectiveness is the ability of an organization to mobilize its centres of power for action-producing and adaptation and can be seen in terms of survival of the organization.

Researchers have proposed a variety of models for examining Organisational Effectiveness but the concern is that very few of them agree with each other. Though there is no dearth of literature on effectiveness, irony is that instead of adding to the existing perspectives, each writing has tried to replace the previous one. Past authors have pointed out myriads of problems but answers and specific guidelines are very scarce. Actually, the need of the theorists, researchers and managers pertaining to Organisational effectiveness are substantially different. Managers use judgments of Organisational Effectiveness to justify what they already do well, to manage conflict, to motivate social change, to contribute to an image, to displace or assign responsibility and so on. (Cameron 1980). Researchers are more apt to focus on circumscribing effectiveness

so that measurable indicators can be identified and reliable judgments made. Theorists prefer not to circumscribe effectiveness but to develop propositions and relationships that have generalized applicability in organisations. This divergence in usage inhibits a single model of effectiveness from emerging. But at the same time, this divergence gives organisational effectiveness its utility. Determination of Criteria of effectiveness across organisation is also difficult. The value of criteria lie in the perception and preference of the individuals. Usually, an institution needs to be internally effective to become externally efficient (Dalwinder Kaur, 2010)

At the organisation level it can be defined as maximization of return to the organisation by all means for some specific period of time.

At the societal level the effectiveness of a particular organisation is given by the costs and benefits associated with its continuing functions.

At the individual level, Organisational Effectiveness is discussed in terms of three generic requirements- joining and remaining in the organisation, performing dependably the assigned activities and engaging in occasional innovative and cooperative behaviour in the service of organisational objectives

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The concept of organisational effectiveness is a popular subject in the literature, yet there is no consensus agreement about its definition.

Backhard (1969) suggests that the organisation should take care of the following factors for achieving organisational effectiveness:

1. The total organisation, the significant, subparts and the individuals manage the work against goals and plans for achievement of these goals.
2. Decisions are made by, and near the sources of information regardless of their location on organisation Chart.
3. Communication-horizontally and vertically, is relatively undistorted. People are generally open and confronting.
4. Minimum amount of inappropriate win-loss activity between individuals and groups
5. Shared value and management strategy to support and maintain integrity constantly

As Steers (1977) points out, there is no generally recognized theory on the concept, no agreement on its criteria of measurement, determinants and influences. Lowe and Soo (1980) believes that often effectiveness is described in terms of financial measures like profit, profitability, return on investment, but they argue that these criteria are insufficient and moreover cannot be applied to all organisations and are not sufficient in them. Explicit research into the concept began to emerge about 20 years ago but the term remains controversial and still somewhat ill-defined.

Bernard Burnes (1988) argues that as there is no universal definition of organisational effectiveness, there can be no universal recipe for achieving it; organisations operating under the same conditions may adopt different approaches and still be successful

Turnipseed (1988) visualizes from an interactionist perspective, develops a model depicting the relationships between effectiveness, climate and culture, with an emphasis on the contribution of climate and culture to organisational effectiveness. A preliminary validation study which uses an effective and an ineffective organisation with very different climates and cultures is reported.

Bernard Red Shaw (2001) considers measures commonly used for organisational effectiveness and suggests a way of combining them to form the basis of a framework that can be agreed with the client before the event takes place. This framework should also fit into the organisation's existing performance

evaluation system.

D. K. Srivastava (2004) investigates the relationship between organisational structure, communication, nature of task and organisational effectiveness in manufacturing organisations belonging to public sector, private sector and multinational companies. Three dimensions of organisational structure namely formalisation, participation and centralisation were considered. Effectiveness was measured using perceptual method which included output (quality), output (quantity), and proper utilisation of resources, flexibility and future orientation.

Approaches to Understand Organisational Effectiveness

1. Goal Attainment Model: The goals approach measures OE in terms of accomplishment of predetermined goals (Etzioni 1964; Campbell 1977; Price 1972; Scott 1977; Robbins 1990; Hannan and Freeman 1977). One problem with this model is that organisation may be judged to be effective in areas outside its goal domain.

Amitai Etzioni (1960) believes that goals, as ideal states, do not offer the possibility of realistic assessment, goals, as cultural entities, arise outside the organisation as social system and cannot arbitrarily be attributed as properties of organisation itself.

2. System Resource Model : Developed as a reaction to the goals school, the system school of thought proposes that organisations are effective only if the organisations means (people , resources processes, infrastructure etc) essential to reach the ends are healthy and effective (Georgopolous 1957; Yuchtman and seashore 1967). This approach focuses on the ability of the organisation to obtain needed resources. Here inputs replace output as the primary consideration. However organisation may prove to be effective even when a competitive advantage in the resource market place does not exist.

3. Process Model: In this approach effectiveness is equated with internal Organisational health, efficiency or well-oiled internal processes & procedures. Again however an organisation may be effective even when organisation health is low and internal process are questionable

4. Ecological Model: Also known as participant satisfaction model. Miles 1980 proposed this model where OE is defined as the ability of an organisation to satisfy the expectations of its strategic

constituencies. Strategic constituencies are those individual, interest groups, coalitions and organisations upon which the focal organisation is critically dependent. OE is attained whenever an organisation distinguishes among its strategic groups (such as investors, customers, employees and suppliers etc.) are important for the survival of the company (Penning and Goodman)

Connolly, Conlon and Deutsch (1980) opine that the strategic approach integrates both the goal and systems approaches to effectiveness by viewing these approaches as special cases of multiple constituency effectiveness.

5. Behavioral Approach: According to the behavioral approach, the extent to which individual and organisational goals are integrated affects the degree of organisational effectiveness. When all share organisational goals, McGregor calls it the true integration of goals. When organisational and individual goals are perfectly integrated, there will be high degree of effectiveness. Alternatively there can be low degree of organisational effectiveness or totally ineffective organisations.

6. Competing Values Approach: According to competing values approach there is no specific set of criteria that best reflects OE and it therefore combines diverse preferences under a competing model.

This approach proposed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) is a three dimension model. The first dimension is related to organizational focus (individual to organisation); the second dimension is involved with organizational structure (stability to flexibility); the third dimension is about the organizational means and end (systems to goals) Research continues to validate the competing values framework in theory (Kalliath et al., 1999), and in practice (Buenger et al., 1996).

7. The Contradiction school: This school outlines that an organisation is effective if the organizational constraints namely goals, constituencies, systems, government- regulatory agents and promised timeframes are investigated elaborately, prioritized according to their value to the organisation and fulfilled without being contradicting to the other groups (Banner and Gange 1995)

Criteria for Organisational Effectiveness

Organisational Effectiveness has been defined and conceptualized in numerous ways but there is lack of consensus among the researchers

regarding its criteria and factors.

Organisational effectiveness may be measured by subjective as well as objective criteria. In general, objective measures include financial indicators like profit, return on investment, share price etc. and subjective measures have focused on overall effectiveness. Reiman (1982) reports that subjective evaluation of an organisation's effectiveness or competence was found to be an excellent predictor of the subsequent survival and growth of the organisation.

Thorndike (1949) identified some criteria-productivity, net profit, mission accomplishment & organisational growth and stability. Morse (1953) suggests that the organisation can be evaluated in terms of human satisfaction. Likert (1961) believes that job satisfaction & other satisfactions derived by members of the organisation constitute an important criterion which can be used for evaluating the administrative effectiveness of an organisation.

Cameron (1986) expresses the concern that in some kind of organisations researchers face a more troublesome criteria problem than in other organisations. For e.g. criteria of effectiveness are especially ambiguous in organisations that do not have clearly defined goals, that are so loosely coupled that acquired resources have little or no connection with the organisations' products.

Katz and Miller (1995) emphasize four key issues for the success of the organisation. These include

- " Focused leadership
- " Motivated workforce
- " Smart strategic management and
- " Sound business execution

Pestonjee and Pandey (1996) state that development of proper role perception is essential for the organisational effectiveness. Sparrow and Hiltrop (1997) characterize autonomy in decision, group role, pursuance of reward and career systems and increased role of social partners (trade unions and employee representatives) vital to organisational effectiveness.

Guthrie (2001) found high positive correlation between objective and subjective measures of effectiveness.

MODELS OF ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Researchers have offered a variety of models for examining organisational effectiveness, yet there

is little consensus as to what constitute a valid set of effectiveness criteria. Vijailakshmi and Gautam (2011) view that the differences in measurement are with regard to criteria problems, normative vs. descriptive models, dynamic vs. static models and there are also differences with regard to level of analysis

Georgopoulos & Taunenbaum (1957) use an output and goal accomplishment model and measure effectiveness in terms of productivity, organisational flexibility and absence of inter organisational strain.

Steers (1975) has summarized a representative sample of 17 models on the basis of type of measure (normative and descriptive), generalizability of criteria and methodology of derivation of criteria (deductive or inductive). While each model uses two or more criteria for evaluation of organisational effectiveness, there is surprisingly little overlap between various studies. Steers conclude that the effectiveness construct is too complex to be explained by these attempts at model development.

Cameron (1978) analyses types and sources of organisational criteria used in 21 studies, has developed a 25 x 25 matrix of cells with the evaluation criterion on the X-axis and the parameters measured on Y-axis. The 21 studies fall into 43 cells in the matrix but it is seen that only 9 out of these 43 cells contain overlapping choices. This lack of overlap clearly illustrates the wide variation in the approaches to the measurement of organisational effectiveness.

Pfeffer and Salanick (1978) also view organisational effectiveness as a multifaceted concept reflecting criteria and preference of various interest groups.

Verma and Jain (2001) proposes that multidimensionality of organisational effectiveness is a result of the multiple values and preferences with which an organisation is approached.

Rensis Likert Model of Organisational Effectiveness

He has identified three variables - causal, intervening and output- for determining effectiveness.

1. Causal Variables - Factors which influence the course of developments within an organisation. They include management strategies structure, styles, skills, policies, procedures etc. They are independent variables within the control of the organisation and its management.

2. Intervening Variables- Factors that represent the internal state of the organisation. Include

aspects such as commitment to objectives, morale and motivation of employees, decision making, problem solving skills, communication, group cohesiveness etc.

3. Output Variables - Reflect the results/ accomplishments/ failures of the organisation. Output could be measured in terms of production, sales, (net profit), etc

Taking into consideration various causal and intervening variables, one can measure organisational effectiveness. The plan must envisage the long-term commitment of the management for higher productivity, zero turnover and absenteeism. The impact of external factors should also be considered

McGregor expresses that when organisational and individual goals are perfectly integrated, there is high degree of Organisational effectiveness

A Scale of Organizational Effectiveness developed by Mott (1972) defined effectiveness along these lines- adaptability, flexibility, and productivity.

Khandwala (1985) proposes that Organisational effectiveness is determined by a large number of variables as follows

1. Contextual variables : Industry in which organization operates, legal and political environment, the type of organization and ownership etc
2. Strategic variables: goals of organization, strategies of the organization, growth rate and style of top management.
3. Structural variables: centralization, formalization, specific functions, division of labour etc.
4. Process variables : communication, leadership and conflict resolution

Schmid (2002) studies the relationship between the organizational properties and OE in service organisation and concluded that organizational properties like centralization, formalization, coordination etc. determined effectiveness

Awasthy and Gupta (2004) find that Indian executives perceived OE as adaptability, innovativeness, and accountability to the stakeholders' interest by following HR systems and policies

Srivastava A K (2008) explains the effect of work environment and revealed that participants who perceived their work environment as to be adequate

and favourable scored comparatively higher on the measures of job satisfaction, performance, and perceived organizational effectiveness. The results also specified that psycho-social environment in work-place exert more impact on employees' job behaviour and organizational effectiveness than the physical environment does.

Kondalkar (2009) describes the criteria for Organisational effectiveness as

1. Direction:- Setting objective, long and short term planning, entrepreneurship and sound investment, devising apt organisational structures and maintaining a favourable image of the enterprise
2. Delegation :- Motivation by encouraging well-judged decisions close to the point of action itself
3. Accountability :- clear understanding of who is accountable for what (without any gaps)
4. Control :- Deals with monitoring performance against objectives and standards
5. Efficiency :- Optimum use of resources of and the achievement of planned levels of output with minimum costs ; input output ratio
6. Coordination: - Integrating the activities and contribution of different parts of the enterprise. Supportive relationship; free flow of production related activities.
7. Adaptation: - ability to respond to changing environment, capacity to innovate and solve problems.
8. Social Systems and Personal effectiveness: - Maintenance of social systems and terms and condition of employment in order to enlist people's commitment.

Barry A. Macy and Philip H. Mirvis examine organisational effectiveness in Korean university Hospital in behavior economic terms and report that intact organizational culture and quality of work life for nurses will undoubtedly lead to improved organizational effectiveness. Without efficient and effective nursing care, desired patient outcomes cannot be achieved.

Carnall describes effectiveness on qualitative and quantitative spectrum and emphasizes that management deployment, adaptability and corporate culture is to be developed for sustainable effectiveness.

Morgan (1995) suggests an analytical model of effectiveness and observes that a number of internal organisation systems and external environmental

influences affect effectiveness of an organisation whereas Smith (1996) finds that high level of formalization generates large clientele and high revenues in voluntary organisations. A moderate degree of formalization contributes to high effectiveness.

Schmid (2002) highlights the relationship between organisational properties and organisational effectiveness in three types of service organisation. Results show that properties like centralization, formalization, coordination etc determined effectiveness. Awasthy and Gupta (2004) analyze perception of Indian executives about organisational effectiveness. It is found that Indian executives tend to define OE as adaptability, innovativeness and accountability to the stakeholders' interest by following human resource systems and policies

Call for Moratorium on Studies of Organisational Effectiveness

Seeing the complexity and ambiguity associated with the criteria of effectiveness, some authors have even argued that research on Organisational effectiveness should cease. Goodman, Atkin and Schoorman (1983) call for a moratorium on traditional studies of effectiveness arguing that the empirical literature till date has been mostly inadequate in helping to understand the effectiveness of organisations. They stress that a completely different kind of research is needed. These authors mention four main problems of the available literature.

- a) Inadequacy in identifying indicators of effectiveness
- b) Over-reliance on single indicators of effectiveness and ignoring the relationships among multiple indicators
- c) Underspecified models and ignoring the timeframe of the criterion variable and
- d) Overgeneralization to dissimilar organisations or subunits

Hannan and Freeman (1977) also support the call for abolition of effectiveness research in organisational sciences.

Cameron (1986) demonstrates why organisational effectiveness studies are crucial in certain types of organisation. He also addresses the objections raised by Goodman et al He finds in this study that certain managerial strategies are strongly associated with improving effectiveness overtime. In fact, Managerial strategies were found to be more

important than structure, demographics, finances and other factors. Proactive strategies and those with an external emphasis are more successful than internal and reactive strategies.

ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Numerous problems of assessing OE have been discussed earlier (Cameron and Whetton, 1983). They state that different approaches to assessing OE are products of different arbitrary models of organisations and effectiveness has been explained as a product of individual values and preferences. Therefore the best criteria for assessing effectiveness cannot be identified.

Cameron (1986) argues that lay public may make judgment regardless of the criteria available. Researchers, on the other hand, are less willing to accept any arbitrary criteria of effectiveness in their assessments, so they struggle to identify indicators that can be measured reliably, that relates to organisational performance (i.e. the indicators possess validity) and they may have some theoretical utility.

CONCLUSION

Since there is absence of a singular theory and a unified framework within which to study OE, some of the authors proposed that the traditional studies on organisational effectiveness should not be carried anymore. Yet another set of authors claim that multiple models of organisational effectiveness are required as there is no universal theory of organisations. The impossibility of circumscribing a single set of criteria of organisational effectiveness prohibits a single model of effectiveness from being developed which according to them is neither possible nor helpful. These multiple models of organisation with their own espoused criteria of effectiveness need to be systematically compared and integrated with one another.

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