THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN OD

Effectiveness of behavioural process interventions in an organisation may be seen as an attempt to assess the impact of a planned effort to bring about changes for greater organisational effectiveness. This study, therefore, falls in the realm of organisation development (OD).

OD is a term used to describe a wide range of social science-based approaches to planned organisational change. Since its inception in the early 1960s, the number of practitioners and scholars interested in this field has grown exponentially. So has the body of literature describing it. With this growth in both theory and practice have come several attempts to synthesize the available knowledge on OD (e.g., Alderfer, 1974; Buchanan, 1969; Friedlander and Brown, 1974; and Strauss 1973). Yet, as Porras and Berg (1978) observed, few attempts have been made to examine, in aggregate, the empirical research in the area. In fact, a commonly accepted assumption is that virtually no empirical evaluations exist and that of those that do, the methodological quality is rather low. For example, Strauss (1973) noted that, "In the end OD is likely to be evaluated in terms of gut reactions rather than dispassionate research" (pp 3); and Dowling (1973) further lamented: "... the failure of behavioural scientists and practitioners alike to do research on organisational development programmes that deserve(s) the designation 'scientific'" (pp 66).
Friedlander and Brown (1974) described organisations as composed of four interacting systems: (a) people, (b) technologies, (c) processes, and (d) structure. They derived two general approaches to organisational change by combining people systems with process systems and technological systems with structural systems. The first approach, called human-processual, consists of a series of techniques focusing on people and processes. The second, titled technostructural, is mainly concerned with technologies and structures.

The human-processual approaches grew out of techniques developed in early laboratory activities conducted by the National Training Laboratories (NTL) along with survey feedback techniques developed about the same time at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. Human-processual approaches can be subdivided into three basic classes: (a) group development interventions, (b) intergroup relations development, and (c) survey feedback interventions.

The second set of change techniques, techno-structural approaches, are rooted mainly in the socio-technical systems paradigm pioneered by the Tavistock Institute in England and in industrial engineering approaches to the design of work systems. Three major classes of techno-structural approaches are: (a) the socio-technical systems approach which primarily includes intervention techniques following the Tavistock conceptualisation, (b) job design and job enlargement, and
finally (c) job enrichment. OD has historically been viewed as primarily consisting of human-processual orientations with the bulk of work to date based on these strategies. Subsequently approaches based on the socio-technical school also gained increasing usage as a later development.

Bennis (1969) defined OD as a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself. Beckhard (1969), at the same time, defined "Organisation Development as an effort (1) planned, (2) organisation-wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organisation effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organisation's "processes", using behavioural-science knowledge."

French and Bell (1983) defined OD as a long-range effort to improve an organisation's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organisation culture—-with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams—-with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research.

Argyris (1971) stressed the organisational renewal and revitalising in his description of OD: At the heart of organisational development is the concern for the vitalising,
energising, actualising, activating, and renewing of organisations through technical and human resources.

Burke and Schmidt (1971) in their definition of OD stated: "Using knowledge and skills from the behavioural sciences, organisational development is a process which attempts to increase organisational effectiveness by integrating individual desires for growth and development with organisational goals. Typically, this process is a planned change effort which involves a total system over a period of time, and these change efforts are related to the organisation's mission.

Pareek (1981) defined OD as a planned effort, initiated by process specialists(s) to help an organisation develop its diagnostic skills, coping capabilities, linkage strategies in the form of temporary and semipermanent systems, and a culture of mutuality.

Reviewing these definitions, several important dimensions of OD emerge:

1 It is planned. OD is a data-based approach to change which involves all of the ingredients that go into managerial planning. It involves goal setting, action planning, implementation, monitoring, and taking corrective action when necessary.

2 It is problem-oriented. OD attempts to apply theory and research from a number of disciplines, including behavioural science, to the solution of organisation problems.
3 It reflects a systems approach. OD is both systemic and systematic. It is a way of more closely linking the human resources and potential of an organisation to its technology, structure, and management processes.

4 It is not a "fix-it" strategy. OD reflects a continuous and ongoing process. It is not a series of ad hoc activities designed to implement a specific change. It takes time for it to become a way of life in the organisation.

5 It focuses on improvement. The emphasis of OD is on improvement. It is not just for "sick" organisations or for "wealthy" ones. It is something that can benefit almost any organisation.

6 It tries to build a culture of mutuality. OD is based on certain values which are important for the development of organisations as open and proactive systems. OD makes an effort to develop an OCTAPACE (Pareek and Rao, 1981) culture. OCTAPACE stands for eight important values which OD tries to develop in the organisation. These are: openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proaction, autonomy, collaboration and experimentation.

As Porras and Hoffer (1986) observed, "Most, if not all writers on this subject concur that OD's principal aim is to improve organisational performance (e.g., Beckhard, 1969; Beer, 1980; French and Bell, 1978; Lippitt, 1969). Others also include as a dual goal the personal development of organisation members (Friedlander and Brown, 1974; Harvey and Brown, 1982; Huse and
Cummings, 1985). These outcomes, however, are too global to give the field its needed focus; more operationally specific variables are required.

Let us now turn our attention to the kinds of dimensions or behaviours that OD efforts have attempted to influence. If behaviour is influenced by characteristics of an organisation's internal environment—that is, its system elements—then altering the system elements should lead to altered behaviour on the job. Organisation interventions change system elements so that they send organisation members new messages about which behaviours are desired and will be rewarded. The more the pattern of the new messages is consistent and related to behaviours contributing to the desired end goals of improved organisation performance and personal development, the more likely organisation members are to behave in the desired ways, and the more likely desired outcomes are to be achieved.

A plausible explanation for the failure of some OD efforts is that they have failed to address enough of the system elements of an organisation. This explanation is supported by evaluation research showing that large-scale, multiple approach efforts are more successful at increasing productivity than are more limited programmes focusing on only one or a few elements (Katzell and Yankelovitch, 1975).

Most often, reports of large-scale change projects do not even mention behaviours (Boje, Fedor and Rowland, 1982; Patterson,
1981; Paul and Cross, 1981). Even when behaviours are mentioned, they are typically outcome behaviours such as turnover, absenteeism, or grievances (Nicholas, 1982). More frequently, OD study reports describe changes in the attitudes or awareness of individual employees (Nicholas, 1979; Porras and Berg, 1978; White and Mitchell, 1976).

Porras and Hoffer (1986) surveyed 42 of the top scholars and practitioners in the field, using telephone interviews and open-ended questions. The participants nearly unanimously reported behaviour changes common to their interventions and showed at least moderate agreement as to what those changes are. Furthermore, the participants' theoretical orientations and professional affiliations did not cause them to differ as to the behaviours they reported. The behavioural changes included: Communicating openly, Collaborating, Taking responsibility, Maintaining a shared vision, Solving problems effectively, Respecting/Supporting, Processing/facilitating interactions, Inquiring, Experimenting, Generating participation, leading by vision, Functioning strategically, Promoting information flow, and Developing others.

Some typical targets of change have included an organisation's formal structure (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969; Davis and Lawrence, 1977; Galbraith, 1977), culture (Davis, 1984), incentive systems (Lawler, 1981), job design (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), sociotechnical "interfaces" (Cummings and Srivastava, 1977),
physical settings (Steele, 1971), group processes (Dyer, 1977; Schein, 1969), interpersonal processes (Argyris, 1962; Walton, 1969), and intergroup relationships (Blake, Shepard and Mouton, 1964; Burke, 1974).

Porras and Berg (1978) classify OD interventions into:
1 Group development interventions including laboratory training with a process emphasis, laboratory training with a task emphasis, process consultation and grid organisation development.
2 Intergroup relations development.
3 Survey feedback.
4 Adjunct interventions including counselling and cognitive training.

In a study of 35 OD efforts, Porras and Berg observed that most projects reported using more than one intervention. Laboratory training (both process and task) were used in over half of the studies. This was to be expected since OD sprang from human relations and T-group training roots. The survey feedback technique was the third most commonly used. These three approaches, process-oriented laboratory training, task-oriented laboratory training, and survey feedback, accounted for about two-thirds of the total interventions. Laboratory training or survey feedback was one of the intervention techniques used in 32 of the 35 studies. The lone exceptions were three studies which used the Managerial Grid approach (Blake, Mouton, Barnes and
Greiner, 1964; Beer and Kleisath, 1967; and Smith and Honour, 1969). A fourth Managerial Grid study (Kreinik and Colarelli, 1971) used process focused laboratory training along with the Grid approach. If only laboratory training (both process and task) is considered, 30 studies report it as one of the intervention techniques used. Clearly, laboratory training was the most commonly used OD change process.

Porras and Berg further analysed the data to determine if any significant trends in intervention usage developed over time. Taking 1970 as the mid-point, the interventions used prior to the date were compared to those used afterwards. The most notable changes were significant increases in the use of Survey Feedback and Process Consultation (from 20% to 45% and 7% to 30% respectively) and the large decreases in the use of the Managerial Grid approach (20% to 5%). Lab training continued to be the most common approach to OD and in fact had increased in usage. Within the lab training set of approaches, process-oriented training increased more than task-oriented training.

Blake and Mouton (1964) listed the major interventions in terms of their underlying themes. They described the following kinds of interventions: (1) discrepancy intervention, which calls attention to a contradiction in action or attitudes that then leads to exploration; (2) theory intervention, where behavioural science knowledge and theory are used to explain present behaviour and assumptions underlying the behaviour; (3)
procedural intervention, which represents a critiquing of how something is being done to determine whether the best methods are being used; (4) relationship intervention, which focuses attention on interpersonal relationships (particularly those where there are strong negative feelings) and surfaces the issues for exploration and possible resolution; (5) experimentation intervention, in which two different action plans are tested for their consequences before a final decision on one side is made; (6) dilemma intervention, in which an imposed or emergent dilemma is used to force close examination of the possible choices involved and the assumptions underlying them; (7) perspective intervention, which draws attention away from immediate actions and demands and allows a look at historical background, context, and future objectives in order to assess whether or not the actions are "still on target"; (8) organisation structure intervention, which calls for examination and evaluation of structural causes for organisational ineffectiveness; and (9) cultural intervention, which examines traditions, precedents and practices—the fabric of the organisation's culture—in a direct, focused approach.

Schmuck and Miles (1971) had proposed an "OD Cube" classifying OD interventions based on three dimensions—the diagnosed problems, the focus of attention, and the mode of intervention.

French and Bell (1983) classified interventions into the following major "families" or types of OD interventions: (1)
Diagnostic activities; (2) Team-Building activities; (3) Intergroup activities; (4) Survey-Feedback activities; (5) Education and Training activities; (6) Technostructural or Structural activities; (7) Process Consultation activities; (8) Grid Organisation Development activities; (9) Third-Party Peacemaking activities; (10) Coaching and Counselling activities; (11) Life-and Career-Planning activities; and (12) Planning and Goal-Setting activities.

Rossi and Freeman (1989) observed that long before Sir Thomas More coined the word utopia in 1516, persons everywhere had been seeking a perfect world. That their aspirations, and ours have hardly been realised is evident in the social problems and attendant personal problems that confront us in every country in the world.

Since antiquity, persons and groups have sought to describe, understand, and ameliorate the defects in the human condition in a myriad of ways. Indeed, one of the earliest "social experiments" took place in the 1700s. A British ship's captain observed the lack of scurvy among sailors serving on the ships of Mediterranean countries. He noticed, too, that citrus fruit was a part of their rations. Thereupon he made half his crew consume limes while the other half continued with their regular diet. Despite much grumbling among the crew in the "treatment" half, the experiment was a success; it showed that consuming limes could prevent scurvy.
The good captain probably did not have an explicit "impact model"—namely, that scurvy is a consequence of a vitamin C deficiency and that limes are rich in it. Nevertheless, the treatment worked and British seamen eventually were compelled to consume citrus fruit regularly, a practice that gave rise to the still-popular label "limeys". Incidentally, it took about 50 years before the captain's "social programme" was widely adopted. Then, as now, diffusion and acceptance of evaluation findings did not come easily.

Carnall (1982) stated that "currently, evaluation studies form a growing activity devoted to the collection, analysis and interpretation of data on the need for, implementation of, and impact of interventions aimed at some form of improvement to the functioning of organisations or other institutions. Evaluations are made for management and administrative purposes, for planning and policy formulation, and to provide for the accountability of those involved in the change. Evaluation facilitates judgements about any particular change programme and allows us to decide whether we need further change, a return to original conditions, or whether the situation is now acceptable to policy makers, and others."

Rossi and Freeman (1989) defined evaluation research as the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation, design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes. In other words,
evaluation researchers (evaluators) use social research methodologies to judge and improve the ways in which human services policies and programmes are conducted, from the earliest stages of defining and designing programmes through their development and implementation.

Regardless of the type of social intervention under study, evaluations are systematic to the extent that they employ social research approaches to gathering valid, reliable evidence. This commitment to the "rules" of social research is at the core of the perspective on evaluation. This is not to say, however, that evaluation studies follow some particular social research style or combination of styles. Indeed one of the distinguishing characteristics of programme evaluation is that its methods cover the gamut of prevailing research paradigms.

Evaluations may be undertaken for a variety of reasons (Chemlimsky, 1978): for management and administrative purposes, to assess the appropriateness of programme changes, to identify ways to improve the delivery of interventions, or to meet the accountability requirements of funding groups. They may be undertaken for planning and policy purposes, to test innovative ideas on how to deal with human and community problems, and to support advocacy of one programme as opposed to another. Finally, they may be undertaken to test a particular social science hypothesis or a principle of professional practice. For all these purposes, the key goal is to design and implement an evaluation
that is as objective as possible—that is, to provide a firm assessment, one that would be unchanged if the evaluation were repeated by the same evaluators or conducted by another group.

The scope of each evaluation, of course, depends on the specific purposes for which it is being conducted. In addition, how the evaluation questions are asked and what research procedures are used depend on whether the programme under evaluation is an innovative intervention, a modification or an expansion of an existing effort, or a well-established, stable human service activity. In this sense, evaluation encompasses several related sets of activities. It is useful to distinguish between three major classes of evaluation research: (1) analysis related to the conceptualisation and design of interventions; (2) monitoring of programme implementation; and (3) assessment of programme efficiency and effectiveness. Although it is not always possible to do fully, the evaluation of social programmes may need to include all three classes of activities. Evaluations that do so are termed comprehensive evaluations.

Micovic (1983) outlined a System Evaluation model given in Figure 2-1. Efficiency is a measure of output per unit of input. It is, in short, what we do, to do it with the least resources (staff, money, time, etc.). It is an expression of the relationship between the results obtained from a programme or activity and the efforts expended in terms of human, financial and other resources, and time. The assessment of efficiency is aimed at
improving implementation, and adds to the review of progress by

![Diagram of system evaluation model]

Figure 2-1. System evaluation model.

taking account of the results. In systems analysis terminology, the word 'results' is equivalent to 'outputs'. Under this heading a check is also made on such matters as the appropriateness of existing plans of operations, work schedules, methods applied, manpower used, and the adequacy and use of financial resources, with a view to improving them, if necessary, at the least cost.

Effectiveness is an expression of the desired effect of a programme, service or institution in reducing a problem or
improving an unsatisfactory situation. Thus, effectiveness measures the degree of attainment of the predetermined objectives and targets of the programme, service or institution. The assessment of effectiveness is aimed at improving programme formulation or the functions and structures of services and institutions through analysis of the extent of attainment of their objectives.

Impact means the effect of the programme on the population. It is an expression of the effect of a programme, service or institution on overall development and related social and economic development. While a programme may be effective in that it has attained its objectives, the attainment of these objectives may, in fact, make little or no contribution to the overall health and related socio-economic developments. The assessment of impact is thus aimed at identifying any necessary change in the direction of a programme so as to increase their contribution to the overall health and socio-economic development.

After carrying out a detailed research procedure of the current state of evaluation methodology in organisation development, Porras and Berg (1978) found 35 empirical studies in the OD field for the period 1959 to mid-1975. Each study was analysed according to (a) research design, (b) data collection procedures, (c) subject characteristics, (d) treatment dimensions, and (e) data analysis approaches. Findings showed that over three-
quarters of the 35 studies identified used quasi-experimental designs, with the rate much higher in the 1970-75 period than in the 10 preceding years. Although none of the studies utilised true control groups, approximately half reported the use of comparison groups. However, groups used for comparison were often of questionable adequacy.

The time span covered by a large proportion of the studies was relatively short (given the generally accepted assumption that organisational change is slow and requires two to three years to take effect and be readily detectable). Approximately half of all the studies reported research periods of one year or less. A remaining third covered a period of one to two years.

Frequency of measurement of research variables was relatively low. Sixty percent used only one or two measurements. However, the trend over the last five years was toward a larger number of measurement points.

Methods of data collection have been heavily biased toward the use of paper-and-pencil questionnaires. Every study reviewed used this form of data collection for the measurement of human process variables. Only slightly over 10% of the studies utilised other forms of attitudinal and behavioural data collection (interviews and tape recordings). None of the studies employed quantified process observational techniques. Use of standardised versus customised questionnaires was split almost evenly with slightly over one-third of the studies using standardised instruments,
approximately one-third using customised instruments, and slightly less than one-third using both. Trends appeared to favour the growth of standardised questionnaires.

Managerial personnel were included in the research subject pool over 90% of the time. Non-managerial personnel were included approximately half of the time. Historically, OD has been a management centred process and the focus of data collection activity reflected this fact. Sample sizes have been relatively ample when the unit of analysis was the individual. Approximately half of the studies used samples of 100 or more. On the other hand, when the unit of analysis was a group or larger organisational sub-system, the sample sizes were quite small. Of the 15 cases in this category, 13 reported sample sizes of seven or less.

The experimental treatments in the studies consisted of various interventions. Laboratory training (both process and task-focused) accounted for over half of the interventions used. When only dominant interventions were considered, the trends indicated that task-focused laboratory training was on the upswing while process-oriented training was declining. Eclectic approaches to change accounted for slightly less than 15% of all the dominant approaches used. In addition, there was no trend toward the increased usage of eclectic approaches to change. This was not to say that OD intervenors were not now using more change techniques in any one project. In fact, the average since 1970 had increased
from a prior level of 1.9 intervention approaches per study to 2.8. However, this increase had not affected the depth to which several intervention approaches were used at equal levels of intensity. Instead, practitioners had continued to use one dominant approach (whatever it might be) while beginning to supplement it more extensively with other change techniques.

Intervention activities had been relatively brief. Approximately 65% of the studies reported employee involvement in OD activities of up to two-weeks duration. In addition, consultant involvement with the organisation had also been relatively short. Sixty percent of the studies reported an intervention period of 12 months or less.

Data analysis procedures usually involved using the individual as the unit of analysis. Sixty percent of the studies did so. Statistical procedures had typically involved the use of statistical tests but in general had not employed highly complex forms of analysis.

Porras and Wilkins (1980) reported the results of a quasi-experimental field study measuring the effects of three OD interventions conducted in a large geographically dispersed organisation. The OD interventions were designed to improve the climate, leadership, group process, and overall performance of experimental units through a series of activities aimed at providing a philosophical base for change; building effective team relationships and problem-solving skills; and altering the
techno-structural and social variables impeding work unit efficiency. A comparison of results from 40 experimental and control sub-units indicated that several key measures of performance showed that significant improvement in organisational productivity had occurred in this change project. Yet, measures of organisational processes indicated a deterioration of the internal dynamics of the system. This was clearly an unexpected relationship and perhaps the most striking result of the study.

The findings also showed that managers and subordinates did not respond to the OD interventions in the same manner. In some cases the managers perceived the organisation as less positive than before the intervention while employees in the same circumstances saw no change. In other cases the situation was reversed. Additional results indicated that the differential magnitude of the intervention, had differential effects on the managers, as contrasted with those on the unit staff. Some outcome variables, however, such as self-actualisation and several measures of unit performance, showed an unexpected improvement (given the negative process changes).

Woodman (1989) observed that in measurement theory, the assignment of numbers to attributes of things—measurement—is an abstraction. That is, the numbers so assigned are not the attributes themselves. Change, even in its simplest form as represented by the difference of comparison between measurements taken at two points in time, represents a still higher level of
abstraction. In addition, in terms of making meaning or making sense of the world around us, the concept of change does not follow directly from our perceptions. Coleman described this perspective on the nature of change as follows:

"the concept of change is a second-order abstraction. It is based on comparisons of difference, between two sense impressions, and, simultaneously a comparison of the times at which the sense impressions occurred. Thus the concept of change requires an extra intellectual leap beyond the mere formation of concepts that reflect a state of the World" (Coleman, 1968, pp 428-429).

Either from the perspective of measurement theory, or from the perspective of the mind attaching meaning to things perceived, change represents a second-order abstraction. Thus evaluation research on organisational interventions that are, by design, attempts to change some aspect of a complex human system represents a higher level of abstraction than research that is focused on measuring relationships among variables whether those relationships be static or dynamic.

Given this complexity, coupled with differing goals and interests of change agents, organisational participants, and organisational researchers, it should not surprise us that change theory reflects numerous tensions and dualities. For example, Porras and Robertson (1987) had suggested that OD theories could be categorised as either implementation theories or theories of change processes. Implementation theory focuses on the
intervention activities needed to carry out programmes of planned change. Change process theories attempt to explain the dynamics of organisational change; that is, how changes occur within the system in response to interventions. This dichotomy is similar to that suggested by Mohr (1982) who contrasted variance theories, which attempt to account for the variance in some criterion of interest, with process theories, designed to describe how some outcome comes about. It seems rather obvious to note that practitioners and scholars may differentially value those two areas of theory.

Many examples of a similar duality can be found in the evaluation research literature. For example, Cordray and Lipsey (1986) proposed that evaluation research needed to separate modes of inquiry into "programme evaluation" and "programme research". Programme evaluation would focus on assessing programme outcomes in a traditional sense while programme research would focus on the assessment of cause-and-effect relationships and other linkages among variables of interest. Each mode of inquiry is characterised by differing purposes, functions, and methods.

Within OD, the duality of "programme evaluation" versus "programme research" can be seen in two sometimes conflicting goals of research conducted on organisational change programmes. The change and development area seeks to develop evaluation methodologies in order to make valid inferences about effective and ineffective organisational change efforts.
At the same time, the field is interested in understanding change phenomena and processes in complex human systems in order to contribute to theory development in the organisational sciences. These dual goals lead directly to two fundamental interrelated issues: (1) How can we design and conduct research so that the factors producing change in an organisation are identified; and (2) how can we extract the best descriptions/explanations of the interventions for the change? It is not clear that approaches best suited for doing the first automatically lead to fulfilling the second. That is, approaches best suited for evaluating change programmes may not contribute as much to theory development as we would like and vice-versa. Woodman (1989) proposed that dealing effectively with the complexity posed by numerous methodological and conceptual dualities requires a blending of quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

The theoretical perspective presented here guided the planning of the methodology pursued in the present research.