

Theory Orientations of Organization Development (OD) Practitioners

MICHAEL N. BAZIGOS

Price Waterhouse LLP

W. WARNER BURKE

Teachers College, Columbia University

Although an emerging literature reports on the values, motives, competence, and activities of organization development (OD) practitioners, little is known about the explicit or implicit theories they bring to their client settings. This study attempts to shed light on OD practitioners' theoretical choices while bringing conceptual clarity and empirical refinement to an existing instrument. Practicing OD professionals responded to a theory orientation questionnaire. Data reveal practitioner preferences for humanistic theory sets (e.g., Herzberg and Maslow) and aversions to theory sets with a system-level focus (e.g., Likert, Lawrence and Lorsch, Levinson). Four meaningful factors proved more reliable and parsimonious an explanation of response patterns. The derived components—Psychodynamics, Structure, Incentives, and Conflict—were conceptualized as practitioners' implicit model of organization. Limitations of this implicit model drive the authors' suggestion that a uniform, core knowledge base inform OD practice. Future uses of the reformulated scale are discussed.

What theories guide organizational development (OD) practitioners in their work? Little is currently known about this question.

Indeed, OD—a total system approach to change in organizations—is itself a relatively nascent field. If theory unification has not yet arrived (Burke, 1995), identifying those concepts that OD professionals rely on to navigate change efforts seems worthwhile. The concomitant identification of an instrument to benchmark which theories hold sway seems equally worthwhile.

The organization development (OD) practitioner study was conducted at the Advanced Organizational Development/Human Resource Management program of the Social-Organizational Psychology program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. We wish to thank Bob Bontempo, Steffani Burd, Veronika Denes-Raj, Miriam Javitch, Wes Siegal, Alfred Ward, and Ta-Fu Yang for their helpful comments. Address correspondence to Michael N. Bazigos, 42 James Street, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, 10706; e-mail: Michael_Bazigos@notes.pw.com.

Group & Organization Management, Vol. 22 No. 3 September 1997 384-408

© 1997 Sage Publications, Inc

In this article, we review what is known about the general orientations of OD practitioners and then review eight *minitheories* that inform OD. We then investigate empirically the congruence of practice to theory, adapting and refining an existing theory measurement instrument to the task. This study, we believe, represents the first attempt to describe and measure the status of the field as it relates to practitioners' theoretical orientations. Finally, implications for OD practice are discussed.

WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT OD PRACTITIONERS

Those who would effect change in organizations—in this case, OD practitioners—have been studied in various contexts. Their values and motives (Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1994), personality characteristics and behavioral tendencies (Hamilton, 1988), and typical interventions have been surveyed and reported in the literature (e.g., Fagenson & Burke, 1990a, 1990b).

Such studies report that practitioners are attracted to the field by a desire to create change, have a positive effect on people and organizations, enhance the effectiveness and profitability of organizations, learn and grow, and exercise power and influence (Van Eynde, Church, Hurley, & Burke, 1992). Church et al. (1994) reported them to be concerned with humanistic issues (e.g., promoting organizational participation, promoting a concern for human dignity), business effectiveness (e.g., increased effectiveness and efficiency, enhancing competitive advantage), and the external environment (e.g., fostering corporate citizenship in the community, protecting the natural environment). In a study of practitioners' predictions of their activity patterns in the 1990s, seven activity categories emerged: human resources planning and development, management style development, vision facilitation, job and structural design, high-technology integration, managing diversity, and planning and forecasting (Fagenson & Burke, 1990a).

Four studies examined behavioral approaches, three with the intention of identifying the more successful approaches. Eubanks, O'Driscoll, Hayward, Daniels, and Connor (1990) offered six general dimensions of OD consultant competencies as a basis for a behavioral observation scale assessing consultant skills and intervention effectiveness. O'Driscoll and Eubanks (1993) studied differences between client and consultant perceptions of consultant behaviors, highlighting the need to give more attention to client expectations and requirements. Using telephone interviews and open-ended questions, Porras and Hoffer (1986) surveyed 47 "leaders in the field of planned organizational change" and identified at least moderate participant consensus on 14 behavior changes common to their interventions.

Finally, a clinical assessment of a journal kept by a new 28-year-old male OD manager prepared by a "full work history" and a Ph.D. in organizational behavior summarizes that practitioner's orientation. This was characterized as an adherence to

principles, especially that employees were adults entitled to fundamentally decent treatment at work and the right to have informed input into decisions affecting them. He saw the desired end state of OD work as closer to these principles, most likely in the form of flatter, more participative organizations and more explicit, competent, and effective handling of emotions and conflicts as well as a better "feeling" toward the organization by its members (and *vice versa*). (Shea & Berg, 1987, p. 332)

The latter study offered a developmental approach, with an emphasis on discovering what meaning a new practitioner made of a particular operating environment.

Beyond these studies, however, OD practitioners' theoretical biases are unstudied in the literature. Burke (1994) specified certain theoretical underpinnings of the field, but we do not know to what extent they are represented in practitioners' orientations. Practitioners in OD come into the field through a variety of routes, guaranteeing, no doubt, intellectual heterogeneity. Some work up through the ranks of human resources departments, some are business school graduates from various programs recruited to consulting firms, some are industry experts with no formal training in OD, and others are graduates of university master's and doctoral programs that variously emphasize individual, group, or systemic approaches and are informed by several psychological theories.

THEORY UNDERGIRDING OD

Eight distinct theory sets (minitheories) representing the combined work of 10 theorists have been discerned by Burke (1994) as impacting greatly on the field. These are theories believed to undergird the practice of OD, even though many of the theorists would not be classified as OD practitioners, for example, Skinner. Herzberg has impacted the field, but he would not associate himself with OD. Although oversimplified, the relevance of each theory in the OD context is summarized below.

Need Theory—Maslow and Herzberg

Although the two theorists disagree about the continuum on which human motivators are arrayed, they share an emphasis on individuals and their needs

(Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Maslow, 1954). Job enrichment, the core of quality-of-work-life projects, and career development programs place individual needs at their assumptive base.

Positive Reinforcement—Skinner

Emery Air Freight used the operant behavior premise of schedules of reinforcement (Skinner, 1953, 1971) to control worker behavior, realizing an annual cost reduction of \$650,000 ("At Emery," 1973). Interventions that flow from Skinnerian premises target the individual's environment, principally the reward system. Performance is the ultimate goal. Typical interventions informed by this premise include establishing incentive systems, reducing or eliminating many control systems that create threats or punishments, providing feedback to all employees, and developing programmed-learning techniques for training employees.

Group and a Psychological Field of Forces Serve as Change Levers—Lewin

Force field analysis divides counterbalancing situational forces into *driving* and *restraining* forces. Lewinian theory (Lewin, 1948, 1951) favors reducing restraining forces (e.g., employee resistance) rather than intensifying driving forces that increase the overall tension of the system (e.g., managerial pressure). Because group opprobrium restrains individual behavior from deviating too greatly from the norm, the group is the target level of choice.

Consequently, the organization is viewed as a social system. The Lewinian OD practitioner will view organizational behavior in terms of whether degree of commitment indicates a strong organization-individual needs match, norms and degree of conformity, internally versus externally imposed goals, and the degree to which the decision-making process is participative.

Changing Values Through the Group—Argyris

Although Argyris's organizational change focus has evolved over the last three decades, emphases on interpersonal competence, behavior change in a group context, and mental and behavioral inconsistencies endure as themes. In his early work, Argyris (1962) stressed the match between organizational values and individual growth needs. Later, he emphasized effective organizational intervention (Argyris, 1971) through the generation of valid information, free informed choice by the client, and internal commitment to the client choices taken.

More recently, Argyris (Argyris & Schön, 1978) has focused on the congruence between espoused and practiced values. Organizational learning that solves a problem ("single loop learning") followed by learning how to learn ("double loop learning") is echoed by those continuous improvement and total quality efforts that seek to inculcate learning ability into the client organization.

The Group Unconscious—Bion

Parallel processes, the "work group" (which solves the actual task at hand), and the "basic assumption group" (driven by the collective unconscious of the group) compete for dominance during the life course of the same actual group (Bion, 1961; Rioch, 1970). Process loss caused by the dependency state (assumption: the omnipotent leader will protect the group), fight-flight state (assumption: the group is challenged to survive), and/or the pairing state (two group members break away to create a new leader) provide useful diagnostic filters and intervention points for the OD practitioner.

Participative Management—Likert

A systems-level theorist, Likert's concepts of the linking-pin structure and the four-system organization model have been the cornerstones of his theory (Likert, 1961). The former refers to the dual role of managers: leaders of their own groups and subordinates of those groups to which they are hierarchically linked. As linking pins, these manager-subordinates are concerned with the organizational work of communication and conflict resolution when the views of the vertically organized groups differ.

Four models of organization design—autocratic, benevolent autocratic, consultative, and participative—are assessed along seven relevant dimensions in the Likert paradigm: leadership, motivation, communication, interaction and influence, decision making, goal setting, and control (Likert, 1967). The model strongly prescribes that the best organization is participative and consensual. Consequently, the OD intervention uses data-based diagnosis (along the seven factors) and survey feedback to promote change in a consensual direction.

Contingency Theory—Lawrence and Lorsch

Critical dimensions of organizational structure—for example, centralization versus decentralization—are contingent on the variability or stability of the external environment. Those decisions that permit a system to adapt for maximum advantage are best. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967, 1969) have been

among the most influential theorists for practitioners, because considering contingencies before acting has proven itself to be a popular OD approach.

Organization as Family—Levinson

In this psychoanalytically influenced paradigm, organizational members reenact roles learned in early memories of family (Levinson, 1972a, 1972b). The chief executive, for instance, takes on the role of ego-ideal for members whose tenure in the organization depends on their comfort with the fit. Each organization has a culture for which the human personality is a metaphor: the better integrated the personality (organizational functions), the healthier the person (firm). Consequently, diagnosis is influenced by the extent to which the organization maintains its psychic (organizational) equilibrium.

Level of Intervention

Finally, these minitheories can be grouped by intervention level: individual, group, and systemic. In this taxonomy, theory sets that best lend themselves to interventions at the level of the individual are Herzberg/Maslow and Skinner. Theory sets most aligned with the group level are Argyris, Lewin, and Bion. Finally, theory sets with systemwide implications are those of Lawrence and Lorsch, Likert, and Levinson. Table 1 summarizes the foregoing perspectives, emphases, and applications of the eight minitheories.

PURPOSE

In the absence of an all-encompassing theory, the current study first investigates the extent to which OD practitioners hew to any of the eight foregoing minitheories that undergird aspects of OD and represent different orientations. Second, we ask whether a different theory set can be captured post hoc from the responses of OD practitioners using factor analysis. Finally, the minitheory set is compared with the derived theory set using empirical and conceptual criteria.

METHOD

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Participants ($N = 189$) in this study came from four consecutive annual cohorts from 1991 through 1994 of OD practitioners attending a 3-week

TABLE 1

Summary of Primary Organization Development (OD) Theorists According to Their Perspectives, Emphases, and Applications

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Theorist</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>	<i>Application</i>
Individual	Maslow, Herzberg	Individual needs	Career development, job enrichment
	Skinner	Individual performance	Incentive systems, reward systems design
Group	Lewin	Norms and values	Changing conformity patterns
	Argyris	Interpersonal competence and values	Training and education
	Bion	Group unconscious, psychoanalytic basis	Group behavior diagnosis
System	Likert	Management style and approach	Change to participative management
	Lawrence and Lorsch	Organizational structure	Change contingent on organizational environment
	Levinson	Organization as a family, psychoanalytic basis	Diagnosis of organization according to familial patterns

SOURCE: Adapted from *Organization Development: A Process of Learning and Changing* (2nd ed.), by W. W. Burke, 1994, Table 3.1, p. 53.

program in advanced organizational development/human resource management under the aegis of Teachers College, Columbia University, and the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan. Participants represented the private (92.5%), not-for-profit (2.4%), and government (5.0%) sectors. Industries with highest representations included manufacturing (24.2%) and high technology (15.2%), followed by smaller representation from a wide industrial array: insurance, banking, financial services, media, utilities, transportation, health, consulting services, and telecommunications.

Demographic information was not uniformly available. However, for 149 of the participants, the number of years' experience in an OD position ranged from 0 to 22 ($M = 7.54$, $SD = 4.98$). For 151 of the participants, 75 (49.7%) were female, and 76 (50.3%) were male. Age ranged from 30 to 60 years ($M = 41.18$, $SD = 6.68$). Finally, of the 37 participants for whom work location was known, 8 (21.6%) were non-U.S. practitioners, whereas 29 (78.4%) were U.S. practitioners. Because recruiting and selection criteria remained stable over the period covered, small sample proportions are assumed representative of the larger group studied. No significant cohort differences were found on questionnaire minitheory subscales when annual cohort group was entered

as an independent variable in a one-way ANOVA. Consequently, the four cohorts were combined to form a single data set.

MATERIALS

An instrument to sensitize OD and human resource management (HRM) practitioners to their preferred theoretical orientations was administered to all participants in the program. Eight subscales with 5 items apiece are embedded within this 40-item instrument. Participants rate the extent to which each item characterizes their beliefs and behaviors, on a 10-point scale in which 10 denotes "most characteristic" ("I believe and do this consistently") and 1 denotes "least characteristic" ("I rarely, if ever, believe or do this"). Subscale scores are computed by adding S-assigned scores to each of the five component items.

The range for any particular subscale is 5 to 50. Higher scores are thought to connote greater congruence with the philosophy of the corresponding theory set. Consistent with the taxonomy offered in the preceding section, the eight theory sets are labeled Skinner, Bion, Likert, Herzberg/Maslow (one scale), Levinson, Lawrence and Lorsch (one scale), Lewin, and Argyris. As an example of the scoring, a respondent who assigns 9, 9, 8, 10 and 10 points, respectively, to each of the five embedded questions on the Argyris Scale will score 46 points, presumably reflecting a strong identification with Argyris's thinking. Both the instrument (Theory Orientations in Organization Development) and the score sheet as well as brief descriptions of the eight theories are published in Plovnick, Fry, and Burke (1982).

PROCEDURE

Early in the first week of this 3-week professional development seminar, participants are asked to complete the questionnaire. Feedback on practitioner orientations is promised following completion of the exercise. Following administration, participants are provided a self-scoring form, which they complete and voluntarily submit to the researcher. Practically all of the individuals participating in the program provided their questionnaire responses for the researcher. A motivational by-product of this exercise comes from self-discovery and personal feedback: Following the self-scored questionnaire, participants are presumably induced to absorb information about theoretical distinctions. High scorers on the Lewin Scale, for example, will be presumably more motivated to learn about Lewin's prescriptions for organizational change following knowledge of their personal results. Partici-

pants are provided with an explanation of the different theories and their relevance to organizational development practice.

RESULTS

RESPONSE TO MINITHEORY SCALES

Significant Differences Exist Between the Eight Subscales

When the grand means for all subscales were compared (see Table 2), clear preferences surfaced. The Herzberg/Maslow Scale was favored clearly and significantly above all others, confirming the humanistic orientation of OD practitioners reported in the literature. Oddly, the Likert Scale—with its emphasis on the reported OD value of participative management—was clearly less preferred than most others and differed significantly from the Herzberg/Maslow, Skinner, Argyris, and Lewin Scales. Finally, the psychodynamic Levinson Scale was the least preferred of all, differing significantly from all but the Likert Scale.

The three theory sets most closely aligned with systemic interventions were the lowest rated by practitioners. Lawrence and Lorsch, Likert, and Levinson clustered at the bottom of the mean rankings of Table 2, with Levinson significantly lowest.

Demographic Differences

The Skinner and Likert Scales were favored by U.S. participants and the least experienced OD professionals, whereas the Herzberg/Maslow and Levinson Scales were favored by women more than men.

U.S. participants scored higher on the Skinner Scale ($M = 32.79$, $SD = 1.19$) than their non-U.S. counterparts ($M = 28.00$, $SD = 1.71$), $t(14.6) = -2.30$, $p < .05$, two-tailed. A similar difference between the two groups on the Likert Scale approached significance. U.S.-born participants favored Likert ($M = 30.10$, $SD = 4.96$) as against non-U.S.-born participants ($M = 25.38$, $SD = 6.02$), $t(9.78) = -2.04$, $p < .069$, two-tailed.

The number of reported years' experience in the OD field was categorized into three post hoc groups: 0 to 3 years, 4 to 11 years, and 12 or more years. A one-way ANOVA found the OD experience category to be significant, $F(2, 99) = 4.77$, $p < .01$. Follow-up multiple range testing using the least square differences (LSD) procedure found the least experienced group to be higher

TABLE 2
Minithyory Scale Means, Standard Deviations,
Reliabilities, Ranges, and ns, Ordered by Descending Means

<i>Scale Name</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>n</i>
Herzberg/Maslow	36.07 _a	6.13	.60	21	50	152
Argyris	33.97 _b	6.24	.36	16	49	150
Lewin	33.29 _{bc}	5.95	.46	20	50	150
Skinner	32.81 _{bc}	6.89	.69	14	48	151
Bion	32.49 _c	6.88	.67	13	50	152
Lawrence and Lorsch	32.34 _c	6.26	.53	16	47	152
Likert	30.44 _d	6.58	.64	11	48	151
Levinson	29.78 _d	7.05	.58	14	47	151

NOTE: Means with different subscripts are significantly different: a > b, c > d, b > d ($p < .001$); b > c ($p < .05$).

scorers on the Likert Scale ($M = 33.17$) than the middle or most experienced groups, with means of 28.48 and 28.67, respectively ($p < .05$).

Similarly, a one-way ANOVA found significant main effects for category on the Skinner Scale, $F(2, 99) = 3.36$, $p < .05$. Follow-up multiple range testing using LSD found the least experienced group to be higher scorers on the Skinner Scale ($M = 35.96$) than the middle group ($M = 31.65$), $p < .05$.

Finally, women rated the Herzberg/Maslow Scale higher ($M = 38.06$, $SD = 6.19$) than men did ($M = 35.20$, $SD = 5.82$), $t(112) = 2.54$, $p < .01$, two-tailed. Women also scored higher on the Levinson Scale ($M = 31.88$, $SD = 8.02$) than men did ($M = 27.88$, $SD = 6.00$). An unequal variances t test proved the difference significant, $t(93.24) = 2.96$, $p < .01$.

Scale Reliabilities

Cronbach's alpha was used to establish baseline reliabilities for the overall questionnaire and each of the eight theorist subscales. The 40-item questionnaire had an overall reliability of .87. Scale reliabilities ranged from .69 to .36 (see Table 2). By deleting the most unreliable item, Cronbach's alpha could be slightly improved in most cases, yielding a maximum scale range of .75 to .38.

LATENT FACTOR SEARCH

To investigate whether total questionnaire variance could be better explained, a factor analysis was conducted on the 40 items. A principal

components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation extracted two components¹ explaining 25.7% of the variance.

The first factor was a 35-item solution, explaining 18.6% of the variance. It was found that eliminating items loading below .40 created a 23-item scale with an alpha of .87. By eliminating items loading below .50, a more parsimonious 10-item scale could be constructed, with only modest reliability loss ($\alpha = .79$). However, neither the 35-, 23-, nor 10-item scale permitted ready interpretation. The second factor explained 7.1% of the variance but yielded only two items with loadings of at least .50.

Consequently, a second-order factor analysis was conducted to determine whether the conceptually opaque first factor was composed of meaningful subscales. Only the questionnaire items from the 23-item solution were entered, and only half the usable sample was employed. The second half was held in reserve for an independent confirmatory factor analysis. Scree plots of the first- and second-order analyses are presented in Figure 1.

A PCA with varimax rotation converged in six iterations. Four meaningful components explaining a cumulative 58.1% of the variance emerged. The rotated matrix is shown in Table 3; the rotated factor items are shown in three-dimensional space in Figure 2. (See the appendix for details on psychometric issues associated with both factor analyses.)

The first component ($\alpha = .77$) is composed of six items. Matrix values, associated theorists, and text are shown in Table 4. Of the five Levinson items in the original question set, three appear here, as do two of Bion's. The former emphasizes the organization as a family, whereas the latter emphasizes the group's unconscious; psychoanalysis informs both theorists' work. This was tentatively labeled the Psychodynamics component.

Item 22 loaded on Component 4 in the exploratory PCA but on Component 1 in the confirmatory PCA. Ultimately, it was classified onto the first factor because of its conceptual congruence with the other items. Scale reliability was not compromised by the move.

Of the second component's ($\alpha = .74$) three items, two derive from Likert, who places significant emphasis on the extent to which organizational structures facilitate participative management. The organizational structure theme is approached from another vantage point by the single Lawrence and Lorsch item that loaded here. This was tentatively labeled the Structure component. Matrix value, theorist, and item text are shown in Table 5.

The third component ($\alpha = .65$), with themes of reward, employee motivation, and performance (see Table 6), concerns the individual rather than the group or system. This was tentatively labeled the Incentives component.

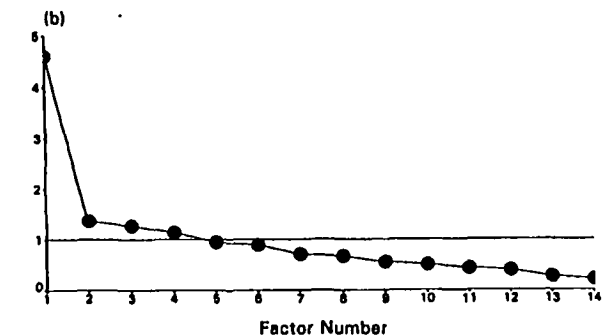
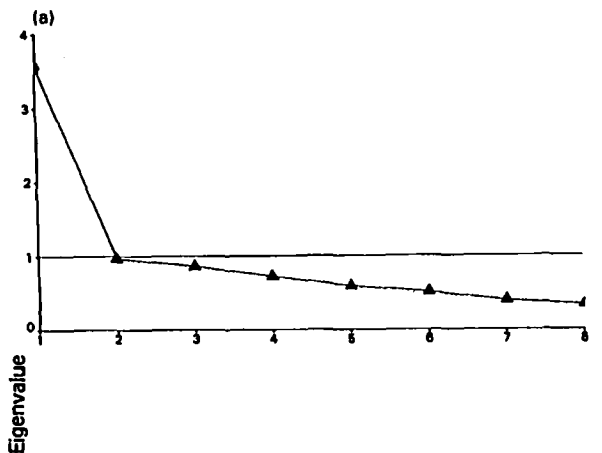


Figure 1: Scree Plot for (a) Primary and (b) Second-Order Principal Components Analysis, Showing Eigenvalues for Component Numbers

The fourth component ($\alpha = .57$) consists of only two moderately correlated items ($r = .39$) that nevertheless capture 7.6% of the variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.14. Although the target level varies (i.e., system, group, or individual level), conflict concerns both items. Consequently, this was tentatively labeled the Conflict component (see Table 7).

TABLE 3
Rotated Matrix for Second-Order Principal
Components Analysis (PCA) ($n = 81$)

<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Component 1</i>	<i>Component 2</i>	<i>Component 3</i>	<i>Component 4</i>
37	.780			
24	.750			
25	.646			
05	.547 ^a			
4	.512			
21		.916		
23		.725		
39		.599		
20			.776	
17			.655	
26			.641	
8			.495	
14				.697
22				.583 ^b
10				.494

NOTE: All component matrix scores lower than .5 (rounded to one significant digit) were omitted.

a. This item did not load on the first PCA. Tabled value is from the second PCA.

b. This item was later recategorized into Component 1 (Psychodynamics) on conceptual and empirical grounds.

CONFIRMATORY ANALYSIS

A confirmatory PCA on the second part of the split half sample ($n = 71$) extracted four nearly identical components while explaining a cumulative 54.0% of the variance. Two items of the 15 loaded on different components. Final categories for these items were determined by conceptual and empirical congruity with other component items (e.g., foregoing reclassification of Item 22). Final summary statistics for the scales are given in Table 8.

Follow-up tests using demographic variables as independent variables revealed no relationship between years of OD experience and component scale scores. U.S. status could not be assessed, because only summary minitheory scores were available for the subgroup from which this variable was culled. However, gender differences again manifested, on the Incentives and Conflict components. Extrapolated scores for females were higher on Incentives ($M = 38.23$, $SD = 6.07$) than for males ($M = 35.40$, $SD = 6.38$), $t(109) = 2.39$, $p < .05$. Females also gave higher ratings to the Conflict component items ($M = 34.52$, $SD = 8.32$) than males did ($M = 31.52$, $SD = 6.87$), $t(108) = 2.06$, $p < .05$.

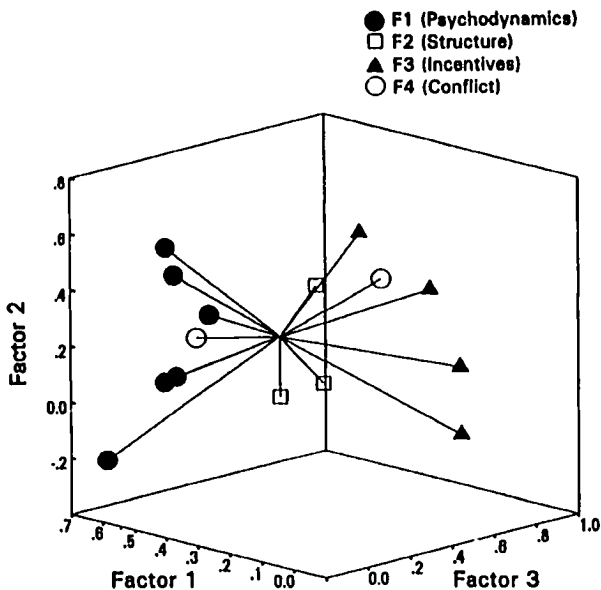


Figure 2: Rotated Solution Scatterplot for Second-Order Principal Components Analysis Shown in Three-Factor Space With Centroid Spikes

COMPARING MINITHEORIES TO DERIVED COMPONENTS

The primary limitation of component analysis is that beyond interpretability, there is no external criterion against which to test the solution. Because two competing interpretations are offered, however, a comparison of two internal criteria—reliability and parsimony—is possible. Subscale reliabilities are compared in Table 9.

The two-column comparison shows higher reliabilities for the top two empirical components, Psychodynamics and Structure, than the two most reliable conceptually derived scales, Skinner and Bion. The third scale on either side, Incentives and Likert, respectively, are identical in reliability,

TABLE 4

**Psychodynamics Component Items:
Matrix Value, Theorist(s), and Text**

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Actual Question Text</i>	<i>Matrix Value</i>	<i>Theorist(s)</i>
37	In team diagnosis, I pay particular attention to ways in which group members relate to their leader—for example, whether they are overtly dependent, passively hostile or aggressive, and so on.	.780	Bion
24	Since I believe that an organization, like a person, has a personality, I typically analyze an organization's management, for example, in such terms as paternalistic, maternalistic, benevolent, or authoritarian.	.750	Levinson
25	As a consultant, I pay considerable attention to the mental health of organizational members, especially the degree of stress they experience and how they cope with it.	.646	Levinson
5	My approach to understanding morale as productivity in an organization is to make sure that I discern the difference between decisions that seem to be imposed and those, if any, that are participative.	.547 ^a	Lewin
4	All organizations act out of the basic family structure in our culture; therefore, as a consultant, I pay attention to the symbolic role of top manager as parent and the next lower level of managers as siblings.	.512	Levinson
22	In diagnosing group (team) behavior, I assume that a group is like an individual: it has both conscious and unconscious and will behave rationally and irrationally, creatively and uncreatively, and so on.	— ^b	Bion

a. This item did not meet the .5 loading criterion in the first principal components analysis (PCA). The value shown is from the second PCA.

b. This item loaded .583 on Component 4 but was reclassified onto the Psychodynamics subscale on conceptual grounds.

which then degrades bilaterally. The mean reliability of the component scale significantly exceeds the minitheory scale, $t(8) = 2.06, p < .10$, two-tailed.²

The greater parsimony of the second column begs the question of whether richness of the data set was compromised through PCA reduction. Participant scores on each of the four components were entered on the predictor side of a multiple regression equation. The single dependent variable (DV) was participants' sum total score for the 25 aggregated items not included on the 15-item scale. Results were reassuring: The four simultaneously entered

TABLE 5

Structure Component Items: Matrix Value, Theorist(s), and Text

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Actual Question Text</i>	<i>Matrix Value</i>	<i>Theorist(s)</i>
21	In diagnosis, I especially consider organizational structure, particularly in terms of the provision made for the effectiveness of vertical linkage.	.916	Likert
23	In diagnosis, I look carefully at the organization's structure and design, paying considerable attention to the degree of interdependence that exists between and among organizational units.	.725	Lawrence and Lorsch
39	I believe certain organizational structures, especially those based on participative group problem solving, and decision making, are better than others.	.599	Likert

TABLE 6

Incentives Component Items: Matrix Value, Theorist(s), and Text

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Actual Question Text</i>	<i>Matrix Value</i>	<i>Theorist(s)</i>
20	In diagnosis, I particularly want to know the nature of the organization's reward system.	.776	Skinner
17	As a consultant, I look for organizational blocks or hindrances to individual motivation.	.655	Maslow and Herzberg
26	As a consultant, I especially urge my management clients to develop processes whereby their employees can realize more of their potential.	.506	Maslow and Herzberg
8	As a consultant, I help my client devise ways to praise and reward organizational members who perform well.	.495	Skinner

component scores yielded a robust explanation of DV variation ($R = .93, p < .0001$), suggesting redundancy of the nonfactor items in explaining response patterns. Similar results were found using the stepwise entry method. (Obviously, this analysis could not be performed on the minitheories, because the eight subscales exhaust the universe of items, leaving nothing on the DV side of the regression equation.)

TABLE 7

Conflict Component Items: Matrix Value, Theorist(s), and Text

Item Number	Actual Question Text	Matrix Value	Theorist(s)
14	I value a client's attacks toward and mistrust of me as serving an important client need and as useful points of departure.	.697	Argyris
10	In diagnosis I pay particular attention to how conflict, especially intergroup conflict, is handled in the organization.	.494	Lawrence and Lorsch

TABLE 8

Factor Scale Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and *ns*, Ordered by Descending Means

Scale Name	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	n
Factor 3—Incentives	36.45	6.40	12.50	50.00	147
Factor 2—Structure	34.82	7.79	10.00	50.00	147
Factor 4—Conflict	33.03	7.42	13.33	50.00	147
Factor 1—Psychodynamics	30.90	7.83	12.50	50.00	147

NOTE: Means have been extrapolated onto a five-item metric to facilitate comparison with conceptual scale means in Table 1. All means here are significantly different, $p < .05$.

TABLE 9

Minitheory Versus Empirical Component Reliability Comparison

Minitheory Scale	α	Component Scale	α
1. Skinner	.690	Psychodynamics	.772
2. Bion	.673	Structure	.742
3. Likert	.643	Incentives	.645
4. Herzberg/Maslow	.602	Conflict	.565
5. Levinson	.582		
6. Lawrence and Lorsch	.527		
7. Lewin	.459		
8. Argyris	.358		
Mean (variance)	.567 (.011)		.681 (.007)

NOTE: Means differ significantly at $p < .10$, two-tailed, using the Welch-Satterthwaite solution for heterogeneous variance to estimate degrees of freedom, $t(8) = 2.06$.

REVIEW OF FINDINGS

First, the extent to which practitioners identify with any of the eight minitheories was assessed. Second, a search for underlying factors that might better explain variation in responses was conducted, resulting in a new, empirically derived taxonomy of practitioner theory dimensions. Finally, the two taxonomies of organization development were presented and contrasted in terms of their ability to explain variation patterns in OD practitioner responses to an orientation questionnaire and their conceptual clarity.

Lessons of the Minitheories

The picture of OD practitioners that emerges is that they are humanistically oriented and concerned with individual- and group-level processes more than systems. The humanistic thrust of OD practitioners was confirmed by the first-place ranking of the Herzberg/Maslow Scale. The paradoxical eschewing of the Likert Scale by respondents might be reconciled with the systematic antisystems bias of the sample: Possibly, the attractive participatory flavor of the Likert Scale was obviated by its stronger systems-level emphasis. It may also be that because Likert stresses a normative view—participatory management and consensual decision making—this lack of a contingency perspective goes against the OD practitioners' grain. Contingency may seem more humane than normative and thus be the overriding value.

It is also possible that many participants did not routinely serve clients who were stakeholders in a system-level solution—for example, “top of the house” executives. In any case, the three systems theory scales—Lawrence and Lorsch, Likert, and Levinson—placed last, in positions six, seven, and eight, respectively. This outcome is surprising because there has been a much stronger emphasis on the system perspective in recent years. The humanistic individual value still reigns supreme.

Latent Factors

In order of practitioner preference, the four derived scales were Incentives (most popular), Structure, Conflict, and Psychodynamics (least popular). All mean differences were significant, and the 15 factor items rendered the 25 others essentially redundant. Moreover, parsimony clearly favors the principal component solution, which reduces theory scales from eight to four. The

number of factors coincides with the number of significant response levels in the eight-scale questionnaire: four (see Table 2).

Typical issues surrounding PCA are (a) a concern for losing the richness of the data and (b) whether the derived components make sense. As the results show, redundancy, not reliability, diminishes. Nor does conceptual clarity suffer, as the four empirically derived components are readily interpretable. To the extent that these derived factors are superior in explaining practitioner responses, we gain insight into the dimensions of an implicit theory set.

Theoretical Implications

OD practitioner theories identified via PCA mirror at least one paradigm for person perception. Three of the four components identified—Psychodynamics, Structure, and Incentives—are analogous in some ways to the Evaluation, Potency, and Activity factors advanced by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) as central in explaining person perception. Analyzing the responses of subjects on a semantic differential person rating task, the researchers found three underlying dimensions that explained most of the rating variance: evaluation (good-bad), potency (strong-weak), and activity (active-passive).

These dimensions are mirrored in the marker variables for each derived component. (Markers are variables thought to be pure measures of a factor or component, as assessed by high factor loadings.)³ Three markers in the Psychodynamics component, for example, explicitly reference trait terms that have an implicit evaluative component, at least for OD practitioners: *dependent*, *passively hostile*, *aggressive*, *paternalistic*, *benevolent*, *authoritarian*, and *stressful*. Previous studies of OD practitioner values suggest that humanistic values such as “empowering employees to act” and “facilitating ownership of process and outcome” are highly ranked ideals of OD practitioners (Church et al., 1994), consistent with an orientation toward valuing participative management (Van Eynde et al., 1992). It is reasonable to assume that if these values are good, the antithetical adjectives (e.g., *authoritarian*) are bad, at once defining a bipolar continuum (i.e., good-bad) and suggesting conceptual congruence between the Psychodynamics component and the Evaluation factor of Osgood et al (1957).

A similar argument can be made for congruence between the Structure component of this study—implicitly about power distribution—and the potency dimension—the strong-weak continuum of Osgood et al. (1957). The purest variable of the former specifically references vertical linkage as an important diagnostic element. Finally, the Incentives component, which

concerns itself with the effect of organizational reward systems on individuals' motivation, suggests philosophical agreement with Osgood et al.'s active-passive dimension.

It is likely that practitioners, heterogeneously prepared, do not act from a uniform knowledge base. From the ensuing statistical "noise" that heterogeneity creates, the strongest discernible factors to emerge are intuitive perceptual frameworks: evaluation, potency, activity, and danger, echoed in respective scales called Psychodynamics, Structure, Incentives, and Conflict. To the extent that these analogies are valid, the picture of organization perception mirrors a taxonomy of person perception.

Practical Significance of Findings

We propose that an implicit theory set best explains practitioner orientations and that this theory set is influenced by several theorists and does not strictly adhere to any single theorist. Further, the foregoing interpretation—if valid—suggests that this implicit theory set is congruent with the relatively more intuitive person perception than with the primary OD minitheories presented here.

From the practical perspective, what seems critical to any intervention's outcome is matching a good diagnosis to an appropriate action plan. Findings presented in this study cast doubt on respondents' ability to do this well. For example, if the full 40-item minitheory scale results are considered, we see an insufficient appreciation for systems-level issues. This is an obvious handicap to sound strategy development.

If the factor-derived practitioner theory set is considered, the following model is implied:

$$\text{OD Practice} = I + S + C + P + \epsilon,$$

where variables represent Incentives, Structure, Conflict, Psychodynamics, and error (i.e., statistical noise), respectively. Even if this is not the elaborated analogue of person perception we suggest, it is a limited model when considered on its own merits. Significant change levers are ignored. Such dimensions as culture, mission, attention to environment, resources, history, information flow, management practices, individual need/value fit, and individual skill/ability fit go unattended (see, e.g., Burke & Litwin, 1992).

This is particularly noteworthy given today's environment. The change programs of the late 1990s need to be multitheoretical and multidimensional. Many practitioners in the organizational change field may be too narrowly

trained and focused. Greater appreciation of OD's theoretical underpinnings (e.g., the minitheories synopsized here) has the potential for providing clients with a higher likelihood that comprehensive diagnoses will be matched to appropriate intervention plans.

For example, a change project that addresses the organizational problem of declining market share for an appliance retailer may take a variety of forms. A consultant may focus on aligning desired organizational outcomes (e.g. customer satisfaction with appliance service) with individual employee rewards (e.g., performance pay) based on congruent individual performance measures (e.g., percentage of same-day installation visits). Another consultant may focus on horizontal conflict, perhaps between marketing strategists and the sales force. A third consultant may see and attend to both.

What is most important, however, is that the choice processes are informed deliberations that consider, among other criteria, relevant theory. This implies something different than fitting round holes with round pegs, or specific organizational problems with narrowly trained specialists. Rather, if the game to be played is unknown in advance, place kickers and designated batters will be only sporadically effective. Adaptive athletes need to be created. A uniform, broad-based theoretical grounding will provide the versatility that the marketplace demands.

Such a knowledge base, we believe, should complement an experiential base of varied consulting situations. Both are necessary for better practice. Just as critical are opportunities for reflection and feedback that relates the outcomes of experience back to theory. Lewin reminded us that there is nothing as practical as a good theory.

Study Limitations

The study population was drawn from a select group—that is, those with the organizational standing and resources to attend the training sessions from which these data were collected. Generalization of these results, therefore, should balance possible selection bias against the broad industrial array from which these real practitioners were drawn.

Some limitations concern the minitheory scales. First, these were not the explicit formulations of their eponymous theorists but, rather, mediated by the scale author's interpretation. Admittedly, Herzberg does not associate himself with the field, and Skinner was not exactly an OD practitioner. Second, even veridical translation of theory to questionnaire item may be obviated because conceptual consistency does not necessarily translate into

empirical reliability. Finally, theorists shift. The best example of this is the Argyris Scale, which attempts in five items to capture three different foci of the same theorist.

Taken together, the foregoing concerns converge on reliability: four scales of the eight fall below .60, and the mean reliability across all minitheories is .57. (The poor reliability of the Argyris Scale [.36] accurately reflects compromised cohesion.) However, the major statements about practitioner orientations from the minitheories in this article were based on the more reliable scales. Moreover, these concerns exist only with the original minitheory scales, which the factor-derived instrument demonstrably improved.

The single marker item in the Conflict component ("I value a client's attacks toward and mistrust of me as serving an important client need and as useful points of departure") speaks to a diagnostic process while nominally referencing the issue of conflict. The only other questionnaire item that specifically referenced conflict loaded on this component as well (see Table 7). The reliability concerns around this component might be resolved by adding more items written around the conflict theme in future administrations of this questionnaire. In like manner, writing questions around the theme of diagnosing from organizational defenses to the intruder/consultant might further clarify the conceptual direction of this component.

FUTURE STUDY

Under the relaxed standards of exploration, four underlying dimensions of OD practitioners' theory orientations were identified and offered as a viable alternative to the larger scale from which they were extracted. Empirically derived and eclectic in their theoretical underpinnings, these components may provide a ready instrument for future investigations involving OD practitioners.

To what extent are practitioners' explicit theories and formal training congruent with their scores on these subscales? Is theory orientation stable over time, or does exposure to a broad theory or experience base cause shifts? How well do these components predict important criterion variables—for example, client satisfaction with a consultant-generated outcome? Is there an optimal consultant-client "marriage" that can be predicted by dyad score interactions? These and other questions invite future research.

Psychometric Issues in Factor Exploration

The sample size of the first (exploratory) PCA was low ($n = 81$) due to 37 missing cases—those subjects for whom summary minitheory scores were known but for whom the 40-item scores were not. However, Tabachnick and Fidell (1989) noted that "if there are strong, reliable correlations and a few, distinct factors, a sample size of 50 may be adequate, as long as there are more cases than factors" (p. 603). In the first-order extraction, there was only one strong component for an 80:1 cases-to-component (factor) ratio. In the second-order extraction, four extracted components lent a 20:1 ratio, increasing confidence in the reliability of the population correlations. The confirmatory extraction provides further evidence of reliability in its substantial replication of the four-component solution.

Because the exploratory analysis was used descriptively, assumptions regarding the normal and linear distribution of variables were not in force (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 603). As the appended scree plot indicates, no component in the second-order analysis shows eigenvalues approaching zero, assuring that singularity and extreme multicollinearity are absent. However, this would not be problematic in any event because PCA, unlike conventional factor analysis, does not require matrix inversion.

Factorability of the R matrix is good. Many sizable correlations ($r > .30$) were present, and Bartlett's test of sphericity proved positive ($p < .001$), validating the significance of the correlations. Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy, which at .74 exceeded Tabachnick and Fidell's (1989, p. 604) criterion of .60, also argued for good factorability.

The fourth extracted component (Conflict) consists of only two variables, raising the issue of reliability and the question of whether this is an artifact of error variance. Cronbach's alpha (.565) is not decisive in either direction. The possibility of opportunity bias—that is, an insufficient number of available conflict items in the questionnaire—competes with the error hypothesis. Only two items in the original questionnaire loaded on this component. Finally, a scatterplot of rotated components (Figure 2) shows no outlier variables among components.

NOTES

1. Although factor analysis and PCA are statistically different procedures, both extract the underlying *factors* or *components* that explain patterns of variation in the data. These terms are used interchangeably in the text.

2. *T* test for mean reliabilities used the Welch-Satterthwaite solution to estimate degrees of freedom for the Behrens-Fisher problem of independent means with heterogeneous variance.

3. Comrey (1973) posited loadings greater than .71 as excellent, and .63 as very good, because variance overlap at these loadings is 50% and 40%, respectively.

REFERENCES

- Argyris, C. (1962). *Interpersonal competence and organizational effectiveness*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey.
- Argyris, C. (1971). *Management and organizational development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- At Emery Air Freight: Positive reinforcement boosts performance. (1973). *Organizational Dynamics*, 1(3), 41-67.
- Bion, W. R. (1961). *Experiences in groups*. New York: Basic Books.
- Burke, W. W. (1994). *Organization development: A process of learning and changing* (2nd ed.). New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Burke, W. W. (1995). Organizational development: Then, now, and tomorrow. *Organization Development Journal*, 13(4), 7-18.
- Burke, W. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1992). A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of Management*, 18, 523-545.
- Church, A. H., Burke, W. W., & Van Eynde, D. (1994). Values, motives, and interventions of organizational development practitioners. *Group and Organization Management*, 19, 5-50.
- Comrey, A. L. (1973). *A first course in factor analysis*. New York: Academic Press.
- Eubanks, J. L., O'Driscoll, M. P., Hayward, G. B., Daniels, J. A., & Connor, S. H. (1990). Behavioral competency requirements for organizational development consultants. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 11, 77-97.
- Fagenson, E. A., & Burke, W. W. (1990a). The activities of organization development practitioners at the turn of the decade of the 1990s. *Group and Organization Studies*, 15, 366-380.
- Fagenson, E. A., & Burke, W. W. (1990b). Organization development practitioners' activities and interventions in organizations during the 1980s. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 26, 285-297.
- Hamilton, B. B. (1988). The facilitation of organizational change: An empirical study of factors predicting change agents' effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 24, 35-59.
- Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. Cleveland, OH: World.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work*. New York: John Wiley.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and environment: Managing differentiation and integration*. Boston: Division of Research, Harvard Business School.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1969). *Developing organizations: Diagnosis and action*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Levinson, H. (1972a). The clinical psychologist as organizational diagnostician. *Professional Psychology*, 3, 34-40.
- Levinson, H. (1972b). *Organizational diagnosis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lewin, K. (1948). *Resolving social conflicts*. New York: Harper.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper.
- Likert, R. (1961). *New patterns of management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Likert, R. (1967). *The human organization*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- O'Driscoll, M. P., & Eubanks, J. L. (1993). Behavioral competencies, goal setting, and OD practitioner effectiveness. *Group & Organization Management*, 18, 308-327.

- Osgood, C. E., Suci, G. J., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Plovnick, M. S., Fry, R. E., & Burke, W. W. (1982). *Organization development: Exercises, cases, and readings*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Porras, J. I., & Hoffer, S. J. (1986). Common behavior changes in successful organization development efforts. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 22, 477-494.
- Rioch, M. J. (1970). The work of Wilfred Bion on groups. *Psychiatry*, 33, 56-66.
- Shea, G., & Berg, D. (1987). Analyzing the development of an OD practitioner. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 23, 315-336.
- Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. New York: Macmillan.
- Skinner, B. F. (1971). *Beyond freedom and dignity*. New York: Knopf.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (1989). *Using multivariate statistics* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.
- Van Eynde, D., Church, A., Hurley, R. F., & Burke, W. W. (1992). What OD practitioners believe. *Training and Development*, 46(4), 41-46.

Michael N. Bazigos is a principal consultant in the Organizational Change Practice of Price Waterhouse LLP, focusing on global organizational change projects across a broad array of industries. His research interests include organizational culture, leadership, organizational conflict, organizational design, and the practice of consulting. He holds a master's degree from New York University in personnel psychology and is completing his Ph.D. in leadership and organization at Columbia University.

W. Warner Burke is a professor of psychology and education and the chair of Department of Organization and Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas, Austin, in social psychology. His research interests include organizational change, leadership, 360° feedback, and interorganizational relations. He is a diplomate in Industrial/Organizational psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology, and a fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, American Psychological Society and the Academy of Management.