# Chapter 1

# The Importance of Researching Organisations

# and Management

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This chapter presents an overview of the field of organisational research and how it has changed the way organisations are run, and importantly, how these changes have developed over time along with developments in methodological approaches. Three significant shifts in the field are particularly noteworthy, and therefore are extensively described in this essay. First, a review of the Human Relations View and Socio-Technical View describes how we have altered our way of thinking about and studying organisations, today. Included alongside this discussion of changing research trends, is information about how these changed views affect our ways of thinking about and studying individuals and their influence upon organisations.

## Organisational Research

Even though research methods have changed in significant ways, many of us still think about organisations as machines that become more efficient, just as Handy suggests. Organisational literature regularly contains contradictions and criticism of this early view of organisations. For example, research often describes organisations as dynamic human and social entities, rendering them difficult and complex to study. Organisational behaviours are seen as networks and systems. Even as the research (and practice) has expanded to incorporate many new ways of thinking about and studying organisations, this field of study is still considered limited and narrow (Morgan, 1986, Scott, 1992).

## Early Classical View

Soon after the onset of the industrial revolution, Max Weber set forth a classical bureaucratic model for organisations. Weber is recognised as having developed the single most powerful theory of organisations, and his "ideal" type of bureaucracy was and still is a starting point for many organisational analyses (Myers, 1996).

Weber's bureaucratic organisation is a rational model of a closed system. Weber considered the "human" dimension of organisations as one way of meeting an organisational objective. Weber stressed the need for impersonal relationships and a clear distinction between private lives and "official" lives for members of organisations. He ascribed to highly mechanised, formal organisational structures, where specialization and differentiation of tasks prevailed. Normalized task specifications, formal rules, formal spans of control, and role differentiation created a mechanistic view that theorists continue, today, to study extensively. Many of Webers' ideas, and other economic and bureaucratic ideas, though seriously questioned, have not been totally rejected (Farace, Monte & Russell, 1977).

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Up to the middle of the century, most organisational theory suggested that tightly controlled, non-human, organisational structures were "best" for achieving overall efficiency; and that a high degree of specialization among workers was most effective. The scientific management of organisations was thought to result in achieving high outputs, standardized products and profit maximization. The total organisation was viewed as an efficient machine, including its "human" dimensions. Most organisational researchers in classical era believed that the guiding principles of modern is to develop an understanding of reality through a set of methods and conceptual schema, which will help scientists to establish laws and principles to describe and to explain (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1984; Hazen & Trefil, 1993; McCain & Segal, 1973). With the knowledge of these laws and principles, modern scientists can then predict and even control the world (Campbell 1992).

By subscribing to a positivistic view of organisational science and aspiring to develop a set of general laws for the explanation and prediction of organisational efficiency, Hunt (1983) highlighted the importance of the pursuit of truth and objectivity as the central goal of research. This positivist view of organisational science results in the adoption of quantitative research methods as the major research tools since these research tools, characterized as objective, obtrusive, controlled and reductionist, are deemed appropriate under this positivist paradigm (Deshpande, 1983). Thus, the majority of organisational researchers focus on efforts to verify or falsify *a priori* hypotheses. These hypotheses are most usefully stated as mathematical (quantitative) propositions or propositions that can be easily converted into mathematical formulas expressing functional relationships. Making use of the availability of powerful statistical and mathematical techniques and models, the aim of research is the prediction and the control of organisational phenomena. There exists a widespread conviction that only quantitative data are ultimately valid and of high quality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As this view was widely embraced, other theorists began recognising that individual workers within the scientific management schematic had feelings of boredom and stress. Thus, some organisational studies began to suggest that the classical theory was too narrow and uninformed (Greenberg & Baron, 1990).

The Hawthorne studies, generally considered very unscientific, are credited with beginning to recognise the importance of human behaviour in organisations. As these concepts began being explored, research objectives and research methods remained rational and mechanistic. The human dimension was studied to determine ways people could operate most efficiently, thus the economic model persisted. Tasks were assigned according to individual skills, abilities and organisational roles were formal, and well established. Centring on organisational needs, individual careers might be extended through formal training. Such training was intended primarily to maximize organisational efficiency. Early research on the human dimension of the organisation therefore, remained rational, positivist, technical and economic (Greenberg & Baron, 1990).


**Human Relations View**

The human relations view of organisations demonstrates the importance of organisations on lives and to society. This view began in the early 1950's and continues to evolve, however, often the human relations view of organisations become only supplemental to the classical view.
The shape and scope of organisational analyses changed dramatically when social and behavioural scientists began studying organisations. Organisations began being studied as open, not closed, systems. They were viewed as communities of individuals who adapt to the world of work, often through social, and political, processes. As early as the 1960's, cultural properties were associated with organisations, including the concepts of morals and ethics. Therefore, within the human relations view, three sets of ideas have emerged in significant ways. These have affected the way in which organisations are studied and described. The three sets of ideas are open systems, socialization processes, and cultural dimensions. Before covering each of these, a general description of the human relations view is provided.

Since mid-century, the mechanical, rational, non-human view of organisations has been gradually eroded by the human relations view. Though organisational efficiency remains an important goal of organisational studies, new themes have emerged from the social, behavioural, and psychological analyses about organisations. Ways of motivating, inspiring, organizing, and cultivating relationships among organisational members has surfaced in the literature. Even with this change, no significant body of knowledge has replaced Weber's classical bureaucratic model of organisations (Bennis, 1994).

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Organisations are studied by many disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and history. Social and human dimensions of organisations, called human relations models, became an important part of this area of study around the 1970's, often pushing the bureaucratic model to the background, (but not replacing it). One of the most famous, the Harvard Human Relations Theory of Organisations still studied organisations from a Weberian viewpoint. Essentially, this model regarded organisations as social systems with two major functions: producing a product (a formal achievement), and the function of creating and distributing satisfaction among the individual members of the organisation (group-needs satisfaction). Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies established that social and environmental factors affected organisations (and organisational performance). Together, researchers begin paying more attention to informal features of organisations, especially human relationships. The Harvard Human Relations Theory minimized the importance of formal rules and emphasized that many patterns of human interaction were not represented on a organisation's formal hierarchical chart. Thus, informal activities were thought significant when attempting to understand organisations in more comprehensive ways (Farace, Monte & Russell, 1977).

The human relations model heightened awareness about human interaction in organisations and identified the value in studying both the desirable and undesirable forms of human interactions. For example, persuasion, influence, coercion, and control became a part of organisational analysis. Both the benefits and potential drawbacks of such behaviours were often explored (McGregor, 1985).

**Human Relations Themes**

The study of behavioural and social features of organisations has extended the organisational body of knowledge, but no single, well-formed way of thinking about organisations has emerged. Organisational research, even from the systems perspective, does not sufficiently explain, nor inform practice, in important and valuable ways (Bennis, Parikh, Lessem & Ronnie, 1994). For example, contemporary studies identify and recommend that organisations need to become less formal and will benefit from more complex communication networks. This open view advocates organisations that are dynamic, adaptable, flexible, and quickly responsive to external environmental influences. The open view suggests that decision-making approaches should vary and adapt depending on each set of circumstances. This way of thinking about organisations is sometimes called the contingency view.

Unlike Weber's highly structured organisational model, the open view, or contingency view, suggests that when one organisational design is applied to two different organisations, results or outcomes will be different (Myers, 1996). While the open view has expanded by studying a great variety of organisational features, the result also has been that organisational studies are less able to predict, or generalize about, how and when certain factors produce desired organisational results. Many prominent organisational researchers suggest that the value and benefit derived from organisational studies should be heavily scrutinized, questioned and challenged (Drucker, 1995).

The open systems perspective has helped establish the importance of understanding unique situations and different circumstances. Contemporary studies have moved beyond being concerned with individual needs and motives to study the uniqueness of organisations. The organisation is often regarded as a separate and independent force - apart from its individual members. Scott refers to organisations as "the subject" and as something that dominants and is very prominent in our lives. This perspective advances our thinking to the point where meeting organisational needs is thought to sustain an organisation, and meeting the individual needs of organisational members is not necessarily significant as organisational success is studied.

The open view has led some researchers to believe that we should understand organisations as a single, separate unit of analysis. A holographic metaphor aptly describes the philosophy behind this idea Bennis (1993) sees the universe of organisations as one gigantic hologram. In the realm of time, space, things and events that are separate and discrete, organisations, not its parts, is one entity and undivided. The part is in the whole and the whole is in each part. Similarly, Morgan applies the holographic view to organisations in this way: "The parts reflect the nature of the whole, since they take their specific shape at any one time in relation to the contingencies and problems arising in the total situation" (Morgan, 1989, p. 13).

Organisational studies emphasize the parts as well as the whole. One stream of literature emphasizes the separateness of "process," "system," and "outcomes," which also diminishes the significance of individual members and their actions upon organisations. Birnbaum (2003) developed the concept of "organized anarchies." He concluded, "decisions of the system are a consequence produced by the system, intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one" (Birnbuam, 2003, p. 11). He suggested that this is why some organisations are counterintuitive.

Thus, he suggests that the organisation is a machine (or human-like entity) that is sometimes out-of-control (Birnbaum, 1991). Birnbaum believes that organisational behaviours are no longer a process where thinking precedes action, where action serves a purpose, nor a place where purpose is related to consistent goals. Similarly, Pfeffer (1982) studied how the outcomes from organisations were not controlled by organisational participants, but instead were determined by the resources produced from organisational structures and procedures. This type of thinking guides the inquiry of organisations, and the study of practice, today. This type of thinking diminishes the role of the individual within and upon the organisation. The open view has expanded our understanding of organisations considerably, but has stifled thinking about the importance of individuals in the wider societal phenomenon.

## Socialization processes

Just as the open systems view has increased the perceived power of organisations over individuals, studies about communities, group activities and other social activities have done the same. Unlike the rational (classical) view of organisations, the social view of organisations proclaims the significance of the emotional, political, social and other unpredictable aspects of organisations, all caused by humans. The power of the organisation, not only as the collective power of its members, but as a social system, has become an intriguing way of studying organisations - one that has gathered pace in the last few decades.

Today, organisations are viewed as systems or networks of interrelationships. Team and group activities are a series of interconnected processes. Viewing organisations as societies, or as social constructions, connotes that individuals are not self-contained units. Individuals derive their identities from both relating to and distinguishing themselves from others in various groups. The risk of individuals is not to appear too individualistic or they might be perceived as manipulative, as seeking obedience or being closed to the ideas of others. As groups have become a key organisational mechanism, individualism is perceived as a form of separateness and, thus, unhealthy for the organisation. Again, this thinking is altered when considering innovation and creativity needs of the organisation. The socialized view of organisations suggests that an individual cannot perform assigned work effectively, or fulfil organisational responsibilities without first establishing on-going, working relationships with others (Schein, 1970; Taylor & Hobday, 1992).

The human relations view values human contributions to organisations, and the upshot of the social view of organisations is an increase in our understanding relationships and interconnectedness among individuals. Yet, the emphasis on the worth of individual effort has been substituted for the collective efforts of affiliating individuals striving toward a shared purpose. Analysis of the human dimension of organisations has created a more comprehensive and informed view, than the classical view. Organisations viewed as open, social systems have been extremely helpful. A third important stream of research has also come out of this human relations view - organisational cultures.

## Organisational Cultures

The third large body of research, originating from the human relations view, has further expanded our understanding of organisations as social and human phenomena. Organisations are now thought to contain cultural dimensions. Closely related are the ethical and moral dimensions of organisations. Not only has the human relations view led us to understand organisations as open systems and a series of interrelated social activities, organisations as an embodiment of a culture, or several cultures, is now a widely accepted view.

Further, the early 1980s witnessed a growing dissatisfaction with the overemphasis on rational, technical and economic methods and the inadequacy of the dominance of positivism in the development of organisational theory and knowledge. Various new research techniques, approaches, and alternative perspectives or paradigms have been recommended (e.g. Bagozzi 1984; Deshpande, 1984). There emerged a powerful challenge to the conventional organisational research methodology. Ideas about corporate, or organisational, cultures also began in the early 1980's. Research by Deal and Kennedy (1982) provided an extensive discussion about the nature of culture, the types of culture and ways of managing culture. The Administrative Science Quarterly, in 1983, prepared a special edition devoted entirely to issues of organisational cultures. A variety of perspectives and studies about cultural features of organisations were considered in that edition. Initially, little was known about how they formed, or about ways of discovering specific features of a culture. Though little was known or understood, the importance of culture upon organisational activities grew.

Organisational cultures are shared beliefs, attitudes, values and expectations among organisational members. Early founders of organisations are generally thought to create an organisation's culture, and organisational members are thought to have a role in sustaining it. As time passes since an organisation was formed, an individual's ability to change the organisational cultures becomes more difficult (Daft, 1995). Norms that govern behaviours in organisations are studied as corporate philosophies, formal procedures and rules, communication systems, reward systems - all things that reinforce certain behaviours and sustain culture. Researchers now recognise that an organisation does not have just one culture, but many subcultures. Researchers believe that by studying features of the primary culture, we learn more about managing change (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

Morgan's (1986) metaphorical view of organisations, offers an interesting view of organisational cultures from an open systems perspective. Organisation rests in the system of meaning. It does not depend on the existence of bureaucratic structures or rules. A culture metaphor points to a way of organizing through shared norms, values, ideas and beliefs and thus shared visions and directions for future development. Through the political metaphor, we see how it may be possible to organize around the interplay of competing interests, forging unity through negotiation, wheeling and dealing, or perhaps even through raw coercion. These examples serve to illustrate the point that our thinking about organisations influences how we organize. We can overcome familiar problems by learning to see and understand organisations in new ways, so that new courses of action emerge (Morgan, 1986).

Unified actions based on shared values, according to this culturally constructed view of organisations, are also tied to ethical and moral concepts that affect organisations. Organisational studies about culture seek answers to questions about the responsibility of organisations, to both its members and to society. These studies seek to understand ways that organisational ethics contribute to organisational successes. Ethical and moral studies are a relatively new contribution to the field of organisational analysis (Beck, 1992).

Acknowledging the existence of organisational cultures challenges the notion that organisations consist of only narrow economic goals, centred on the production of goods or services. The socialized view of organisations creates a complex view of how organisations reach desired levels of efficiency and profit. The cultural view defines organisations as powerful social, political, and economic forces that need to assume their "proper" place in society. Further, studies suggest that organisational cultures, including subcultures, morals, and ethics, have not been given enough attention by organisational theorists. These concepts are thought to be a significant part of understanding how organisations develop and change, and thus are very important factors to consider in many organisational studies (Bennis et al., 1994).

There is no such thing as a "good organisation" in any absolute sense. Always it is relative; and an organisation that is good in one context or under one criterion may be bad under another (Ashby, 1962, p. 263). As organisational cultural values were becoming prominent features of organisations, the view of the individual, again, was devalued. The ethical and moral dimensions of organisations, in some studies, challenged the notion that organisations are motivated only by purely economic motives. Some organisations were being judged according to moral ethical values. Research suggested that organisational goals and initiatives are, and should be judged by much larger constituencies, and thus organisational responsibility has been broadened beyond economic motives. All this thinking about the organisational values supersedes individual values. Though individual morals and personal ethics are considered in this cultural view, studies suggest that individuals will/should align their personal values to organisational values, and adopt the ethics and morals of the organisation. The literature implies that if individuals cannot assimilate into the organisation's culture, then they are more likely to move to another organisation rather than try to change it. If an individual tries to change the culture of an organisation, such changes are identified as slow, tedious and often unsuccessful (Aubrey & Cohen, 1995).

Organisational analysis has expanded our understanding of organisations in new and interesting ways, especially through various human relations views. The open systems concept, socialization and cultural considerations sometimes contradict the classical rational view, but more often become supplemental to the original view of organisations. Whether a study examines morals, motives, justice or the ethics of caring, organisational hierarchy and formal structures are assumed present and desired. As discussed above, an emphasis on open systems, social groups and organisational cultures all seem to diminish the sense that individuals are, or can be, an important influence upon organisations. Organisational analysis has changed significantly in many ways, but continues to suggest that individuals succumb to the power of the organisation.

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One final area of research about organisations, that has significantly altered our view of organisations, is the socio-technical view. Technological advancements have thrust organisations into rapid, turbulent times. Technology has creates a state of "flux" in organisations and sometimes caused organisations to spiral out of control. Though changing demographics and a global marketplace have also created new challenges for organisations, technology has placed many business enterprises in compromising and threatened positions. Technological change also raises questions about the value of individuals, especially in relation to acquire past knowledge that may not help with new problems posed by new technology. An explanation of how and why organisations change continues to baffle. As technology calls for "new" knowledge, individual abilities to acquire this new knowledge (i.e., their ability to learn) are being considered. A third shift in organisational research, both major and current, - the socio-technical view -considers the diminishing role of the individual in organisations.

## Socio-Technical View

In addition to the human relations views altering ways we think and talk about organisations since the classical view was expressed, now the socio-technical view of organisations has accelerated the rate of change in our thinking. Organisations struggle to keep pace with rapid technological advancements and organisational research struggles to identify the important factors of technological change. Technology has created an imperative for change. Organisational research has documented many ways that technology and the resulting need resulting change is problematic. The ability of an organisation to respond appropriately, effectively, and quickly, seizing a technological advantage, is one of the most pervasive challenges for organisations.

Early in the 1970's, the rate of technical progress was just beginning to escalate. The importance of individuals to the organisations was immediately threatened with this kind of progress. As this same time, the organisational field of study was expanding by to investigating the human dimensions of organisations. The open, organic view widened the boundaries, set forth a wide-range of organisational influences, and offered out for study complex, systems of organisations, all ideas rendering individuals as only one of many organisational influences.

Technical progress accelerated change and the organic view of organisations seemed better equipped, than the mechanistic view, at determining how to keep pace with the rapidly changing technology. The organic view, alongside the reality of technical changes, identified ways that technical progress, in many cases, threatened to render certain jobs obsolete, particularly some jobs performed by individuals. Thus, technical progress, from its early beginning, was seen as an independent power to which individuals (and organisations) must respond (Dalton & Lawrence, 1970).

As social and behavioural considerations in organisational research provided new insights into organisations, Alfred Toffler (1970), a world-renowned scholar and social critic, came forth with several radical ideas for the 1970 era. His book was called "Future Shock". He viewed organisations from a systems perspective and made ominous predictions about how technology would drastically change organisations and the lives of the individuals within them. Toffler described an emerging, super-industrial, world filled with temporary organisations and a world where people were overwhelmed by change. He examined "the death of permanence." He described how computers would force upon us a "knowledge and information age." Specifically, he described that technology would challenge and eliminate the need for many jobs. Toffler's solution to the threat of technology was for individuals to acquire new knowledge and become good learners. According to Toffler (1970), the need for everyone to learn was an imperative.

Within this stream of research questions are not strictly about human dimensions, as in the human relations view, but some studies ask what the impact of technology is upon humans. Fear, doubt, and insecurities held by organisational members are recognised and studied as a part of organisational research (Argyris, 1957; Blau, 1987; Elfrey, 1982). Toffler (1970) described technology as a great engine with a mighty accelerator, and he saw individuals (especially with technical knowledge), as the fuel to run the engine. People needed to learn new ways and acquire new knowledge.

However, in practice, studies revealed that people were clinging to the status quo and were resistant to change (Baron, 1990; Drucker, 1995; Handy, 1996). Psychological research described how people became filled with self-doubt in the face of change. Uncertainties abounded among organisational members. Even organisationally, technological change meant losing or relinquishing control to one part of the environment. As more and more technological change was seen on the horizon, individuals (and organisations) were threatened. It seemed that new ways of achieving success were being identified. Along with the new ways, many careers, industries and organisational types were becoming obsolete.

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Twenty years after Tofller's Future Shock, organisations have experienced dramatic change. Both implied and real threats to the security of organisational members have resulted. Organisational theorists continue to consider how humans can be "fit" into technologically run organisations. The ad-hoc groups, temporary teams, throwaway organisations that Toffler predicted in 1970, have become a reality. Research describes how technology drains the authority and power of the people of organisations. Research also confirms that temporary, ad-hoc groups inspire, adapt and engage in creative problem solving. Virtual organisations are more and more prevalent, and employees are increasingly dispersed (Kilmann, 1996).

The socio-technical view suggests that technology may dismantle bureaucratic organisations and maybe all organisations, as we now think of them. The role of the individual in virtual organisations is uncertain and considered more complex than ever. Studies about knowledge possessed and shared by individuals is an expanding stream of thought in this view of organisations. Already power relationships have changed from vertical to horizontal or becoming knowledge-based (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Organisational members are viewed as residents and creators of knowledge, but so too are organisations seen as receptors of knowledge that is something to be converted into organisational power and authority. Complex variables and web-like relationships uniquely created within organisations are based on a wide range of factors, including individuals. Thus, technology has pushed organisational analysis to extend itself even further to consider new environments and new horizons than ever considered by the human relations view (Drucker & Falmer, 1993).

Not only are the shapes of organisations changing, individual behaviours called for in organisations are dynamically different. The 1970's research view of technical progress sought ways to understand how to continue to control and design functional differentiation, specialization, structured tasks, and formal delegation activities in organisations (Dalton & Lawrence, 1970). By the 1990's, individual entrepreneurial, creative and competitive efforts are sought; but are still shaped around organisational needs. Ways to reduce rigid, bureaucratic organisational structures are desired, while retaining control. Organisational analysts study and write about technological change using terms like, "frightening speed", "rapid", "unforeseen", "unpredictable", "chaos" and "crisis". The bureaucratic model of organisations, still voraciously studied and sometimes emulated, is now considered "inadequate" and a big part of "the problem" (Huey, 1993). Finally, individual efforts that produce changes to the structures of organisations, seem infinite. Leaders are especially burdened with facilitating change.

The bureaucratic and scientific view of organisations established stable, centralized, decision-making processes. This view created formal gradations of power and authority, and structured functional organisational designs. As technology has prompted change, ways of breaking down these rigid well-established structures have become paramount. Contemporary views still value formal bureaucratic organisational structures as stable, secure, and predictable environments, but there is recognition that organisations must restructure themselves into exploratory, creative, revolutionary and dynamic environments. Removing the discord between what organisations are and what they should become is a current challenge for leaders. Knowledgeable, flexible, adaptable leaders are highly desired. However, the risks to leaders' careers, from these types of behaviours, have been recorded in the research.

Further, most "traditional" organisational structures have been challenged. Organizing by function, formal communication structures operating according to hierarchy and distinct job specifications still exist - but are often viewed as deterrents to change. Formalities and other rigidities are thought to decrease an organisation's ability to change quickly (Peters, 1987). These barriers to organisational success are broken down, through concepts of "reengineering" and "continuous quality improvement". New ways of operating are needed, and the wisdom of past activities, based on experiences, often seem outmoded, according to the socio-technical view. The need to change because of new technology creates some doubt that what individuals have come to know and understand over the course of their lives, is of less value than new knowledge to be learned and applied in the future. Some theorists believe the ability of the organisation to acquire new knowledge, must begin with individuals (Aubrey & Cohen, 1995).

The socio-technical view of organisations promotes open and informal lines of communication, flatter bureaucracies, cross-functional matrices, flexible and adaptable workflow processes, for example. Not only are the less traditional, less bureaucratic and non- mechanical organisational factors sought, but also fluid, dynamic, variable and unique ways are preferred. As noted above, individuals, and especially leaders, are needed to control these "hard-to-control" organisations, to predict what is nearly impossible to predict and to manage what is difficult to manage.

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For a few decades, organisational theorists have been suggesting that organisational members need to embrace and encourage change. Individuals, not just groups, can create change. Both research and practice confirm that changing times create unpredictable and uncontrollable situations that people often resist (Novelli & Taylor, 1993). Entrepreneurial and creative activities are encouraged and experimental ways are supported. Trial and error activities are encouraged. Action learning is advocated. Yet new types of individual (and group) activities are rarely put into practice, the promised security of experimentation and testing, are often more rhetoric than reality. Individuals, and their careers, are being put at risk (Slade, 1994).

Handy suggests that the way we think and talk about organisations must change. We now think very differently about organisations than in the past. Even the language of organisations has changed dramatically. Terms used to describe organisations used to include stable, predictable, and controllable; these have been replaced with transformational, radical, revolutionary and chaotic. As members of organisations pursue their careers within organisations, they engage in dialogue, collaborate, partner, facilitate communication, influence others and are influenced by others, rather than directing, controlling and authorizing organisational activities as in the past.

Technological advancements have prompted thinking that people in organisations are both the problem and the solution. As organisational structures become more dynamic and, thus, more uncontrollable, individuals are expected to inspire and create and control. However, technology continues to alter the environment rapidly, often rendering new ideas obsolete or ineffective long before they have had time to be fully implemented. As individual entrepreneurial efforts are carried out, they often fail. Organisations cannot exist for long from failures, and thus the search for predictability and control of outcomes continues.

**Conclusion**

Charles Handy, noted economist, describes a need today for thinking and talking about organisations differently. The way in which we view organisations today has changed considerably from when we began studying them early in the last century. Today, this field of study - organisational analysis - is changing dramatically from the first "scientific" studies conducted early in the century. This field offers rich contextual ideas, multidisciplinary perspectives, and is still an emerging field. Hardy, along with many other organisational researchers, believes this body of research continues to be limited and of questionable value, as a field of study that effectively informs practice.

New contemporary research ideas about organisations and their effectiveness include ideas about empowerment, team-based management, participative decision-making and organisational learning, to name just a few. Organisations have grown in prominence in our society and organisational research continues to develop as a way of informing practice. Organisational research is intended to increase our understanding of these important social phenomenon organisations and to prescribe ways of improving them. While Handy urges us to begin thinking and talking about organisations in new ways, an historical review of the organisational research literature reveals that this field already has changed and continues to evolve in many new ways.

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