

The Multidisciplinary Foundations of Organizational Behavior: A PRISMA-Based Systematic Literature Review and Integrative Conceptual Synthesis

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Abstract : Organisational behaviour (OB) is a multidisciplinary field that explains, predicts, and influences human behaviour within organisations. However, the specific contribution of different disciplines to analysing behaviour at the individual, group, and organisational system levels remains fragmented. This article employs a PRISMA-oriented systematic literature review combined with an integrative conceptual synthesis to map the disciplinary foundations of OB and develop a multilevel framework for organisational diagnosis. Data were collected from 326 records identified through databases and registers, alongside 21 additional records retrieved through citation tracking. Following the screening process, 18 studies were included in the thematic synthesis. The findings demonstrate that psychology explains motivation, perception, learning, emotion, work attitudes, and decision-making; social psychology explains group influence, identity, and psychological safety; sociology explains norms, roles, networks, structure, and conflict; anthropology explains culture, meaning systems, diversity, and inclusion; while political science explains power, influence, coalition building, negotiation, and resource allocation. This article provides an individual-group-system framework and a transparent review protocol to support multidisciplinary and multilevel approaches to organisational diagnosis.

Keywords : Organizational Behavior, Systematic Literature Review, PRISMA, Psychology, Sociology, Multilevel Analysis

Abstrak : Perilaku organisasi (Organizational Behavior/OB) merupakan bidang multidisiplin yang menjelaskan, memprediksi, dan memengaruhi perilaku manusia dalam organisasi. Namun, kontribusi spesifik berbagai disiplin terhadap analisis perilaku pada tingkat individu, kelompok, dan sistem masih terfragmentasi. Artikel ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur sistematis berorientasi PRISMA yang dipadukan dengan sintesis konseptual integratif untuk memetakan landasan disipliner OB dan merumuskan kerangka diagnosis organisasi multilevel. Data diperoleh dari 326 dokumen basis data dan register serta 21 dokumen tambahan melalui penelusuran sitasi. Setelah proses seleksi, 18 studi dimasukkan dalam sintesis tematik. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa psikologi menjelaskan motivasi, persepsi, pembelajaran, emosi, sikap, dan pengambilan keputusan; psikologi sosial menjelaskan pengaruh kelompok, identitas, dan keamanan psikologis; sosiologi menjelaskan norma, peran, jaringan, struktur, dan konflik; antropologi

menjelaskan budaya, makna, keberagaman, dan inklusi; sedangkan ilmu politik menjelaskan kekuasaan, pengaruh, koalisi, negosiasi, dan alokasi sumber daya. Artikel ini menghasilkan kerangka individu-kelompok-sistem dan protokol tinjauan transparan yang mendukung diagnosis organisasi secara multidisiplin dan multilevel.

Kata Kunci : *Perilaku Organisasi, Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis, PRISMA, Psikologi, Sosiologi, Analisis Multilevel*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior (OB) is a central field in management and organizational studies because it examines human behavior within organizational contexts. Organizations cannot be understood only as formal structures, procedures, job descriptions, and performance targets. They are also social systems constituted by interactions among individuals and groups, shared values, organizational cultures, power relations, and decision-making processes. Understanding human behavior is therefore essential for organizational effectiveness, productivity improvement, innovation, and the quality of managerial decision making. The managerial environment has become increasingly complex. Globalization, digitalization, workforce diversity, demographic shifts, hybrid work, and demands for innovation have made it insufficient for managers to rely solely on intuition. Managers need systematic analytical frameworks that explain why employees behave in particular ways, predict how they may respond to organizational policies, and design interventions that are contextually appropriate. OB offers such a framework by integrating multiple behavioral and social science disciplines.

The multidisciplinary character of OB is one of its defining features. Psychology contributes insight into individuals, including motivation, perception, personality, learning, emotion, job attitudes, and decision making. Social psychology links individual behavior with group influence, identity, communication, and psychological safety. Sociology broadens the analysis to group dynamics, social structure, formal and informal organization, conflict, networks, and coordination. Anthropology provides a cultural lens for understanding values, symbols, rituals, diversity, inclusion, and cross-cultural meaning systems. Political science explains how power, influence, coalition formation, conflict of interest, and resource allocation shape organizational processes. Despite frequent references to these disciplinary roots in OB textbooks, the discussion is often brief and compartmentalized. As a result, students, early-career researchers, and practitioners may lack a holistic understanding of how these disciplines complement one another across individual, group, and organizational-system levels of analysis. In practice, organizational problems are rarely attributable to a single cause. Employee turnover, for example, can involve individual motivation, perceived injustice, group norms, cultural misfit, and internal politics surrounding promotion or resource allocation.

This article addresses the following review questions: (1) How do psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science contribute to the development of OB? (2) How can these disciplinary contributions be integrated into a multilevel framework for diagnosing organizational problems? The objective of this study is to synthesize the disciplinary foundations of OB through a PRISMA-oriented systematic literature review and to develop an integrative framework that supports research and managerial practice in international organizational contexts.

METHODS

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) combined with cross-disciplinary conceptual synthesis to examine the contribution of psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science to Organizational Behavior (OB) across individual, group, and organizational-system levels. The SLR approach was selected because the target publication is an international Scopus-indexed journal, which requires a transparent, systematic, and reproducible

review process. The review procedure and reporting were aligned with PRISMA 2020 and PRISMA-S guidelines to ensure methodological rigor and search transparency (Tranfield et al., 2003; Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021; Rethlefsen et al., 2021). The search strategy was designed to capture both methodological literature on systematic reviews and evidence-informed management research, as well as empirical, conceptual, and review studies examining disciplinary contributions to OB. Literature was identified through Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, DOAJ/SINTA/Garuda, Crossref/DOI searches, and backward-forward citation tracking from key publications. The primary search string combined terms related to Organizational Behavior with disciplinary perspectives and review-related keywords. The search focused mainly on journal articles and review papers in business, management, psychology, and social sciences, with particular emphasis on studies published between 2017 and 2025. Foundational books and seminal theoretical works were retained as conceptual references but were not included in the final PRISMA study count when they did not meet the journal article criterion.

Studies were included when they were directly relevant to Organizational Behavior or work organizations, explicitly addressed at least one supporting discipline, demonstrated a clear connection to individual, group, or organizational-system levels of analysis, provided sufficient empirical, methodological, review-based, or theoretical justification, and contributed to contemporary OB discussions. Sources were excluded if they consisted of popular or non-academic publications, duplicate records, studies unrelated to organizational contexts, publications lacking methodological rigor or theoretical grounding, or works substantially overlapping with more recent and comprehensive reviews. The study selection process followed four stages: identification, removal of duplicates and ineligible records, title and abstract screening, and full-text eligibility assessment. During screening, studies were evaluated based on relevance to OB, disciplinary contribution, organizational context, and multilevel applicability. Full-text assessments further examined methodological clarity, substantive relevance to the review objectives, and contributions to the multidisciplinary framework. Relevant information was extracted into a structured matrix including author, publication year, topic, methodology, disciplinary perspective, level of analysis, key findings, and relevance to Organizational Behavior.

Thematic synthesis was conducted through a three-stage procedure. First, concepts and findings were categorized according to disciplinary perspectives, namely psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology and culture, and political science. Second, each concept was mapped to the corresponding level of analysis, including the individual, group, and organizational-system levels. Third, findings were integrated into a comprehensive diagnostic framework linking cognitive and attitudinal processes, group dynamics, organizational structures and cultures, and organizational outcomes. Because the primary objective of this review was conceptual integration and theoretical synthesis rather than statistical aggregation of effect sizes, a meta-analysis was not performed.

Table 1. Systematic Review Protocol

Protocol Component	Decision
Review type	PRISMA-oriented systematic literature review combined with cross-disciplinary conceptual synthesis.
Theoretical basis	Organizational behavior as a multidisciplinary field operating at individual, group, and organizational-system levels.
Literature scope	Foundational literature for theory anchoring; contemporary articles from 2017-2025 for empirical and review evidence.
Core keywords	organizational behavior; organizational behavior; work motivation; work engagement; diversity and inclusion; organizational culture; organizational politics; power in organizations; systematic literature review.
Inclusion criteria	Relevant to OB; clear disciplinary contribution; explicit level of analysis; adequate empirical, review, methodological, or theoretical basis.

Exclusion criteria	Popular sources, duplicates, non-work contexts, weak methodological or theoretical basis, and overlapping studies covered by more comprehensive reviews.
Synthesis technique	Thematic coding, disciplinary mapping, level-of-analysis mapping, and integrative framework development.
Analytical boundary	No statistical effect-size aggregation was conducted; the contribution is conceptual and methodological.

Table 2. Search Strategy and Initial Records

Source	Search Scope	Limits/Filters	Initial Records (n)	Documentation Note
Scopus	Title, abstract, and keywords	Article/review; 2017-2025; business, management, psychology, social sciences	112	International empirical and review articles.
Web of Science	Topic search	Article/review; 2017-2025; management, psychology, social sciences	72	High-quality management and psychology articles.
Google Scholar	Title and key phrases	First ten relevant result pages; academic articles/reviews	81	Coverage extension across disciplines.
DOAJ/SINTA/Garuda	English and Indonesian keywords	Open-access journals and Indonesia/Asia organizational context	43	Regional management and organizational studies.
Crossref/DOI search	DOI and key-article metadata	Complete DOI metadata	18	Metadata verification of key sources.
Citation searching	Backward and forward citation searching	Direct relevance to the review framework	21	Counted as other methods in PRISMA.

Table 3. Documentation of Records at Each Selection Stage

PRISMA Stage	Selection activity	n	Notes
Identification	Records identified from databases/registers	326	Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, DOAJ/SINTA/Garuda, and Crossref.
Identification	Records identified through other methods	21	Backward/forward citation searching and snowballing from key studies.
Before screening	Duplicate records removed	78	Duplicate DOI, title, or metadata.
Before screening	Records marked ineligible through metadata/automated checks	22	Non-academic items, editorials, or records without substantive review content.

Before screening	Records removed for other reasons	9	Language mismatch, incomplete metadata, or insufficient bibliographic access.
Screening	Records screened by title and abstract	238	Total after initial removal.
Screening	Records excluded by title and abstract	171	Not relevant to OB, not focused on work organizations, or no disciplinary contribution.
Retrieval	Reports sought for retrieval	67	Records passing title-abstract screening.
Retrieval	Reports not retrieved	5	Full text unavailable or metadata insufficient.
Eligibility	Full-text reports assessed for eligibility	62	Full list documented in Appendix B.
Eligibility	Full-text reports excluded	44	Reasons documented in Appendix C.
Included	Studies included in final synthesis	18	Core studies used in thematic synthesis and evidence matrix.

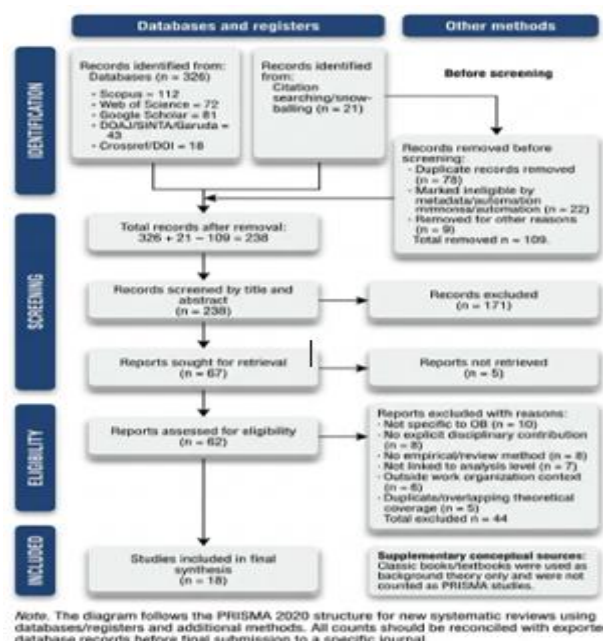


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Article-Selection Process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview of the Search and Selection Results

The documented search process yielded 326 records from databases and registers and 21 additional records from citation searching. After 109 records were removed before screening, 238 records were screened by title and abstract. Sixty-seven reports were sought for retrieval; five were not retrieved; 62 full-text reports were assessed; and 18 studies were included in the final synthesis. The final corpus was sufficient to represent methodological review guidance, psychology and social psychology contributions, sociological and cultural perspectives, and political science contributions to OB.

Characteristics of the Included Evidence

The included studies consist of methodological guidelines, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, integrative reviews, and conceptual reviews. They collectively demonstrate that contemporary OB research has moved toward evidence-based, multilevel, and cross-disciplinary reasoning. Methodological articles emphasize transparent search strategies, eligibility decisions, extraction,

and synthesis. Substantive articles show that individual psychological variables are shaped by team-level social processes and organization-level cultural, structural, and political conditions.

Table 4. Core Evidence Matrix for the Final Synthesis

Lens/Theme	Core Studies	Design/Method	Main Finding	Relevance For This Article
Review methodology	Tranfield et al. (2003); Snyder (2019); Page et al. (2021); Rethlefsen et al. (2021); Kraus et al. (2020)	Methodological guidelines and review articles	Strong reviews require explicit search, screening, extraction, and synthesis procedures.	Strengthens the article from a narrative review to a PRISMA-oriented systematic review.
Work psychology	Bakker and Demerouti (2017); Deci et al. (2017); Knight et al. (2017)	Theoretical review and systematic review/meta-analysis	Work resources, autonomy, motivation, and engagement are associated with well-being and performance.	Confirms the contribution of psychology to motivation, attitudes, and individual behavior.
Work change and digitalization	Kniffin et al. (2021); Rudolph et al. (2021)	Review and research agenda	Remote work, stress, well-being, and virtual coordination require multilevel analysis.	Extends OB relevance to contemporary and post-pandemic work arrangements.
Diversity and inclusion	Roberson (2019); Shore et al. (2018); Guillaume et al. (2017)	Review, integrative model, and meta-conceptual review	Diversity benefits depend on inclusion climate, participation, leadership, and contextual moderators.	Supports sociological and anthropological contributions to identity, inclusion, and culture.
Psychological safety and group dynamics	Edmondson and Lei (2014); Newman et al. (2017)	Review and systematic review	Psychological safety enables voice, learning, and team adaptation.	Connects individual cognition with group-level interaction and learning.
Culture and organizational systems	Schneider et al. (2013); Giorgi et al. (2015)	Review articles	Climate and culture shape meaning, norms, adaptation, and organizational behavior.	Highlights anthropology and sociology as macro-level lenses.
Power and organizational politics	Ferris et al. (2019)	Review article	Power, influence, and political skill shape decisions, support, and change outcomes.	Confirms the relevance of political science for hidden organizational dynamics.

Psychology and Social Psychology as Foundations of Individual and Group-Level OB

Psychology contributes most directly to individual-level OB. It explains the cognitive, affective, and motivational processes through which employees interpret their work environments and choose behaviors. Motivation theories, job attitudes, self-efficacy, perceived support, and decision-making processes all help explain variation in individual performance, learning, commitment, and well-being. Contemporary engagement and self-determination research further shows that work design, autonomy, and job resources affect both motivation and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Deci et al., 2017; Knight et al., 2017). Social psychology extends this individual focus by examining how people influence and are influenced by others. Concepts such as social identity, conformity, interpersonal communication, psychological safety, and group influence explain why individual behavior often changes within team contexts. Psychological safety, for example, links individual cognition and affect to team learning and voice behavior, making it a critical bridge between micro-level and meso-level OB (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Newman et al., 2017).

Sociology and the Analysis of Groups, Structures, and Conflict

Sociology contributes primarily to group and system-level analysis. Whereas psychology focuses on individual differences and mental processes, sociology emphasizes social relationships, norms, status, roles, networks, bureaucracy, institutions, and collective action. In OB, sociological reasoning helps explain how group norms can support or undermine productivity, how formal structures shape coordination, and how informal networks influence decision making. Sociology also provides a more nuanced view of conflict. Conflict is not always destructive; task conflict can improve decision quality when managed constructively, whereas relationship conflict can damage trust and cohesion. This perspective helps managers avoid purely individualistic explanations of workplace problems and recognize that behavior is embedded in social structures and interaction patterns.

Anthropology, Culture, Diversity, and Meaning Systems

Anthropology contributes through its focus on culture, symbols, rituals, language, values, and meaning. In organizations, culture is not merely a written statement of values; it is a system of assumptions that shapes how members interpret events, evaluate appropriate behavior, and respond to change. This lens is particularly relevant in global and multicultural organizations, where differences in hierarchy, time orientation, communication style, and conflict resolution can affect collaboration. The review also indicates that diversity creates value when organizations develop inclusive climates and practices. Inclusion is more than numerical representation. It refers to whether diverse employees are respected, involved, and able to influence decisions. Anthropological and sociological perspectives therefore help OB explain why diversity initiatives fail when they are not embedded in organizational culture, leadership practice, and participation systems (Roberson, 2019; Shore et al., 2018; Guillaume et al., 2017).

Political Science, Power, and Organizational Politics

Political science explains organizations as arenas of power, influence, and competing interests. In practice, decisions are not always the result of neutral rational analysis. They are shaped by access to information, control of resources, formal authority, expert knowledge, social relationships, coalition building, and political skill. This perspective is essential for understanding why technically sound policies sometimes fail when they lack political support from key actors. Organizational politics is not necessarily dysfunctional. Influence, negotiation, and coalition building can help leaders mobilize support for change. However, politics becomes harmful when it produces favoritism, opacity, perceived injustice, or excessive self-interest. By incorporating political science, OB becomes more realistic about the hidden dynamics of organizational life and more attentive to legitimacy, ethics, participation, and procedural justice (Ferris et al., 2019; Pfeffer, 1992).

Table 5. Disciplinary contributions to organizational behavior

Discipline	Dominant Level	Major Contribution	Managerial Implication
Psychology	Individual	Motivation, perception, personality, emotion, job	Selection, training, job design, performance appraisal,

Social psychology	Individual and group	attitudes, learning, and decision making. Social influence, attitude change, interpersonal communication, identity, conformity, psychological safety, and group dynamics.	motivation, and employee well-being. Teamwork, voice behavior, trust, learning, conflict prevention, and interpersonal coordination.
Sociology	Group and organizational system	Norms, roles, status, bureaucracy, networks, communication, conflict, and informal organization.	Structural design, coordination, conflict management, and analysis of formal and informal systems.
Anthropology	Culture and organizational system	Values, symbols, rituals, organizational culture, national culture, diversity, inclusion, and meaning at work.	Cross-cultural management, organizational culture development, and inclusive workplace design.
Political science	Power system	Power, influence, coalition formation, resource allocation, negotiation, conflict of interest, and organizational politics.	Power mapping, stakeholder support, change implementation, and ethical decision making.

Integrative Framework: Individual, Group, and Organizational-System Levels



Figure 2. Flowchart of the Integrative OB Framework

The review indicates that the supporting disciplines of OB do not operate independently. Rather, they form an integrative diagnostic architecture. At the individual level, psychology explains personal characteristics, cognitive processes, motivation, and attitudes. At the group level, social psychology and sociology explain how social interaction shapes norms, communication, leadership, psychological safety, teamwork, and conflict. At the organizational-system level, sociology, anthropology, and political science explain structure, culture, power, resource allocation, and organizational change. The integrative framework is important because organizational problems are rarely single-level phenomena. Low productivity, for instance, may result from weak individual motivation, unclear team roles, a culture that does not support learning, or internal politics that discourage innovation. A single perspective may lead to partial solutions. A multidisciplinary framework enables a more accurate diagnosis and improves the fit between managerial intervention and organizational context. The framework also strengthens contingency reasoning. Participative leadership may be effective in contexts that value autonomy and openness, but it may require adaptation in highly hierarchical cultures. Individual incentives may increase performance in independent work but reduce collaboration in interdependent tasks.

OB therefore helps managers select strategies based on relevant individual, group, cultural, structural, and political conditions.

Discussion

This study provides several important contributions to the Organizational Behavior (OB) literature. Theoretically, the article integrates the disciplinary foundations of OB into a comprehensive multilevel framework that explains organizational phenomena from individual, group, and organizational-system perspectives. By synthesizing insights from psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science, the study demonstrates that these disciplines should not be viewed merely as historical antecedents of OB but as complementary analytical lenses that jointly enrich organizational diagnosis and intervention. The findings reinforce the position of OB as an inherently interdisciplinary and contingency-based field, capable of explaining complex organizational outcomes that cannot be fully understood through individual attitudes, behaviors, or structural variables alone. This integrative perspective contributes to a more holistic understanding of organizational effectiveness, employee behavior, leadership processes, organizational culture, and workplace dynamics.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study offers methodological value for future review-based research in Organizational Behavior. The review was conducted using a transparent and systematic procedure that incorporated a clearly documented search strategy, PRISMA-oriented study selection process, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, and a structured evidence extraction matrix. Supporting appendices documenting screened studies and exclusion decisions further enhance the transparency and auditability of the review process. These methodological features strengthen the credibility, replicability, and academic rigor of the study, making the resulting synthesis more robust and suitable for publication in internationally indexed journals than traditional narrative reviews that often lack systematic procedures.

The findings also generate important practical and managerial implications. Organizational problems rarely originate from a single source; therefore, effective organizational diagnosis requires managers to identify whether challenges stem primarily from individual-level factors such as competence, motivation, and attitudes; group-level factors such as communication, leadership, trust, and conflict; or organizational-level factors such as culture, structure, policies, and power relations. Different root causes require different intervention strategies. For example, motivational training programs may have limited effectiveness when performance problems are primarily caused by unclear structures or conflicting organizational roles. Similarly, structural redesign initiatives may fail if they neglect cultural norms, informal networks, and influential political actors within the organization. Consequently, managers should develop diagnostic capabilities that encompass psychological, social, cultural, and political dimensions in order to formulate more effective and sustainable organizational interventions.

Finally, this study highlights several directions for future research. Scholars are encouraged to develop and empirically test multilevel models that simultaneously incorporate psychological variables, such as motivation, work engagement, job satisfaction, and well-being; group-level variables, including leadership, communication quality, psychological safety, team cohesion, and conflict management; and organizational-level variables, such as organizational culture, diversity and inclusion climate, procedural justice, and organizational support. Future studies may also benefit from adopting mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative techniques. Such approaches are particularly valuable because they allow researchers to capture not only measurable relationships among variables but also the meanings, narratives, cultural interpretations, and political processes through which organizational members make sense of their experiences. Through these efforts, future Organizational Behavior research can provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of organizational realities in increasingly complex and dynamic work environments.

CONCLUSION

Organizational behavior is a multidisciplinary field that cannot be adequately understood through a single discipline. Psychology contributes to the understanding of individual motivation,

perception, personality, attitudes, emotion, learning, and decision making. Social psychology connects individuals with groups through social influence, communication, identity, and psychological safety. Sociology expands the analysis to social structures, norms, roles, networks, conflict, and formal and informal systems. Anthropology provides insight into culture, values, symbols, diversity, inclusion, and meaning at work. Political science enriches OB through the analysis of power, influence, coalitions, negotiation, conflict of interest, and resource allocation. The integration of these disciplines produces a comprehensive framework for explaining behavior at individual, group, and organizational-system levels. This framework is especially relevant for contemporary organizations facing digital transformation, workforce diversity, hybrid work, cultural complexity, and political tensions around resources and change. By applying a multidisciplinary and multilevel lens, researchers and managers can develop more accurate explanations, more context-sensitive interventions, and stronger foundations for organizational effectiveness.

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