

The socio-organizational dimension in Michel Crozier's understanding of organizational job performance

البعد السوسيوتنظيمي في فهم ميشال كروزييه للأداء الوظيفي للمنظمات

Dib Hamma^{1*}, DjahmiAbdelazize²

¹ Laboratory of Philosophy, Humanities and Social Studies, Media and Communication Problems, University of May 08, 1945 Guelma (Algeria), Dib.Hamma@univ-guelma.dz

² University of May 08, 1945 Guelma(Algeria), Djahmi.Abdelazize@univ-guelma.dz

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Abstract

Researchers have shown interest in job performance due to its significant importance for individuals and organizations. This article addresses the factors, components, and types of job performance, using Michel Crozier's strategic analysis model, which provides an alternative approach to managing employees through zones of doubt, margins of freedom, and tangible patterns. Drawing from important classical theories that have studied the topic of performance, this article aims to clarify the strategic analysis perspective of organizational job performance, its assumptions, principles, and the elucidation of organized work principle in organizations.

Keywords: Performance; Functional performance; Strategic analysis; Organizations; Michel Crozier.

ملخص:

إهتم الباحثين بالأداء الوظيفي بسبب أهميته البالغة للأفراد والمنظمات، وتناول هذا المقال عوامل ومكونات وأنواع الأداء الوظيفي، من خلال نموذج التحليل الاستراتيجي لميشال كروزييه، الذي قدم لنا منهجية مغايرة لتسيير العاملين، من خلال مناطق الشك وهوامش الحرية و النسق الملموس، إنطلاقاً من أهم النظريات الكلاسيكية التي درست موضوع الأداء ، ويهدف هذا المقال إلى توضيح رؤية التحليل الإستراتيجي للأداء الوظيفي للمنظمات، من خلال مسلماته ومبادئه، وتوضيح مبدأ العمل المنظم في المنظمات.

كلمات مفتاحية: أداء؛ أداء وظيفي ؛ تحليل إستراتيجي ؛ منظمات ؛ ميشال كروزييه.

* Corresponding author.

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1. Introduction

The field of sociology has evolved from studying industrial organizations and related phenomena. Over time, its scope of interest expanded to encompass all aspects of social life. Scholars recognized the importance of understanding modern organizations, leading to the emergence of the sociology of organization. This subfield aims to understand all forms of modern organizations. Several scholars, including the French thinker Michel Crozier, distinguished themselves in this field. Crozier conducted strategic analytical studies, representing a progression from classical studies emphasizing human productivity and performance. In contrast to traditional theories viewing organizations as shaping individuals, strategic analysis revealed that individuals shape the organization. Thus, a strategic role is attributed to the actor in sociological and socio-organizational studies.

Criticism of traditional theories, which focus on individuals or work groups without emphasizing organizational strategy, serves as a starting point for one of the pioneers in the field of modern organizational sociology, Michel Crozier. He introduced the model of strategic analysis, attempting to examine the organization as an independent phenomenon. Crozier indicated that organizational dynamics depend on diverse and contrasting strategies. He affirmed that each category or group has its own specific strategy, and each actor within the organization has their unique strategy. Through interaction, each actor holds a certain degree of freedom regarding the organization or structure in which they operate. According to Crozier's concept, strategic analysis represents a diagnosis aimed at understanding how collective actions are constructed based on individual behaviors within the organization.

2. Organizational Performance:

We will address the organizational performance by understanding its concepts, identifying its dimensions and elements, and highlighting its types and determinants.

2.1. The Concept of Organizational Performance

The definitions and concepts of organizational performance vary with the diversity of studies and approaches, as its understanding differs from one thinker and observer to another.

- Performance is linked to the cumulative human effort of an individual or a group, whether it has a direct or indirect impact. When performance is a result of the operation of a unit, department, or organization, human effort must always be the primary driving force. (**Kamal Mustafa, 2014, p. 30**)

2.1.2 Definition of Job Performance: It refers to the effort exerted by an individual after being assigned a specific task in terms of quantity and quality, (**Nairat , 2022, p. 08**) and it is executed in a specific manner. Job performance is the result of the interaction between the effort exerted, available capabilities, and the individual's understanding of their role

2.3. Dimensions of job performance : The performance elements are defined as follows:

a. The first element in the analysis of functional performance is "Type of Exerted Effort," which refers to the level of accuracy and the degree of alignment of the effort with specified standards. In some domains, emphasis is placed more on the quality and excellence of the effort than on the speed or quantity of performance. **(Shawai , 2016, p. 2291)**

b. The second element is "Quantity of Exerted Effort," representing the total amount of energy expended by the worker or employee within a specific timeframe. This effort is directly linked to the provision of rewards and incentives, enhancing performance and dedication in the workplace.

c. The third element in assessing functional performance is the "Achievement Style," indicating the approach an individual takes in performing tasks and activities. This style encompasses the person's perceptions and impressions of the tasks performed, along with the behavior exhibited, defining a specific pattern of accomplishment .

The thinkers also clarify the elements of job performance from another perspective, where they see that job performance has fundamental elements, without which effective performance cannot be discussed **(Guerrieche & Laarbaoui , 2022, p. 316)**. Researchers have directed their efforts towards identifying the elements or components of job performance to contribute further in supporting and developing the effectiveness of employees' job performance. Some of the elements of job performance can be explained as follows:

✓ **Employee and Competence:** They represent what the employee possesses in terms of knowledge, skills, interests, values, attitudes, and motivations. Competence refers to what the employee has in terms of information, skills, attitudes, and values. It represents the fundamental characteristics that generate effective performance by the employee, in addition to dedication, seriousness in work, the ability to take responsibility, and completing tasks on time, as well as the need for supervision and guidance.

✓ **Organizational Environment and Components:** It consists of internal and external factors. Internal factors include the organization, its structure, goals, resources, strategic position, and the procedures used. External factors that shape the organizational environment and impact effective performance include economic, social, technological, and legal factors.

✓ **Work and its Requirements:** It includes tasks, responsibilities, roles, skills, and experiences required for a specific job. It also encompasses precision, organization, mastery, ingenuity, technical proficiency, the ability to organize and execute work, speed of accomplishment, and the ability to learn from mistakes **(Hawari, 2015, p. 65)**.

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2.4.Types of Functional Performance: Functional job performance, as outlined, can be structured and categorized akin to other organizational phenomena, with the ability to be segmented based on both source (Boualsharech , 2017, p. 292) and comprehensiveness criteria. Under the source criterion, job performance bifurcates into two distinct types: self-performance, or internal performance, and external performance. Internal performance, also known as "unit performance," stems from the resources inherent to the organization. It encompasses human performance, denoting the efficacy of individuals within the organization and their capacity to contribute strategically through the organization of their skills; technical performance, which evaluates the organization's adeptness in utilizing its investments; and financial performance, which measures the efficiency in the planning and utilization of available financial resources. Conversely, external performance emanates from variables in the external environment, not directly influenced by the organization. Typically manifested through positive outcomes such as augmented selling prices, this type of performance underscores the necessity of scrutinizing organizational results, particularly when dealing with quantifiable variables to gauge their impact.

2.4.1 According to the inclusivity criterion: According to this criterion, performance can be divided into two types: comprehensive performance and partial performance. Comprehensive Performance: It is manifested in the achievements contributed to by all elements, functions, or subsystems of the institution to achieve it. Its accomplishments cannot be attributed to any element without the contribution of the other elements (Arfis , 2018, p. 484). In this context, we can discuss the extent and means by which the institution achieves its comprehensive goals, such as sustainability, inclusivity, profit, and growth. The performance of the institution, in reality, reflects the result of the interaction of its subsystems. Partial Performance: It is achieved at the level of the subsystems of the institution and is further divided into several types depending on the criterion adopted to evaluate the elements of the institution. It can be classified according to the functional criterion into financial function performance, individual function performance, supply function performance, production function performance, and marketing function performance.

2.5 Performance Determinants: Performance determinants necessitate the identification of the desired level of individual performance, requiring an understanding of the factors that determine this level and the interaction among them. Performance is considered a result of the interaction of three main determinants: (Mohammadi & Gharaf , 2021, p. 47)

2.5.1 Individual Motivation: Reflecting the individual's desire to work, motivation is evident through their enthusiasm and inclination towards work that aligns with their preferences and tendencies (Salem Al-Andalusi, 2019, p. 09) .

2.5.2 Work Environment:

Performance determinants necessitate the identification of the desired level of individual performance, requiring an understanding of the factors that determine this level and the interaction among them. Performance is considered a result of the interaction of three main determinants: effort, personal capabilities, (**Mohammadi & Gharaf , 2021, p. 47**) and role perception. Effort vividly emerges as the physical and mental energy an individual invests in performing their duties, with the aim of achieving the utmost contribution in the workplace. Personal capabilities appear as tools capable of being effectively utilized in task execution. Role perception signifies the direction that an individual deems essential to guide their efforts at work, coupled with an awareness of the significance of the role they play in the context of performance.

3. Job Performance from the Perspective of Some Sociological Theories

The topic of job performance has received significant attention from many thinkers and researchers due to its importance and role in achieving organizational goals. There are numerous theories explaining performance in organizations, and we will focus on two of them: the Human Relations Theory and the Bureaucratic Theory. We will provide a brief explanation of each as follows:

3.1 Elton Mayo's Human Relations School:

Through his conducted research, Elton Mayo provided ample evidence that the factory constitutes a social system where informal groups play a vital role. The worker should be treated as a social entity with needs, desires, attitudes, and feelings that directly impact their performance at work. Elton Mayo and his team (1927-1932) conducted experiments on lighting and its effect on productivity. They formed two groups: an experimental group and an observational group; they observed an increase in productivity after reducing the lighting in the experimental group. In the second experiment, they introduced stimulating variables such as wages, breaks, and timing, resulting in increased productivity. This indicates that the well-being of workers is a result of human relations with their responsibilities. The results of the Hawthorne studies revealed a significant gap between workers and management due to communication issues in both directions (**Retimi & Retimi, 2013, p. 16**) across organizational levels. Workers perform their tasks due to their urgent need for wages and financial rewards, while, at the same time, they are influenced by their attitudes and behaviors through mutual social relationships. In conclusion, Elton Mayo's Human Relations theory highlights the importance of engaging in the social aspects of the work environment. Mayo suggests that improving relations between workers and enhancing communication can lead to a substantial improvement in performance and

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productivity, emphasizing the significance of understanding human aspects in the workplace context, without neglecting material aspects.

3.2 Bureaucratic Theory by Max Weber (Ideal Bureaucratic Model):

This theory is associated with the German sociologist Max Weber, who is considered the first to develop a genuine scientific theory addressing the analysis of the administrative apparatus and its impact on performance and organizational behavior. Weber focused on studying large government administrations suffering from inefficiency and various problems. The structuring of authority held significant importance in his studies, and he identified three types of authority: (Sakher, 2005, p. 31).

a. Traditional Authority: Based on traditions, customs, status, position, heredity, and lineage, it does not rely on objective criteria related to performance, efficiency, or abilities. Its legitimacy is derived from the traditions of the community and prevailing values.

b Charismatic Authority: Relies on characteristics or traits possessed by an individual that lead others to follow them due to conviction or emotional inclinations.

d. Legal-Rational authority : which is a pattern that arises based on rationality because it is based on objective, logical laws, principles, and rules Weber advocated for the application of this authority to achieve rationality in organizations, introducing what is known as the ideal bureaucratic model. Its key characteristics include: division of labor and specialization, organizing functions in a hierarchical power structure resulting in a chain of command, (Lamdebar, 2017, p. 73) selection of employees based on qualifications, appointment rather than election of employees, administrative employees working for fixed salaries, administrative staff not owning the units they manage, deriving their authority from their positions, reliance on written and documentary records, administrators being subject to laws, regulations, and supervision while performing their duties, which are impersonal controls applied uniformly in all cases. Although this theory focused decision-making authority in a small category at the expense of larger categories, neglecting the society's impact on the organization, thus rendering it a closed system unaffected by or influencing its surrounding environment, it also overlooked the human aspect of the worker, undermining initiative and innovation. Nonetheless, it contributed numerous ideas in the field of management and organization, delineating hierarchical administrative sequences, systems of rights and duties, the principle of division of labor, promotions, and others, all of which lead to improved performance in organizations.

4. Michel Crozier perspective on organizational performance:

Michel Crozier's perspective on organizational performance has been significantly shaped by a culmination of contributions, studies, and theses within the sociology of work and industry. Influential figures like Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, and Elton Mayo laid the groundwork for a new paradigm in addressing organizational issues. The mid-twentieth century saw the rise of organizational sociology as an independent discipline, surpassing traditional dimensions of the sociology of work. This field aimed to tackle fundamental challenges such as integration, adaptation, formal and informal relationships within organizations, and power dynamics. Organizational sociology delves into behaviors of individuals and groups at the organizational level, contributing to a deeper understanding of interactions between individuals and society within this context.

4.1 Levels of Organizational Analysis:

Analysis of social units encompasses both formal and informal structures. Formal units are characterized by closed structures governed by laws, documents, and written regulations, while informal units rely on social interactions among workers or actors. Moving further, analyzing social units in their relations within economic and political institutions involves examining patterns found in family, local communities, unions, and other relevant institutions. Another aspect involves studying the relationship between the organization, individual, (Ibrahim Lotfi , 2007, p. 31) and culture, with a focus on achieving balance in the exchange between what the individual contributes and what the organization provides. Lastly, analysis delves into studying the reciprocal relationship between the organization and the environment, investigating how the environment influences the organization and vice versa.

4.2. Michel Crozier and the Shift from Economic to Mental Aspects in the Sociology of Organizations:

Sociology of organizations aims to understand behaviors and relationships in comparison to established guidelines. Michel Crozier is considered one of the foremost sociologists who contributed significantly to enriching this sociological field through his vision of organizations.

4.2.1. Strategic Analysis:

Strategic analysis is a tool and method used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the organization and its environment. This is achieved through a current and future study of both, where strategic analysis aims to explore the adaptability of the organization's means to achieve the desired goal and keep pace with environmental requirements. Strategic analysis goes beyond focusing on studying (Belkhiri & Chenaf, 2019, p. 112) the organization as a closed system alone; it extends to studying the context surrounding it therefore, it is important to identify the strengths and

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weaknesses within the organization, as well as to study the opportunities and threats arising from the environment, Strategic analysis relies on a set of interconnected concepts that cannot be separated from each other. These concepts include the actor, strategic power, tangible action system, stake, shadow area, and others. The goal of strategic analysis is to understand collective actions based on individual behaviors. The behavior of actors is considered linked to the goals they consciously set, given their power and the resources available in the organizational environment, alongside existing pressures.

4.2.2. Strategic Analysis According to Michel Crozier:

Crozier's strategic analysis theory originated from an attempt to develop an analysis related to bureaucratic phenomena. Michel Crozier had previously criticized various theories, especially traditional ones like the classical school with Frederick Taylor, Henry Fayol, and others, as well as the human relations school with Elton Mayo and others. According to Crozier, individuals in the organizational **(Kharbiche, 2017, p. 239)** context cannot be considered mere laborers. he rejected traditional perspectives that overlooked the fact that individuals possess a thinking mind and freedom. Instead, he viewed humans as independent actors capable of reasoning, control, and management, with the ability to adapt and innovate in prevailing circumstances.

Crozier rejected all forms of absolute determinism that characterized organizational thinking, presenting his ideas in two key works: "The Bureaucratic Phenomenon" in 1963 and "Actor and System" in 1977 Through his approach to the relationship between individuals and organizations, Crozier attempted to reconcile **(Merabti & Allioua , 2023, p. 02)** the two prominent directions in explaining social behavior. The first direction explains social behaviors based on individual determinism (habitus), considering the influence of social, familial, and class environments on individual behavior. The second direction, known as sociological determinism, places the individual within the folds of collective consciousness, denying the individual the ability to choose, make decisions, and be creative. Crozier sought to reconcile these two directions, considering the relationship between organization and the individual as a result of a game between two parties within the organization. This occurs through formal controls aimed at regulating individual behavior.

4.2.3. Principles of Strategic Analysis According to Michel Crozier :

a. Goal Selection: Each individual within the organization has their own goals, which necessarily conflict with the organization's goals. Therefore, each individual designs a unique strategy to achieve their goals and embody their aspirations. This underscores the **(Aiwaj, 2019, p. 110)** rejection by individuals (actors) within the organization to be treated as tools or means to achieve the organization's goals, with attention drawn to the fact that these personal goals do not necessarily contradict the organization's objectives.

b. Relative Freedom for Actors: The actor (working individual) within the organization enjoys relative freedom, granting them a degree of independence from the organization. Despite the actor possibly being obligated to participate, this independence allows them (Alioua, 2018, p. 148) the power of choice in the extent of their interaction and participation. The organization seeks to restrict this independence, while the actor strives to enhance it or at least maintain it.

c. Limited Rationality: Strategies in power maneuvers are characterized by limited rationality, requiring the actor to obtain all information beforehand to enjoy it. Although rational choice is exercised in a way that approaches realism, the strategy always maintains limited rationality in the context of power maneuvers.

d. Construction: Crozier suggests that the organization is a structure, and the actors within it are the ones who create answers to the challenges they face.

4.2.4. Principles of Michel Crozier's Strategic Analysis:

a. First Principle: The Power Principle, as deduced by Crozier from his study of bureaucracy, highlights the competitive nature among various actors for survival and increased power, with the primary strategy being the control of doubt. These sources, as outlined by (Sakher, 2005, p. 44) encompass relying on irreplaceable ability or functional expertise, controlling relationships with the environment, managing internal communication, and utilizing organizational rules.

b. Second Principle: Zone of Doubt. In every organizational situation, there is a margin of doubt, and the actor who controls this margin can control power sources. By seizing an area not controlled by others and making his behavior unexpected, an individual can achieve power. Independence alone is not enough; one must make it unexpected and conceal maneuvers. The actor with greater control over maneuvers can predict the behavior of others, making him a significant source of power, areas of doubt exist at all organizational levels, and each actor seeks to gain power by creating zones of doubt as spaces for maneuvering and a source of conflict for survival and gaining more power.

c. Third Principle: Tangible Action Framework ; it is a set of relationships that develop members of a specific organization and help solve tangible problems. (Belkhiri & Chenaf, 2019, p. 119) The organization can only predict these relationships by focusing on the unofficial rules necessary for the institution's operation. Michel Crozier defines the tangible action framework as a structured human group that coordinates the actions of its members through maneuvering mechanisms, ensuring construction through control mechanisms that adopt other maneuvers. Crozier also emphasizes that organizational pressures are the supposed conduit for power.

4.2.5. Crozier and the Rational Actor: Away from Taylor's model, which depicts humans as mere hands, and the humanitarian model, which sees

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humans as hands with hearts, some argue that humans are primarily heads, innovators, possessing a realm of freedom not subject to reduction in pursuing their activities. Strategic analysis is considered a methodological approach to understanding organizations, involving a micro-sociological study that starts with the individual as the driving force behind various organizational processes, given their limited rationality. The focus is on recognizing that organizations are not closed systems; they exist within an environment comprising actors who influence them. Actors may not only be individuals but also groups. **(Sahraoui & Ben ramdhan, 2022, pp. 230-231)** Strategic analysis utilizes actors' behaviors as a broad research tool to uncover dynamics within organizations, viewing the organization as a realm of power, influence, exchange, calculations, and development, especially concerning performance. It aims to understand how social actions are constructed from individual behaviors and coordinated work, which assumes a series of individual actions. Analysis becomes strategic when examining actors' behaviors related to clear and conscious goals they set, alongside the pressures of their environment and available resources. Michel Crozier's study of collective action falls within his framework of studying individual behavior within groups and within organizations. Crozier regarded the individual as an economic man seeking to move from a state of ignorance to knowledge. Through his strategic analysis approach, Crozier acknowledged that actors within organizations cannot predict their behaviors due to their limited rationality. This highlights that an organization consists of or is characterized by a collection of limited rationalities among its members, leading to conflicts affecting organizational performance.

Crozier emphasized that organizational and collective work problems are permanent solutions created by actors' use of their resources. His findings regarding bureaucracy and routine problems faced by employees led to the crystallization of a new idea for Crozier, which he elaborated on in his work "The Actor and the System" with the thinker, Friedberg, who addressed actors confronting the system. Crozier stressed the importance of analyzing actors based on their goals and actions and called for a dynamic thinking approach to understanding change problems in bureaucratic organizations, necessitating strategies for both the actor and the bureaucratic system. Through his studies on accounting agencies and industrial monopolies, Crozier identified the problem of routine created by bureaucratic organizational rules, where employees do not feel like active individuals in the organization able to participate in setting goals. He also highlighted conflicts between employees occurring among groups lacking daily interaction in work life, which, according to Crozier, hampers organizational performance. Crozier concluded that the low level of organizational performance primarily stems from bureaucracy, causing stagnation and complexity, with routines for working

individuals stemming from their commitment to formal rules in dealing with employees and other organizations. Resistance to complexity and routine, according to Crozier, leads to reactions resulting in heightened bureaucracy and increased complexity.

5- Conclusion

Functional performance serves as a crucial indicator of an individual's ability to carry out their tasks, reflecting the efforts exerted towards achieving organizational goals and developing personal capabilities and talents. Michel Crozier, in his strategic analysis theory, highlights the individual's pivotal role in enhancing functional performance, emphasizing the significance of interactions within the organization, along with the necessity for negotiation and flexibility in practical relationships to improve performance. Organizations face increasing challenges in managing personal interactions within complex work environments, with Crozier noting that practical relationships rely on interactive strategies determined by the resources available to the actor, leading to continuous organizational performance improvement.

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