

Situational Factors

Individual behavior and performance also depend on the situation, which is any context beyond the employee's immediate control.¹⁴ The situation has two main influences on individual behavior and performance.¹⁵ One influence is that the work context constrains or facilitates behavior and performance. Employees who are motivated and skilled and know their role obligations will nevertheless perform poorly if they lack time, budget, physical work facilities, and other resources. The second influence is that the work environment provides cues to guide and motivate people. For example, companies install barriers and warning signs in dangerous areas. These workplace features are situational factors that cue employees to avoid the nearby hazards.

LO2-2 Summarize the five types of individual behavior in organizations.

TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

The four elements of the MARS model—motivation, ability, role perceptions, and situational factors—affect all voluntary workplace behaviors and performance. There are many varieties of individual behavior, but most can be organized into the five categories described over the next few pages: task performance, organizational citizenship, counterproductive work behaviors, joining and staying with the organization, and maintaining work attendance ([Exhibit 2.2](#)).

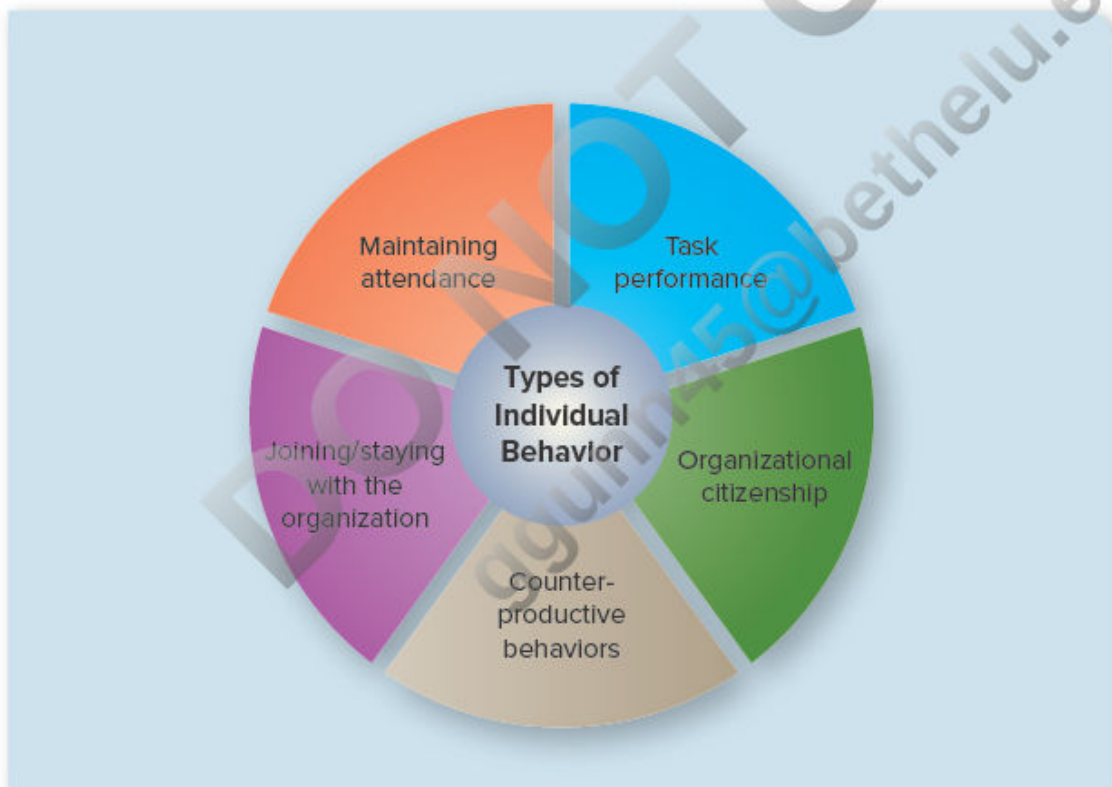


Exhibit 2.2 Five Types of Individual Behavior in the Workplace

Task Performance

Task performance refers to the individual's voluntary goal-directed behaviors that contribute to organizational objectives.¹⁶ Most jobs require incumbents to complete several tasks. For example, foreign exchange traders at Morgan Stanley must be able to identify and execute profitable trades, work cooperatively with clients and coworkers, assist in

training new staff, and work on special telecommunications equipment without error. All tasks involve various degrees of working with people, data, things, and ideas.¹⁷ Foreign exchange traders mainly work with data (e.g., performing technical analysis of trends), people (e.g., sharing information with coworkers and clients), and ideas (interpreting charts and company reports).

There are three types of task performance: proficient, adaptive, and proactive.¹⁸

- Proficient task performance refers to performing the work efficiently and accurately. It involves accomplishing the assigned work at or above the expected standards of quality, quantity, and other indicators of effectiveness.
- Adaptive task performance refers to how well employees modify their thoughts and behavior to align with and support a new or changing environment. Essentially, adaptive task performance is about how well employees respond to change in the workplace and in their job duties.
- Proactive task performance refers to how well employees take the initiative to anticipate and introduce new work patterns that benefit the organization. Proactive behaviors bring about change in oneself, coworkers, and the workplace to achieve what is perceived to be a better future for the organization.

Employees are expected to perform their work proficiently. However, adaptive and proactive task performance are also important, particularly when the work is ambiguous or dynamic. These conditions exist when the client's expectations are unclear, resources to perform the work have uncertain availability, and the methods used to perform the work are rapidly evolving due to emerging technology.

Organizational Citizenship

Employee behavior extends beyond performing specific tasks. It also includes [organizational citizenship behaviors \(OCBs\)](#), which are various forms of cooperation and helpfulness to others that support the organization's social and psychological context.¹⁹ Some OCBs are directed toward individuals, such as assisting coworkers with their work problems, adjusting your work schedules to accommodate coworkers, showing genuine courtesy toward coworkers, and sharing your work resources (supplies, technology, staff) with coworkers. Other OCBs represent cooperation and helpfulness toward the organization, such as supporting the company's public image, offering ideas beyond those required for your own job, attending voluntary functions that support the organization, and keeping up with new developments in the organization. Some OCBs are discretionary behaviors (employees don't have to perform them), but employees are expected to engage in some forms of organizational citizenship even if they aren't explicitly stated in job descriptions.²⁰

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OCBs can have a significant effect on individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.²¹ Employees who help others have higher task performance because they receive more support from coworkers. OCBs also increase team performance where members depend on one another. However, OCBs take time and energy away from performing tasks, which can undermine career success in companies that reward task performance. Also, employees with high organizational citizenship tend to have higher work–family conflict because of the amount of time required for these activities.²²

Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Organizational behavior is interested in all workplace behaviors, including dysfunctional activities collectively known as **counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs)**. CWBs are voluntary behaviors that have the potential to directly or indirectly harm the organization or its stakeholders.²³ This concept includes a wide array of behaviors, both intentional and unintentional, such as harassing coworkers, creating unnecessary conflict, deviating from preferred work methods (e.g., shortcuts that undermine work quality), being untruthful, stealing, sabotaging work, and wasting resources. CWBs are not minor concerns; research suggests that they can substantially undermine the organization’s effectiveness.

Joining and Staying with the Organization

Organizations are people working together toward common goals, so another critical set of behaviors is joining and staying with the company. Employers face skill shortages when the economy is booming, but employing qualified people can be a problem even during recessions.

Equally important is ensuring that employees stay with the company.²⁴ Employee turnover removes valuable knowledge, skills, and relationships with coworkers and external stakeholders, all of which take time for new staff to acquire. In later chapters, we identify other problems with employee turnover, such as its adverse effect on customer service, team development, and corporate culture strength. Employee turnover does offer some benefits, such as removing people with counterproductive work behaviors and opening up positions to new employees with fresh ideas. But overall, turnover tends to have a negative effect on organizational effectiveness.

Maintaining Work Attendance

Along with attracting and retaining employees, organizations need everyone to show up for work at scheduled times, whether in-person or through remote work arrangements. American