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# Organizational Behaviour Models at ABC Tech Corp: A Comparative Analysis of Autocratic, Custodial, Collegial, Supportive, and System Models- A Case Study

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**A B S T R A C T**

This case study explores the evolution of organizational behavior models at ABC Tech Corp, a mid-sized technology firm founded in 2005. Over time, the company transitioned through five distinct models: autocratic, custodial, collegial, supportive, and system. These phases correspond to the company's growth and changing workforce dynamics, highlighting the impact of each model on employee motivation, engagement, and organizational performance.

The autocratic model initially centralized authority but led to high turnover and dissatisfaction. Shifting to the custodial model improved financial security but fostered complacency. The collegial model encouraged teamwork and engagement but lacked structure, while the supportive model enhanced empowerment and productivity, albeit with inconsistent application across teams. The current system model integrates holistic practices, aligning individual and organizational goals, but presents scalability challenges.

This case provides critical insights into how management practices influence behavioral dynamics and organizational culture, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and strategic leadership in managing transitions.

**Keywords:** Organizational behavior, management models, autocratic, custodial, collegial, supportive, system model, employee motivation, organizational culture, leadership strategies, ABC Tech Corp.

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## Introduction

ABC Tech Corp is a mid-sized technology firm founded in 2005. The company initially started as a family-run business, growing steadily over the years. As it scaled operations, the company had to adapt and implement various management models to support its increasing workforce and ensure smooth operational functioning. Over the last decade, the leadership at ABC Tech experimented with different organizational behavior models, including the autocratic, custodial, collegial, supportive, and system models.

These models each have their distinct leadership style, power dynamics, employee engagement practices, and influence on the company's overall performance and employee satisfaction. The purpose of this case study is to assess how these models were applied at different stages of the company's growth, evaluate their effectiveness, and discuss the behavioral dynamics that emerged as a result.

### Background of ABC Tech Corp

ABC Tech Corp began with a highly centralized, autocratic leadership style under its founder and CEO, John Marshall. As the company grew and employees voiced their concerns about working conditions, it transitioned through custodial, collegial, supportive, and finally to the system model over time. Each model brought about significant changes in the way employees were managed and how the organizational culture developed.

The company employs around 2,000 people today and operates in a highly competitive market, providing software development services to Fortune 500 companies. Its human resources and management teams have been instrumental in shaping the corporate structure and culture. This case study takes you through the evolution of their organizational models and the challenges faced during each phase.

### *Phase 1: The Autocratic Model*

During the first five years, ABC Tech Corp was characterized by an autocratic leadership style, where all decisions were made by the top management. John Marshall believed in centralized authority and demanded obedience from employees without much input from them. He controlled every aspect of the business, including product development, HR policies, and operations.

**Impacts on the workforce:**

Employees were treated more as tools to achieve company goals rather than as partners in growth.

There was little room for upward communication, and the company had high employee turnover, with dissatisfaction prevalent across departments.

The lack of autonomy led to low morale, with employees feeling disengaged and undervalued.

By the end of this phase, the autocratic model had created a high-stress work environment, and the company was losing valuable talent to competitors. Marshall realized the need to adopt a different management style as the company struggled to keep pace with the changing business landscape.

### *Phase 2: The Custodial Model*

In response to increasing employee dissatisfaction, the leadership transitioned into a custodial model, offering more benefits, job security, and improved working conditions. The company introduced several initiatives such as better healthcare packages, pensions, and perks like company-sponsored holidays and bonuses.

**Impacts on the workforce:**

Employee turnover reduced drastically, and there was a sense of financial security among workers.

Despite these benefits, employees felt that management still viewed them as subordinates rather than collaborators, as the company lacked a system for fostering empowerment or creativity.

Employee motivation was largely dependent on financial incentives rather than intrinsic job satisfaction.

Although the custodial model improved job security, the lack of personal involvement in decision-making led to an environment where employees became complacent. They stayed for the benefits, but their passion for contributing to the company's success did not grow.

### *Phase 3: The Collegial Model*

Seeing the limitations of the custodial model, ABC Tech transitioned into a collegial model, fostering a team-oriented approach. In this phase, the company decentralized its decision-making process, encouraging collaboration between managers and employees.

**Impacts on the workforce:**

Employees felt a renewed sense of belonging as the hierarchical barriers began to dissolve.

Teams were formed to work on projects collectively, and the responsibility was shared, leading to greater engagement and improved job satisfaction.

This model was particularly successful for their Research & Development department, where creativity and teamwork flourished.

The collegial model created a culture of partnership, but as the company continued to grow, there were difficulties in managing this flat structure. Some employees felt that decisions were still largely influenced by senior managers, and the lack of a formal leadership system occasionally led to confusion and slowed decision-making processes.

### *Phase 4: The Supportive Model*

In an effort to address the confusion that arose from the collegial model, ABC Tech adopted the supportive model of organizational behavior. Managers were trained to act as coaches and mentors, rather than taskmasters. The focus shifted toward empowering employees by developing their skills and supporting their personal growth.

**Impacts on the workforce:**

Employees became more motivated as they felt valued for their contributions beyond just meeting company goals.

The supportive model led to higher levels of job satisfaction as employees felt they had a say in the direction of their personal development and career path within the company.

The company reported higher productivity and creativity as employees began to take more ownership of their work.

However, this model also introduced challenges related to consistency in managerial support. While some departments thrived under supportive leadership, others lagged due to variations in managerial styles.

*Phase 5: The System Model*

In its current state, ABC Tech has evolved into the system model of organizational behavior. The focus now is on integrating all parts of the organization into a unified whole, where both employees and management are seen as essential parts of a broader ecosystem. This approach emphasizes openness, shared purpose, and the alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives.

**Impacts on the workforce:**

The system model has led to high levels of employee engagement, as individuals see how their roles contribute to the overall success of the organization.

The introduction of cross-functional teams has facilitated innovation, allowing departments to collaborate more effectively across disciplines.

The company has developed a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback loops between employees and managers are actively maintained.

Despite the success of the system model, the company still faces challenges in maintaining this level of cohesion, especially when rapid changes in market dynamics occur. Additionally, scaling this model across all departments has proven to be more difficult in larger, geographically dispersed teams.

**Concluding Remarks:**

The case study of ABC Tech Corp illustrates a compelling journey through various organizational behavior models, showcasing the dynamic interplay between leadership styles, employee engagement, and organizational culture. Each model—autocratic, custodial, collegial, supportive, and system—offered unique strengths and challenges, reflecting the evolving needs of the company and its workforce. While the autocratic model streamlined decision-making in the early years, it led to high turnover and dissatisfaction. The custodial model addressed financial security but fostered complacency, whereas the collegial model emphasized collaboration and engagement, albeit with structural challenges. The supportive model empowered employees, boosting productivity and job satisfaction, yet lacked consistency across departments. The system model, as the current approach, holistically aligns individual and organizational goals, fostering innovation and continuous improvement, but scalability remains a challenge. The journey underscores the importance of adaptability in leadership, strategic alignment of management practices with organizational growth, and a commitment to fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation. ABC Tech's experiences offer valuable lessons for organizations navigating similar transitions, emphasizing that the right leadership framework, coupled with continuous refinement, is key to sustainable success.

## Case Analysis Questions

**Applying Knowledge of Organizational Behavior Models**:

1.Identify and describe which organizational behavior model was most effective for improving employee motivation and engagement at different phases of ABC Tech Corp's growth.

2.Apply the concepts of the supportive model to propose a strategy that could have addressed the challenges faced in the collegial phase of ABC Tech's development.

**Analysing Business Scenarios Related to Behavioral Dynamics and People Management:**

1.Analyze how the transition from an autocratic to a custodial model impacted both employee turnover and organizational culture. What factors contributed to the overall success or failure of these transitions?

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the system model in ABC Tech's current operations. What challenges can arise when implementing this model in a large-scale organization, and how might the company address these challenges?

**Comparison and Contrast of Models:**

1.Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the custodial and supportive models in terms of employee retention and productivity. How might these models apply differently in a startup versus a large enterprise?

2. Analyse a real-world scenario where another company successfully transitioned from an autocratic to a supportive or system model. What lessons could ABC Tech Corp learn from this transition?

## Teaching Note for the Case Study

**Objective of the Case Study**

The case study provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the five organizational behavior models (autocratic, custodial, collegial, supportive, and system models) through the lens of ABC Tech Corp's evolution. It encourages analysis of management practices, behavioral dynamics, and organizational change, enabling learners to apply theoretical concepts to practical business scenarios.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. **Understanding Organizational Behavior Models**: Students will learn the key characteristics, benefits, and limitations of each model.

2. **Analyzing Behavioral Dynamics**: Evaluate the impact of management styles on employee motivation, engagement, and organizational culture.

3. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving**: Apply concepts to propose strategies for overcoming challenges in each model.

4. **Comparative Analysis**: Compare and contrast the models to assess their applicability in different organizational contexts.

5. **Real-World Application**: Draw lessons from real-world transitions to improve strategic decision-making for organizational growth.

## Teaching Strategy

1. **Preparation**

   o Ensure students have foundational knowledge of organizational behavior models.

   o Assign pre-reading on the models, focusing on their application in different organizational contexts.

   o Encourage students to research similar transitions in other companies to enrich discussions.

2. **Case Presentation**

   o Provide an overview of ABC Tech Corp's history and growth trajectory.

   o Highlight the phases of transition between the models, emphasizing behavioral dynamics and management challenges.

3. **Discussion Framework**

   o Use the provided case analysis questions to guide group discussions.

   o Assign specific questions to different groups or individuals based on their roll numbers, as per the instructions.

4. **Interactive Learning**

   o Role-Playing: Have students act as employees and managers during transitions to understand emotional and behavioral dynamics.

   o Group Debate: Compare the custodial vs. supportive models, or discuss the scalability of the system model.

5. **Wrap-Up**

   o Summarize key takeaways from the discussion.

   o Highlight practical insights on managing organizational transitions.

## Analysis of Key Phases

### Phase 1: Autocratic Model

- **Discussion Focus**:

  o How did centralized authority affect employee morale and productivity?

  o Explore the consequences of employee dissatisfaction and turnover.

- **Key Insight**: Autocratic models may work in the initial stages of a business but fail to sustain engagement and innovation in a growing workforce.

### Phase 2: Custodial Model

- **Discussion Focus**:

  o How did financial security influence employee retention?

  o What were the limitations of relying on extrinsic motivation?

- **Key Insight**: While custodial models reduce turnover, they can lead to complacency without fostering intrinsic motivation.

**Phase 3: Collegial Model**

- **Discussion Focus**:
    - o Assess the benefits of teamwork and shared responsibility.
    - o Analyze challenges in decision-making and leadership in a flat structure.
- **Key Insight**: Collegial models enhance engagement but require clear boundaries and leadership to avoid confusion.

**Phase 4: Supportive Model**

- **Discussion Focus**:
    - o Explore how empowerment impacts productivity and satisfaction.
    - o Address the issue of consistency in managerial support across departments.
- **Key Insight**: Supportive models drive employee growth but need strong training programs to ensure uniform application.

**Phase 5: System Model**

- **Discussion Focus**:
    - o Evaluate the effectiveness of integrating organizational systems for collaboration and feedback.
    - o Discuss challenges in scalability and maintaining cohesion in a larger organization.
- **Key Insight**: System models foster innovation and alignment but demand robust processes for communication and adaptability.

## Case Analysis Questions: Guidance for Answering

1. **Identify and describe effective models for motivation**:
    - o Highlight how each model improved employee engagement during specific growth phases.
    - o Discuss trade-offs between motivation strategies in autocratic vs. supportive models.

2. **Propose strategies for collegial-phase challenges**:
    - o Suggest a hybrid approach incorporating supportive elements into the collegial phase.
    - o Emphasize training, leadership development, and clear role delineation.

3. **Impact of transitioning from autocratic to custodial models**:
    - o Discuss reduced turnover due to financial incentives.
    - o Explore limitations in terms of employee empowerment and cultural rigidity.

4. **Evaluate the system model**:
    - o Highlight its success in fostering innovation and engagement.
    - o Address challenges in scaling across departments and maintaining cohesion.

5. **Custodial vs. supportive model comparison**:
    - o Contrast their effectiveness in terms of retention and productivity.
    - o Discuss contextual applications in startups vs. established enterprises.

6. **Real-world transitions**:
    - o Reference successful examples (e.g., Google's transition to a supportive/system model).
    - o Discuss transferable lessons for ABC Tech, such as the importance of leadership training and feedback mechanisms.

## Assessment Tools

1. **Participation in Discussions**:

o   Evaluate engagement during group work and role-play activities.

2.   **Case Analysis Submission**:

o   Assign written responses to the analysis questions, graded on depth of insight and application of concepts.

3.   **Presentation**:

o   Have groups present solutions to challenges in specific phases, with peer evaluations.

2.   **Case Analysis Submission**:

o   Assign written responses to the analysis questions, graded on depth of insight and application of concepts.