

Week 6 Course Project Paper (Organization: LAPD) Part I

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Introduction

As someone with a background in law enforcement and a deep interest in organizational behavior, I chose to explore the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for my course project because it presents one of the most complex, visible, and evolving organizational structures in public service today. The LAPD, with over 9,000 sworn officers and nearly 3,000 civilian employees, has long been a national example of both excellence and controversy in policing. Its size, diversity, and high profile nature make it an ideal case study for examining how leadership, motivation, culture, and organizational behavior interact in a dynamic and challenging environment.

In this paper, I evaluated how the Los Angeles Police Department's organizational behavior (OB) and leadership practice affect its operations, both internally among employees and externally with the public. I also analyze how personal values, beliefs and attitudes influence decision making at every level of the department. Through this lens, I explored the role of motivation in driving performance and maintaining public trust, while also assessing how team dynamics, authority structure and conflict resolution strategies shape the agency's long term effectiveness. Finally, I reflect on how the LAPD engages with global trends, like technology and data driven statesman what that means for its future in a rapidly changing world. This exploration blends academic insight with real world application, offering a nuanced view of a complex organization that continues to grow, adapt, and redefine itself in response to public needs and internal pressures.

Organizational Behavior and Practices: Improving Operations in the LAPD

Organizational Behavior (OB) is pretty much how people function in groups and how that impacts the overall performance and culture of that organization. OB advocates for community communications, accountability & teamworking across multiple divisions & precincts of the LAPD. If you can get them in place, I've witnessed feedback systems that are well designed communication silos that can create a more collaborative approach between units. The LAPD benefits from more transparency and responsiveness to citizens about specific concerns over civil unrest or high profile events that attract mass media attention through measures such as community policing and inclusive training that are part of its frameworks of improvement. In my view these measures are necessary for rebuilding public trust and driving a stronger organization going forward. The reforms on the agency's table are indicative of an effort to align what is internal to the agency with what is more and more asked of it in the world outside it, and that is a sign of healthy organizational behavior in action.

As I have studied the LAPD, it is unnaturally clear to me that decision making in the department is driven by personal and organizational values, beliefs, and attitudes. Officers do not simply respond to situations based on their training; their worldviews and emotions act as powerful influences. I have learned that features such as empathy, fairness and emotional control can significantly influence the way an officer engages with the public. For instance, I read about

occasions when officers who attached great importance to justice were able to deescalate situations more peacefully than others who may have a more uncompromising or aggressive style. Values aren't the only thing that influences behavior; other aspects of personality, such as conscientiousness or resilience, can also play a role. Those officers who can manage their stress tend to make better decisions under extreme pressure. In my view, every police department's training regimen should place a strong emphasis on emotional intelligence. Knowing how beliefs and feelings drive opinions results in a more accountable and down to earth centered law enforcement culture.

This latter group is much less likely to generate motivation, which is a key driver in organizational success from an organization like LAPD. I've observed that when officers feel valued, supported, and challenged in meaningful ways, they are naturally much more motivated. And theories like Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Herzberg's two factor theory emphasize this well. It's hard to expect people to be motivated if their most basic needs like safety and fair wages aren't met. When I think of how motivation manifests within the LAPD, I think of things like leadership support, recognition programs, promotions and educational opportunities. When officers feel their work matters and is being recognized, they also tend to give their best effort on the job, follow protocol and interact positively with the public. On the other hand, when motivation is low, burnout, cynicism and misconduct are more likely. For me, motivation is not merely an instrument for productivity; it's the basis of ethics in behavior and health in organizations.

Team Dynamics and Managing Conflict in the Workplace

Strong teamwork is important in law enforcement, and I've noticed that strong team dynamics are among the pillars of the LAPD's foundation for doing its mission essential work. Whether SWAT, gang units, or patrol divisions, each team relies on trust, communication, and role clarity. In my research and experience, teams that perform well in high pressure situations tend to have open leaders who promote feedback and challenge across layers of hierarchy. That's not so easy in a hierarchical system like the LAPD, but when done well, it improves morale and creates better operations. The department's structure is traditional and top down, but I've noticed more decentralized decision making creeping in, especially at local stations. Giving precinct commanders more latitude to tailor responses to community specific needs demonstrates a flexible and thoughtful approach to leadership. It's a move that I personally support because it allows for more innovation and accountability closer to the ground. When combined with a simple and robust structure, positive team dynamics empower officers to do their jobs better and to do their jobs with greater confidence.

As a former student of and a thinker about the inner workings of the LAPD, I appreciate that kind of conflict both internal and external is unavoidable in a high pressure setting like this. Officers experience stresses that many people do not, which can sometimes contribute to friction between colleagues or divisions. As best I can understand it, the LAPD has historically addressed