

PSYC3309 Lecture Notes- Organisational Psychology

Lecture One

- Psychology: the scientific study of human behaviour and mental processes
- IO psychology: the speciality area within psychology that studies human behaviour in work settings
 - o The application of psychological principles, theory and research to work settings.
 - o The science practitioner approach (evidence based practice)
- Increase satisfaction and performance of individuals and groups, and the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

IO contains:

- Industrial: original name of the field and took on a management perspective and focused on efficiency, job design, selection training and performance appraisal. Getting people to work better, get them to do more.
- Organisational: developed from the human relations (human resources) movement. Concerned with enhancing well-being in the workplace.

Different roles of IO psychologists

- Scientists: examine individual, group and organisational behaviour through basic or applied research (e.g., in the organisation- doing experiment with the people).
- Consultants: apply scientific knowledge to the solution of problems at work.
- Teachers: train students in the research and application of I-O psychology.

Common areas for I-O psychologists

- Selection and placement: developing and validating tests, analysing job content, identifying management potential
- Training and development
- Organisational development
- Performance measurement
- Quality of work life
- Engineering psychology

Three main applications

- Personnel Psychology (Human Resources)
 - o Recruitment, selection, training, performance, appraisal, promotion, transfer and termination
- Organisational Psychology
 - o Emotion and motivation; attitudes, fairness, stress, leadership, teams and work design.
 - o How well do the characteristics of worker match characteristics of work to be done?
- Human factors (engineering psychology)
 - o Study the cognitive capacities and limitations of humans in particular work environments
 - o Helps to design effective means to deal with limitations.
 - o Designing tools, automation, information display, shift work, machine controls and safety.

Scientist-practitioner model

- The use of scientific method and research in the practice of IO psychology
- Evidence-based practice
- Using research evidence to address problems and issues
- Evidence based; depend on research to draw conclusions.

- Concerned with measuring and/or manipulating variables within basic or applied settings to provide answers to applied questions
- Concerned with implementing reasonable *controls* in our studies
- Control refer to procedures that allow researchers to rule out certain explanations for results other than the hypotheses that we wish to test

- We use reliable and valid measures when working in organisations

- Validity: a measure assesses what it is purported to measure
- Reliability: consistency of measurement across repeated observations.
- Ethics- concerned with the welfare of the people we work with and do what we can to protect their interests.
 - o E.g., anonymity and confidentiality.

1917 > 2008 Changes

- Now more specific
- 'Meta-analysis': take many studies on a topic and combine them all.

History

- IO psychology emerged in response to the industrial revolution in the 18th century in Britain and the prevailing faith in capitalism.
- There was a perceived need to increase work efficiency and reduce fatigue- not about well-being.
- Nearly all psychologists were experimental psychologists working in academia (uni)
- APA formed in 1842- the I/O division formed in 1945.

History...19th century

- Hugo Munsterberg (experimental psychologist)
 - o Interested in the design of work and personnel selection for jobs
- Walter Dill Scott
 - o Studied salespeople and the psychology of advertising
 - o Social control and motivation
 - o Consumers don't act rationally and can be influenced.
- Frederick Taylor
 - o Scientific principles could be applied to the study of work behaviour to help increase work efficiency and productivity.
 - o Scientific management and 'time & motion' studies.
 - o Using science to develop and train people into better workers.
 - o Broke jobs down scientifically into measurable component movements and recorded the time required to complete each movement.
 - o Dividing tasks between managers and lower-level workers
 - o This process was used to identify the fastest and most efficient way to perform any task
 - o 4x output
 - o Suited for jobs that involve manual labour or that could be easily broken down into component parts

WWI and the 1920s

- Yerkes (presidents of APA) worked with the US Army to create intelligence tests for the replacement of army recruits
- Led to the development of the Army Alpha and Beta intelligence tests and the first mass intelligence testing (standardised tests).
- Following WWI, psychologists became more involved in screening and placement of people

Hawthorne studies

- Mayo and colleagues studied the impact of the physical work environment on productivity. Eg., lighting, rests and wage incentives
- Mayo explored the impact of lighting on productivity of females on assembling devices
- Varied the lighting and aimed to identify the optimal illumination to maximise efficiency
- Results- no matter what the illumination level, productivity increased. Even when illumination decreased so the workers were barely able to see, productivity increased.
- The influence of workers' knowledge of being observed and their expectations were said to determine the increases in productivity.
- People can be impacted by observation and expectation.