

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



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**Psychology of Work Behavior**, by Frank J. Landy, Homewood, Ill., The Dorsey Press, 1985, XIV-622-R41-11 pp., ISBN 0-256-03046-4

The author understands psychology very broadly and includes not only traditional psychological topics (information on the role of psychology in industry, tests and testing techniques, interviews and other predictors, the motivation to work, job satisfaction and the meaning of work) but also personal training and development, personnel decisions, the measurement of performance, judgmental measures of performance, supervision as a practice of leadership, the organization of work behaviour, work and well-being, and designing work for people. This book may serve managers and trade union leaders as a background to industrial relations. A comprehensive review of available research results, and theories and practices makes this text particularly valuable.

The review of tests focuses on their consistency (reliability) and whether they accomplish their purpose (validity). Tests can be categorized along several different dimensions and these are resources available to identify good tests. There are now quite many test preparation schools which help people to improve their scores on standardized tests. Job interviews are interpreted in the text as an exercise in social judgement; they should be based on a thorough job analysis. There are several additional measures useful in selecting candidates: application blanks, life-histories, self-assessments, work sample tests, peer assessment, personal recommendations, data provided by the candidates regarding their suitability for particular duties (unassembled testing). The measurement of performance can be used for selection, validation, compensation, training, motivation and satisfaction programs, and feedback. Criteria of measuring performance have to be valid and reliable. It is very important to be fully aware of the weaknesses of various criteria and their limited applicability. Performance judgments could be rankings, ratings and comparisons; they may suffer of unfairness and inaccuracy. Personnel decisions about people are of an institutional nature and are much different from individual decisions dictated by personal preferences. There are several rational measures to make personnel decisions appropriate. Training of the personnel needs to be founded on a careful organizational analysis, assessment of skills needed and people suitable for learning skills. One of the problems in training is that older people lose interest in improving their skills; job enrichment and continuing training may be helpful in this respect.

In the motivation of people to work the maximalization of gain, goal setting, reduction of psychological tension produced by imbalance and the reinforcement mechanism all play a major role. Motivation concerns the conditions responsible for the variations in the intensity, quality, and direction of ongoing behavior and there are several appropriate models to understand these conditions. The assumption that there are some *needs* behind is not much helpful; even the reduction of the variety of needs to *existence, relatedness* and *growth* (Alderfer) remains unverified. More useful is the *instrumental model* in which several components of incentive to work are distinguished: value of reward, perceived effort-reward probability, effort, abilities and traits available, role perception, performance, rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic), perceived equitable rewards, perception (Porter and Lawler) — or valence, instrumentality and expectancy (Vroom). The *goal-setting model* shows that in general harder goals yield higher performance. Here such factors play a role as: goal commitment, goal acceptance, direction of action, intensity, persistence, strategies, goal specificity, ability, performance, knowledge of results. The *equity model* states that individuals form a ratio of their inputs in a given situation to their outcomes in that situation; the predictions hold up fairly well in the *underpayment* conditions; as referent others serve other inside or outside an organization, system structure, system administration, self-pay history, self-family, self-internal. «Equity theory is in for some substantial (possibly even radical) modification. This modification will involve a reconsideration of individual differences, an extension to outcomes other than simple money, and possibly

of a completely new definition of equity that abandons relative equity in favor of adjustment equity» (p. 356). *Reinforcement model* is based on understanding various stimulus-response-reward associations: a contingent relationship between response and reward, timing of rewards.

The author makes the following suggestions of a practical nature: relate rewards to good performance, formulate goals, provide feedback, offer positive rewards, apply fairness, enrich jobs of people who expect it. Jobs differ in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman and Oldham); there is a question how to enrich jobs accordingly to the potential of workers, and on the other hand, how to adapt workers to various dimensions of a given job. Rewards interact in a complex manner with task characteristics and *more is not* always better.

The meaning of work to people depends on several subjective and objective factors. The combination of the feelings a worker has about all aspects of the job defines overall job satisfaction (Lawler). According to Locke, job satisfaction depends on the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing these values are compatible with one's needs, and assuming that the major predisposing element for emotional experience is arousal. The author offers his own theory of satisfaction based on primary emotion, opponent process, and stimulus. According to this particular view, job satisfaction should be studied from a longitudinal perspective because the opponent process has much influence. The theory suggests that the *scheduling* of stimulus presentation more influences the boredom at work than the tasks themselves. Job satisfaction is a dynamic phenomenon and should be treated accordingly.

According to Landy, «What is needed is a more dynamic view of how satisfaction develops, is maintained, and diminishes over time. Opponent-process theory is dynamic in that way» (p. 343). Thinking and feeling are closely inter-related and it is difficult to say what comes first (probably feeling). Job satisfaction is the result of several factors influencing human emotions and it is important to be cautious in making conclusions regarding the meaning of the phenomenon. Job content factors play a role for «haves» but not for «have-nots» who do not have anything else to enjoy but only context factors (pay, good working conditions, etc.). As regards satisfaction and performance, «There is no reason to accept the notion that only satisfied workers are productive or that productivity breeds happiness» (p. 412). The problem of dissatisfaction in general is quite often related to unrealistic expectations on happiness and behaviour; the moral maturity of the individual has much to do with happiness.

In the field of *leadership* research there has been a general move from characteristics of leaders to the functions (duties) exercised in the role of a leader. For example, Yukl offers the following list: performance emphasis, role clarification, training-coaching, goal setting, planning, innovating, problem-solving, work facilitation, monitoring operations, external monitoring, information dissemination, discipline, representation, consideration, career counselling and facilitation, inspiration, praise recognition, structuring reward contingencies, decision participation, autonomy delegation, interaction facilitation, conflict management, constructive criticism. Effective management is a joint function of *leader* characteristics and *situational* characteristics. It is up to a leader to solve several problems arising in the goal-directed activity of the team lead by him/her. According to F.E. Fiedler, the effectiveness of a group is contingent upon the relationship between leadership style and the degree of which the group situation enables the leader to exert influence. If the supervisory style does not fit into the actual contingencies of time and place, leader will not succeed. Of course, 'effectiveness' may be long term or short term. The leader ambitious to promote his/her style against all short term odds may be more useful in the long run than a leader looking for immediate advantages. The reasoning of Fiedler seems to miss this important point.

Leadership is based on *reciprocal* relationship and it is necessary to treat it accordingly. In the mutual relationship between leader and followers the latter count to a different degree depending are they friends or strangers. There are several situational factors which act as substitutes of leadership (e.g. the mechanic flow of work) or neutralizers of it (e.g. indifference of subordinates toward rewards offered). Leadership practiced within organizations is very much conditioned by the division of labour, delegation of authority, structure, span of control, and several other organizational factors. Requirements practiced within a given organization result from the leadership style exercised by top management, as well as from several other circumstances; at the same time these requirements much influence the leadership potential available at various levels of the hierarchy.

The basic organizational units (departments) meet specific contingencies and leadership is a skill and willingness to face the challenge. It may be much helpful in this respect to acknowledge the systemic nature of work situations (the sociotechnical approach) and to diagnose accordingly the relationship between people, technical equipment, technology, administration, etc. Skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback appear in various jobs to a different degree and the job design may be much improved by manipulating accordingly these core job dimensions. It is now much better understood than before that not only the objective job dimensions but even more the subjective perception of them counts much in the reaction of employees to the managerial actions. Team building techniques are much valid in supervision and they are geared toward developing an appreciation among team members for what the task is and how much mutual cooperation may be helpful in task fulfillment.

With the growing complication of work as a social, psychological and organizational phenomenon there is more and more demand of an expert consultation. Stresses and stressors have to be diagnosed. The work schedules, a source of much irritation, need to be modified. The man-machine relationship is constantly changing with the technical progress. In all these problem areas there is a room for consultants. The professional profile of them needs to be carefully considered in order to avoid a conflict of interests as well as the potential harm to the workers. There is much need for a systematic analysis of moral problems related to psychological consulting. This particular perspective is much missing in the book. The logic of business may be in contradiction with the logic of service and witnessing. Much may be said in this respect and it deserves to be appreciated by the textbook writers.

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**La gestion par projet: aspects stratégiques**, par Pierre Beaudoin, Montréal, Agence d'Arc Inc., 1984, 251 pp., ISBN 2-89-22-065-6

Bien qu'il existe de nombreux ouvrages sur la «Gestion de projet», il n'en existe guère que je sache sur la «Gestion par projet»! Pierre Beaudoin innove donc en proposant un texte fort bien documenté sur une nouvelle approche à la gestion de situations complexes et éphémères qui assaillent de plus en plus nos organisations.

Allant au-delà des techniques qui sont présentées dans bien d'autres livres sur le même sujet, l'auteur insiste sur sa valeur comme nouvelle forme de gestion. «La gestion par projet, fournit à la direction d'entreprise un moyen pour instaurer la communication et contrer les effets du gigantisme des bureaucraties modernes» (p. 1). Elle survient généralement lorsqu'une