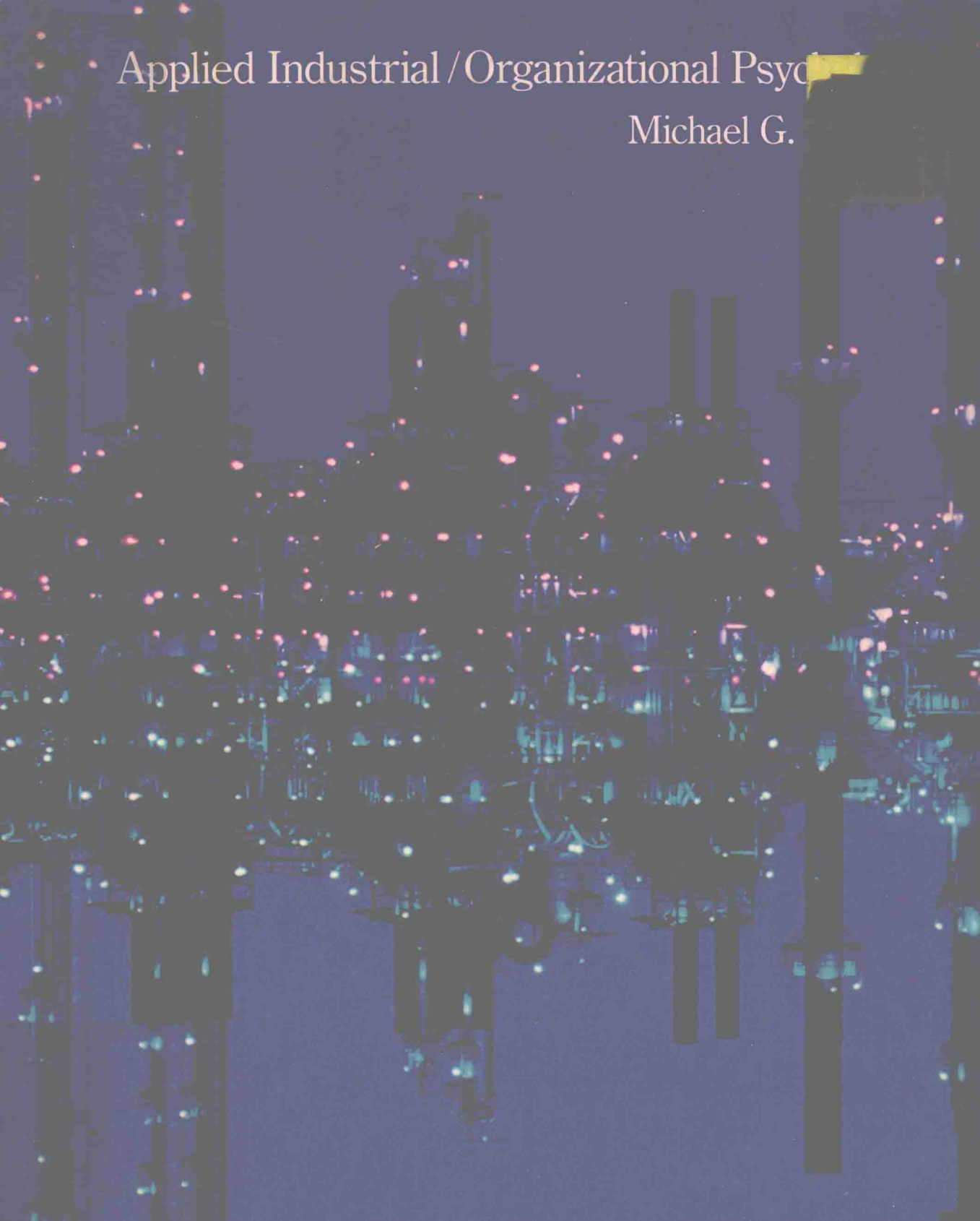
Applied Industrial/Organizational Psyc

Michael G.



Applied Industrial / Organizational Psychology

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Wadsworth Publishing Company
Belmont, California
A Division of Wadsworth, Inc.

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Printed in the United States of America 85
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—95 94 93 92 91

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aamodt, Michael G.
Applied industrial/organizational psychology / Michael G. Aamodt.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-534-13770-9
1. Psychology, Industrial. I. Title.
HF5548.8.A17 1990
158.7—dc20 90-12395
CIP

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Preface

I am convinced that Industrial/Organizational Psychology can enhance the quality of a person's life more than almost any other field. This opinion is based on the fact that most of us spend more of our waking hours at work than we do at any other activity in our lives. Support for this opinion can be found by listening to people talk. When people we know are unhappy, they often describe the "terrible problems" with their jobs. When people are happy, they often brag about their jobs and the organizations for which they work. Thus, a person who is happy and productive in his or her job will have a higher quality life than a person who is mismatched with his or her job.

The process of selecting and maintaining happy and productive employees is a complicated one and there are many different opinions about how this process is best accomplished. From this text, the reader will learn about the different approaches and, I hope, will come away with the knowledge to contribute to a high quality of work life.

I chose to write an I/O psychology text because the other texts that are currently available are not as applied as the field itself. Several of the current texts spend most of their time describing the details of studies and listing complicated statistical formulae. While this approach may be appropriate for some students at some universities, it tends to cause most undergraduates to remain unexcited about I/O psychology. Other texts focus on theories without helping the reader understand how to apply the theories.

This text was written for a student audience that is primarily undergraduate and whose members are probably not planning on becoming I/O psychologists but will nonetheless be involved in selecting, training, evaluating, and motivating employees. With such an audience in mind, it is essential that the material be presented in an applied fashion.

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The applied nature of my approach is perhaps best demonstrated by *I/O Psychology in Action,* the workbook that accompanies this text. This supplement allows the student a chance to actually use the material that is presented in the text. The student will be able to conduct the critical incident technique, determine the utility of a test, take a personality test, write a job description, write a résumé, and develop a theory of leadership. The workbook also contains practice tests to help the student prepare for exams.

In the text itself, evidence of the applied approach can be found by looking at the topics that are covered. For example, in addition to covering the traditional selection areas, the text instructs the reader about how to survive an interview, how to write a résumé, and how to write a rejection letter. The applied nature of the text can also be seen in the number of meta-analyses that have been included. Most texts describe the details of an assortment of studies that often leave the reader confused. When possible, I have tried to use the "bottom line" that can be provided by a solid meta-analysis.

Another unique feature of this text is the inclusion of "Employment Profiles" in all but the first chapter. These profiles feature active I/O professionals describing their work and are designed to give students an idea of the variety of careers available in the I/O field.

When possible, I have tried to make the text more interesting by including examples, stories, and some humor. Even for people who are not one of us I/O fanatics, I/O psychology should be fun.

This book could not have been written without the work of the excellent staff at Wadsworth Publishing. In particular, I would like to thank my editor Ken King as well as Debbie Cogan, Peggy Meehan, Stacey Pollard, James Chadwick, and Michelle Palacio, and free-lancers Steve Bailey and Harry Voigt.

The quality of the book was greatly enhanced by the I/O psychologists who served as reviewers for the book. The text would not have been of such a high quality had it not been for the comments of Elizabeth S. Erffmeyer, Western Kentucky University; Dean E. Frost, Portland State University; David C. Gilmore and William Siegfried, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Paul John Hanges, University of Maryland at College Park; Charles E. Lance, University of Georgia; and Paul R. Nail, Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Krista, who provided many of the banking examples found in this text. Her patience during the years this book was being written can neither be measured nor appreciated enough.

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