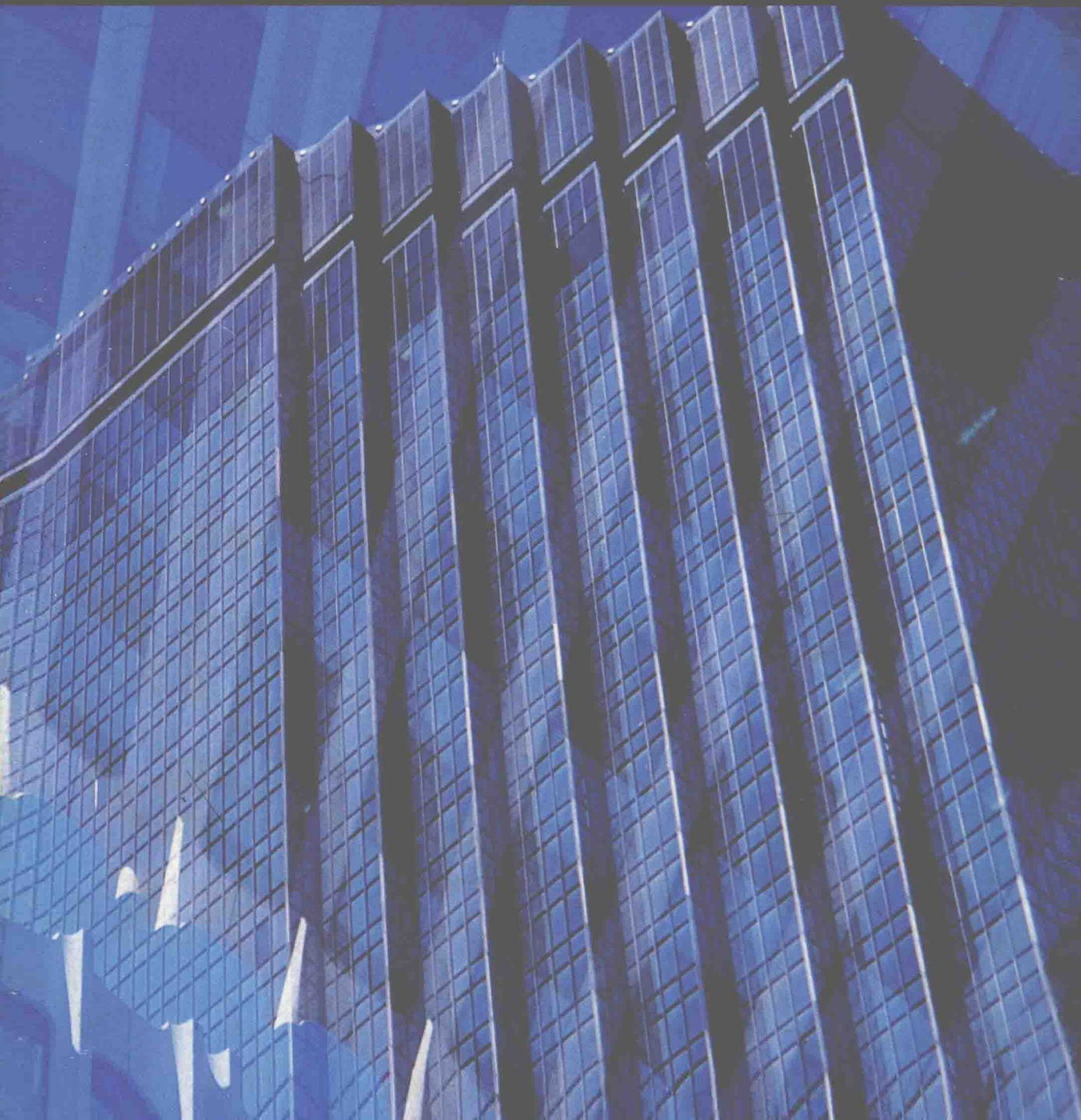


Contemporary Industrial/Organizational Psychology

L.N. Jewell



Contemporary Industrial/ Organizational Psychology

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Preface

Contemporary Industrial/Organizational Psychology is written out of the deepest respect for tradition and for those who laid the foundation for I/O psychology as it exists today. I took my own introductory I/O psychology course over twenty-five years ago. My professor not only knew I/O history, he personally knew many of those who made it and his knowledge and enthusiasm had a considerable influence on my career choice. In the subsequent quarter-century, I have watched things change. The scope and knowledge of the field have changed, the world has changed, organizations have changed, colleges and universities have changed, and students have changed.

Today the subject matter of I/O psychology attracts students from a variety of backgrounds and interests. How can one write a book that meets the needs of psychology majors, business majors, and students from other areas, who believe some knowledge of this subject will help them in their chosen careers? How can one write at a level that is meaningful to students who have never worked, students who have worked part time and students who have been working for years in various positions in organizations of all kinds?

There are as many solutions to this predicament as there are authors of introductory I/O psychology textbooks. My approach stems from the conviction that the purpose of such a book is to *introduce* this field of study. By this, I mean that the first priority is to provide students with an understanding of the topics, the issues, and the methods of I/O psychology.

To introduce a field as rich and complex as I/O psychology, some choices must be made regarding the balance of coverage given to its several facets—application, theory, and research. With respect to the applied side of I/O psychology, my goal is to acquaint students with objectives, decisions to be made, alternatives available, and issues involved in choosing among these alternatives. The section that begins each chapter—“I/O Psychology at Work”—adds the flavor, if not the specifics, of applying I/O to the problems in today’s organizations.

Theory is handled similarly. The major theories are summarized or discussed in context as alternative explanations and foundations for studying certain phenomena; they are not treated as subject matter in and of themselves. Every effort has been made to put these theories in a perspective accurately reflecting a consensus of their standing with respect to research support and practical utility in the mid-1980s.

While this is not a theory-oriented text, it *is* a research-based text. Whenever possible, points are made and illustrated through the empirical literature of I/O psychology; margin notes aid the student in linking

this material to the introductory discussions of research and testing in Chapters 3 and 4. As appropriate, recent review of the topic's research literature is cited for further reference. Finally, the role of research in I/O psychology is further emphasized by "Spotlight on Research," a feature of Chapters 3–15 that summarizes a recent or classic study in a topic area relevant to the subject matter of each chapter.

These research-oriented features continually reinforce the point that the body of knowledge we are accumulating about human behavior in organizations is both the heritage and the future of I/O psychology. A view of this future is presented at the end of each chapter in a special "At Issue" section. The "At Issues" provide a forum for the new, the speculative, and the controversial.

Some "At Issue" topics are so new that their implications for our field are now only beginning to be explored. Genetic screening for employees is one such issue. In other cases, this feature presents the views of those who are questioning mainstream or traditional approaches to topics of established importance, such as leadership. The advancement of knowledge requires the courage to question and I believe students will benefit from a glimpse of this process. I also believe that discussions and debates of these questions are a valuable aid to learning.

In summary, I have tried to write a book for today, one that gives balanced coverage to the past and the present while keeping an eye toward the future. I have tried to present this material in such a way that students may see the big picture as well as the details, the "why" as well as the "what." I hope I have succeeded and that the reader will find few occasions to question the relevance of a topic or discussion.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Part I is an introductory section. It presents background material about the field of I/O psychology and prepares the way for understanding the material to follow. Chapter 1 introduces I/O psychology as a field and as a profession. Chapter 2 continues this introduction with a brief review of I/O psychology's basic subject matter—the causes of human behavior. In Chapter 3, the methods by which human behavior in organizations is studied are examined and important terminology that appears frequently in subsequent discussions is introduced.

Parts II, III and IV cover the theory, research, and practice of I/O psychology, each focusing on a different set of variables that determine behavior in organizations. Part II centers on the individual, Part III on jobs and working conditions, and Part IV on the organization system. Part V examines the outcomes of the interaction of individuals, jobs, and organizations from various perspectives.

Acknowledgments

Anyone who writes a textbook is aware of the critical role that reviewers play in the process. I have been fortunate; each person who commented upon this manuscript made useful contributions that added to the insights and suggestions of the others. I am sincerely appreciative of the efforts of Terry Beehr, Leonard Berger, John Bernardin, William Farrar, Larry Froman, H. Joseph Reitz, William Sauser, Lois Smith, William Wooten, and Elizabeth Zoltan-Ford. Robert Haygood must have a line to himself because he accomplished a minor miracle—reviews that were not only thorough and useful, but also fun to read.

I also would like to acknowledge the fine work of the editorial staff of West Publishing Company. Acquiring Editor Gary Woodruff has guided this project with care and has been an invaluable sounding board. Developmental Editor Phyllis Cahoon has coped with the practical problems and, it must be admitted, listened to my complaints for over two years with unfailing courtesy and efficiency. Production Editor Deanna Quinn is, in my opinion, outstanding in the performance of her exacting duties. Last, but not least, is the important role played by Copyeditor Kathy Massimini.

My sincerest thanks also are due to those who helped with the many tedious tasks necessary to preparing a manuscript. Thank you Scott Busbee, Jennifer Jewell, Carl Russell, Marc Siegall, Mary Tippens, and, most particularly, Barbara Smith.

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Part I of *Contemporary I/O Psychology* provides an overview and a foundation for the material that follows. Chapter 1 gives a brief introduction to the field of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, its subject matter, development, training requirements, and career opportunities available. Chapters 2 and 3 introduce major concepts, terminology, and principles basic to understanding the theory, research, and practice of I/O psychology.

CHAPTER 1

An Overview of Industrial/Organizational Psychology

CHAPTER CONTENTS

I/O Psychology at Work:
A Quick Walk through Hawthorne
The Development of
Industrial/Organizational Psychology
Industrial/Organizational Psychology
as an Academic Discipline
Industrial/Organizational Psychology
as a Career

I/O PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK

A Quick Walk through Hawthorne

In the relay assembly test room, as Roethlisberger wrote in *Management and Morale*, "the idea was very simple. A group of five girls were placed in a room where their condition of work (assembly of a telephone relay) could be carefully controlled, where their output could be measured, and where they could be closely observed. It was decided to produce at specified intervals different changes in working conditions and to see what effect these innovations had on output. Also, records were kept, such as the temperature and humidity of the room, the number of hours each girl slept at night, and kind and amount of food she ate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner." Over a two-and-one-half-year period, tons of material were collected and analyzed.

What did the data show? The key point was that with each variable—shorter rest periods, longer but fewer rest periods, the five-day week, introduction of group incentive pay, reversion to original working conditions—production increased period after period in an almost unbroken line. This confirmed the puzzling—to the researchers—result of an earlier illumination experiment in which either raising or lowering the light levels had consistently positive impact on productivity, except for one phase in which employees were compelled to work in semidarkness. . . .

One reason for the continuing rise in productivity lay in the changing social environment. An ordinary group of workers, performing routine, low-status jobs with little or no recognition, had been transformed into important people. "Their physical health and well-being became matters of great concern. Their opinions, hopes, and fears were eagerly sought," observed Roethlisberger.

Nor was this all. They were questioned by investigators—frequently in the superintendent's office—sympathetically and at length about their reactions to working conditions. They traded an oppressive production-centered supervisor for a trained observer sympathetic to their needs. They could chat as they wished, and they set their own productivity quotas.

A change in morale occurred with the development of feelings of group responsibility. All labor turnover stopped, and casual absences fell to a fraction of the rate in the department outside the test room. The "layabout" girl, for example, who had been absent 85 times in the 32 months before the experiment, went for 16 months thereafter without an absence.

From "Hawthorne Revisited: The Legend and the Legacy." *Organizational Dynamics*, 1975, 3, pp. 67–68. Copyright 1975 by AMACOM, a division of American Management Associations, New York. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

The excerpt describes one phase of some of the most famous experiments in the field of I/O psychology. The Hawthorne Experiments, conducted at Western Electric's Hawthorne plant, have been the subject of an extraordinary number of publications over the years. Among these are several books, including Roethlisberger's *Management and Morale* (1941). The original report of these studies, which were conducted by Fritz Roethlisberger along with Elton Mayo, William Dickson, and others was also reported in book form (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939).

Although the Hawthorne Experiments took place over 50 years ago, I/O psychologists still disagree about what caused the dramatic production, attendance, and morale improvements among the employees of the relay assembly room. Some believe these effects were a natural consequence of singling out these individuals for attention. This phenomenon often is referred to as the *Hawthorne Effect*. Others believe the improvements were due to the increased participation in work-related decisions that the experiments gave to the employees.

Whatever the differences among those who debate the "true meaning of Hawthorne," the historical significance of these studies for I/O psychology is not in question. The results of the relay assembly experiments and the bank wiring room experiments (see Chapter 11) had a great impact on the study of human behavior at work, on the conduct of research, and on the practice of management. Nevertheless, Hawthorne was only one milestone in the development of I/O psychology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is the study of human behavior. As a formal scientific discipline, it began in experimental laboratories in the 1800s. There, early psychologists attempted to discover the laws that govern behavior through systematic observation with experimental methods borrowed from the physical sciences. Gradually, this new science broadened and diversified and developed its own methodologies; psychologists moved out of the laboratory to conduct experiments and study behavior in natural settings as well.

Today, a large number of specialties and subspecialties make up the discipline of psychology. Each has its own interests and characteristic approaches to the study of behavior. The coordinating professional society, the American Psychological Association (APA), was founded in 1892 and now has over 40 specialty divisions; Division 14 is the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Inc.

The "Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Industrial/Organizational Psychologists" (APA, 1981) defines this specialty as follows:

Industrial/organizational psychological services involve the development and application of psychological theory and methodology to problems of organizations and problems of individuals and groups in organizational settings (p. 666).