**Unit One**

**Introduction to Organizational Psychology**

**1.1. Meaning of Organizational Psychology**

Organizational psychology is the scientific study of individual and group behavior in formal organizational settings. Itis the study of individuals’ feelings, thoughts and behavior in the organizations. This definition has two major concepts. First, organizational psychologists use methods of scientific inquiry to both study and intervene human behavior in organizations. This simply means that organizational psychologists use a systematic, data-based approach to study organizational processes and solving organizational problems. Secondly, organizational psychology focuses on individual behavior. This means regardless of the level at which some phenomenon occurs, psychologists view individual behavior as the most important mediating factor in work set. Hence, learning about OP will help you develop a better work-related understanding about yourself and other people. It can also expand your potential for career success in the dynamic, shifting, complex, and challenging new workplaces of today and tomorrow.

**1.2. Nature of organizational psychology**

While organizational psychology represents a legitimate field of study in its own right, it is also part of the broader field of industrial/ organizational (I/O) psychology. I/O psychology is defined as the application of the methods and principles of psychology to the workplace (Spector, 2006). Figure 1.1. Provides a comparison of the topics that are typically of interested to those in the industrial and organizational portions of the field. Notice that the topics listed on the industrial side are those that are typically associated with the management of human resources in organizations. Contrast, these with the topics on the organizational side, which are associated with the aim of understanding and predicting behavior within organizational settings

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| **Industrial/Organizational Psychology** | | | | | |
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| **Industrial Side**   * Recruitment * Selection * Classification * Compensation * Performance Appraisal * Training | |  | | **Organizational** **Side**   * Socialization * Motivation * Occupational Stress * Leadership * Group Performance * Organizational   Development | |

**1.2.1. Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour**

What is the difference between organizational psychology and organizational behavior? In all honesty, these two fields are quite similar—so much so far, in fact, that many faculties who teach organizational behavior in business schools received their training in departments of psychology. Though less common, there have been some instances where faculty who teach organizational psychology received their training in business schools.

Despite the outward similarities, there are actually subtle differences between organizational psychology and organizational behavior. Moorhead and Griffin (1995) define organizational behavior as ‘‘the study of human behavior in organizational settings, the interface between human behavior and the organization, and the organization itself’’. If we focus only on the first part of this definition, there is no difference between organizational psychology and organizational behavior. However, the differences lie in the portion of the definition stating that organizational behavior is concerned with ‘‘the organization itself.’’ Specifically, the field of organizational behavior is concerned not only with individual behavior in organizations, but macro-level processes and variables such as organizational structure and strategy are viewed as interesting and worthy of study in their own right. There are also other fields that study human behavior in organization namely **work psychology** (often referred to as **‘human resource management’**) and organizational psychology (often referred to as **‘organizational behavior’**). Therefore, the common interest for these different fields reflects the study of **human behavior** related to work, organizations and productivity.

**1.3. Goals of organizational psychology**

The contemporary organizational psychology has four explicit goals: (1) describe, (2) explain, (3) predict, and (4) control human behavior in the organizational setting.

**I. Description of behavior:** It is gathering data about an individual and stating the known specific and concrete fact about that individual’s work behavior.

Examples; Mr. ‘x’ is aggressive leader and Mr. ‘y’ is clever worker.

**II. Explanation of behavior:** It goes beyond description because it seeks deep understanding of why people react/do in some way (why people behave in some way). Here, the explanation includes identifying the causes and reasons of individuals’ work behaviors.

Example; Why Mr. ‘x’ becomes aggressive leader? Or Why Mr. ‘y’ becomes clever worker?

**III. Prediction of behavior:** Is foretellingthe future working behavior of an individual based on his/her past performance and present acts.

Example; Mr. ‘x’ will have difficulties in agreeing with others because of his aggressiveness.

Mr. ‘y’ will be productive/successful because he/she is clever worker.

**IV. Controlling behavior:** This is the final goal of organizational psychology. The major goal of organizational psychology is to sustain desirable work behaviors and to modify undesirable work behavior in the organization.

Example; Mr. ‘x’ should change his aggressive leadership behavior through counseling and treatment (occupational therapy).

Mr. ‘y’ should get reward to sustain his clever work behavior.

**1.4. Brief Historical Background of Organizational psychology**

The year 1992 marked the hundredth anniversary of the field of psychology. To mark this centennial, much was written about the history of industrial/organizational psychology. Chronologically, the beginnings of the field of I/O psychology can be traced to work, during the early part of the twentieth century.

The Major Historical Development of Organizational Psychology during the Twentieth Century Includes:

Early 1900s - Development and growth of Scientific Management (Taylor);

beginning of the scientific study of organizational structure (Weber)

1920s–1930s - Hawthorne Studies; growth of unionization; immigration of Kurt Lewin to

the United States

1940s–1950s - WWII; publication of Vitele’s book Motivation and Morale in Industry;

development of the ‘‘Human Relations’’ perspective; Lewin conducts ‘‘action

research’’ projects for the Commission on Community Relations and

establishes the Research Center for Group Dynamics at M.I.T.

1960s–1970s - U.S. involvement in Vietnam; Division 14 of the APA is changed to

‘‘Industrial/Organizational Psychology’’; ‘‘multi-level’’ perspective in

organizational psychology; increasing attention to nontraditional topics

such as stress, work-family conflict, and retirement.

1980s—1990s - Increasing globalization of the economy; changing workforce demographics;

increasing reliance on temporary or contingent employees; redefining

the concept of a ‘‘job.’’

2000-Present - Advances in communication technology (Internet), continued increases

in globalization, greater flexibility in work arrangements, boundaries

between ‘‘work’’ and ‘‘non work’’ less clear

**1.5. Research methods in organizational psychology**

Organizational psychologists often design scientific investigations to answer a variety of research questions about human behavior in organizational settings.

Common research methods that Organizational psychologists conduct include:

**1. Observational Methods**

Observational methods actually encompass a variety of strategies that may be used to study behavior in organizations (Bouchard, 1976). Simple observation, the most basic of these strategies, involves observing and systematically recording behavior. If one wishes, for example, to investigate decision-making processes used by corporate boards of directors, one might observe these individuals during quarterly meetings and record relevant observations. These observations may reveal that the chairperson has more input into decisions than other board members, or perhaps that younger board members have less input into decisions than their more experienced counterparts.

**2. Archival Data**

Conducting study based on records that are typically kept on many employees’ behaviors such as job performance, absenteeism, turnover, and safety, to name a few. We simply analysis the written documents on individuals’ behavior in the organization. In addition, the governments of many countries maintain databases that may be relevant to the study of human behavior in organizations.

**3. Survey Research**

By far the most widely used form of research method in organizational psychology is survey research (Scandura & Williams, 2000). Survey research simply involves asking research participants to report about their attitudes, opinion, interest, job satisfaction and/or behaviors, either in writing form or verbally. This form of research is extremely common in our society and is used to gather information for a wide variety of purposes. The major advantages of survey research are, it allows a researcher to study large workers for wide concept within short period of time by least cost.

Steps Involved in Conducting a Survey Research Project are:

Identify Variables → Literature Search → Questionnaire Design → Sampling → Data Collection → Data Analysis and Presentation.

**4. Experimentation**

An experiment is a highly controlled situation that provides a researcher the best opportunity to assess cause-and-effect relationships. This is important because the hallmark of any science is to detect and explain causal relationships. Because the term experiment is very commonly used, students are often unclear about what constitutes a true experiment. According to Cook and Campbell (1979), three characteristics distinguish a true experiment from other methods. These are (1) manipulation of an independent variable and measurement of a dependent variable; (2) random assignment to experimental treatment conditions; and (3) maximum control by the experimenter.

**5. Quasi-Experimentation**

According to Cook, Campbell, and Perrachio (1990), a quasi-experiment is similar to a true experiment except that it lacks one or more of the essential features previously described. In organizational settings, the independent variable of interest often cannot be manipulated because it is under the control of the organization, or may even be a naturally occurring event. Quasi-experimental designs are also used in organizational settings because research participants usually cannot be randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

**6. Correlation research**

It is a research method, which studies the **relationship** between two or more variables. All problems cannot be studied using experimental method. **Correlation:** It is the degree of relationship between two variables. If a high rank on one measure is paired with a high rank on the other measure, it is positive correlation. If a high rank on one measure is paired with a low rank on the other then it is negative correlation.

**Interpretation of correlation coefficients:** coefficients indicate merely that two things tend to occur together. They do not show cause and effect relationship. But correlational studies help at least to predict human behavior. Correlation coefficient indicates the *direction* (positive, negative, none) and *magnitude* (perfect, strong, moderate and weak) of the relationships between two or more sets of measures of variables.

**7. Case Study**

It is a type of research in organization in which study is conducted on specific individual deeply for relatively a long period of time. Even though it takes time, it provides deep information about an individual on specific purpose.