Industrial organizational (i o) psychology

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Psychology in Organizations

Industrial organizational (I/O) psychology is the study of individual and group behaviors in the workplace. The field utilizes methodology, statistical analysis, and recording observations of how people interact and function in the workplace. This can include populations in business, non-profit, academic, government, and other organizations. This enables the I/O psychologist to analyze and interpret data, draw conclusions from the results, and provide solutions for employee problems in an organization (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2015). These solutions can improve the culture of the organization and promote positive relationships in the human aspect of business.

Definition of Industrial Organizational Psychology

I/O psychologists are generally specialized trained individuals who can be practicing researchers, leadership, human resource specialists, teachers, administrators, and other applicable professions. I/O psychologists are typically trained in seven core practices which are as follows:

1. Assessments: I/O's should be proficient at developing, administering, and interpreting assessments of employees, roles, behaviors, and performance. This also involves using measurement tools as assessment aids which may include but is not limited to: questionnaires, behavior scales and surveys, work samples, personnel history, computers, psychological tests, and many others.

2. Intervention: I/O's are typically trained in intervention techniques to improve behaviors and interpersonal relationships. This can include but is not limited to: implementing personnel instructions such as media, email, and computer based training, program designs, developing technical and problem solving skills, effective appraisal methods, enhancing group morale, and other growth enrichment procedures.

3. Consultation: I/O's should be knowledgeable about the people they are consulting and interacting with in an organization. They should be informed about the functions regarding individual roles. They should also be familiar with stakeholders in the community and how the organization interacts with other interested parties.

4. Supervision and management: I/O's should be knowledgeable in leadership skills. They should also possess knowledge specific to legal requirements, ethical behaviors, American Psychological Association procedures and policies, and established codes of conduct by other governing organizations.

5. Research and inquiry: I/O's must possess extensive research abilities, measurements, research methodologies, statistical data analyses, and should be able to make predictions and draw conclusions from gathering and studying acquired information. This can include conducting experiments, studying relationships in organizations, as well as other related abilities.

6. Consumer protection: I/O Psychologists should be knowledgeable regarding ethical and legal responsibility of dealing with sensitive material pertaining to clients and other stakeholders.

7. Professional development: I/O professionals should always strive to update their skills and abilities in the field by participating in seminars, conferences, classes, and certifications administered by associations such as SIOP, SHRM, NAOP and universities offering I/O as a program (American Psychological Association, 2014).

Benefits of I/O Psychology in the Work Place

The field of I/O psychology generally requires the individual to be knowledgeable in research, statistical data analysis, measuring the effects of culture on the work environment (Folkman, 2012), comparing variables, job and task analysis, ethics training, and leadership abilities are all considered necessary components of this field.

There are multiple benefits from utilizing I/O psychology in the workplace. I/O's can improve productivity, promote succession training, plan for growth, minimize the negative effects of downsizing, devise employee training programs, and resolve many other personnel issues. I/O's are also generally privy to current changing trends and laws, new technology, and globally evolving work place environments. Some examples are as follows:

- Productivity: I/O psychologists are generally able to assess personnel productivity problems, determine the underlying cause, and recommend solutions for rectifying these issues. They can also devise programs and implement them for the benefit of the organization. They can also measure the success of a program and make adjustments to the program and recommendations as needed (Johnston, 2015).

- Problem solving: I/O psychologists are typically problem solvers. They are able to assess a situation, make a rational determination of the source of the issue, propose solutions, and implement viable plans to resolve the problems and minimize damage caused by confounding variables that cannot be resolved. These could be environmental factors, local economy, and sudden loss of experienced personnel, downsizing, or lack of training (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2015).

- Relationship stability: I/O professionals recognize that individuals devote a great deal of their time, energy, efforts, and are greatly motivated by work. Employees in an organization spend one-third to one-half of their lives at work and commuting to and from their job. People identify themselves with their company and their profession (Dauber, Fink, & Yolles, 2012).

Incorporating I/O into Business Strategies

Incorporating I/O psychology in the workplace requires an investment of time and resources; however this cost can be overridden by the monetary savings and the reduced loss of experienced and valuable employees (Noe, 2009). Some of the ways that I/O can be implemented in a business strategic method of operations is by facilitating on-going training for new and current employees. Keeping employees up to date on new products, competitors, trends, and regulations is imperative for maintaining sustainable product knowledge which in turn increases productivity and profitability (Johnston, 2015).

Utilizing I/O psychology in the recruiting, hiring, and classification process is a necessary component towards achieving and maintaining the organization's goals. Implementing I/O principles in a company's recruitment and hiring practices can greatly improve the chances of acquiring the best individuals for a position. Screening tools such as personality and ability assessment tests are particularly useful for matching primary candidates to positions (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2015).

Communication is important to developing and maintaining group cohesion within an organization. Open, positive, and informative communicative avenues such as email, company intranet, instant messaging, telecommunications, web seminars, online information, and other methods of exchanging information assist in improving the transfer of knowledge, propose projects, exchange operational information, learn new policies and procedures, and formulate creative ideals between employees. This ability of interpersonal communication enables individuals and groups to openly communicate with co-workers (Hutchins, Burke, & Berthelsen, 2010).

Many organizations, institutions, social groups, society, communities, and individuals typically recognize the impact of factors such as increasing government influences, changing state and federal laws, growing consumer awareness regarding product value and environmental sustainability, skill and talent shortages, and the ever evolving nature of the work place. These in turn increase productivity and profitability. I/O psychologists facilitate responses to real life issues and problems involving people at work by serving as advisors and catalysts for business, industry, labor, public,

academic, community, and health organizations (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2015).

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