THE BLACKWELL HANDBOOK OF PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Book information


1.2. Review

This international handbook lights out the most vital management principles that can be applied to different organizational settings. Moreover, the book can be viewed as a collection of numerous high academic quality research papers, knowledge and experts with qualified background in the research field.

The handbook consists of 8 practical parts, with a total of 29 chapter studies which debate upon a generous range of topics such as recruitment and selection, job motivation, styles of leadership, decision making process, stress factors, building teams and performance at work. The manner of presentation highlights the practical style of writing yet academic, following the idea of allowing access to the readers to a huge collection of theories, good practices and examples in order to favor good understanding and impact, both theoretical and practical.
In this light of things, experts, managers, students from a wide range of specialties such as economy, management, finance, organizational psychology, consultancy, training, coaching can benefit from a vital tool, needed in every managers’ “skills pocket”.

The updated paperback edition of Edwin Locke's handbook includes a keynote essay. The essay discusses the main principles and perspective towards teaching management, in other words a must have guide for students and teachers of organizational psychology and management.

The editor of this handbook, Edwin A. Locke presents the main topics and paradigms related to Organizational Behavior (OB) and Human Resource Management (HRM), gathering numerous research papers, years of organizational practice and controversial results and adding a structured and interconnected form to the wide domain of organizational theories and practices, many a time criticized for their divergent perspectives and “solitary” acceptance. The book follows the publishing line in the Blackwell Series Handbooks in Management, covering different functional areas of management and organizational psychology.

The known figure of Ph.D. Dean's Professor (Emeritus) Edwin A. Locke of Leadership and Motivation at the R.H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland, College Park provides an expertise of the highest rank on the international academic scene. Professor E. Locke is one of the most well-known experts on organizational behavior, publishing over 290 chapters, being author or editor to 12 books, numerous notes and articles in professional journals on most key topics of management and organizational field, being internationally known for his research on goal-setting and theory. Moreover his expertise, academic papers and theory have served numerous research grants and awards in research and teaching. Professor E. Locke is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, of the American Psychological Society and of the Academy of Management, also being a consulting editor for leading journals and consultant for the organizational and management international domain.

The 8 sections gather 29 topics on the OB, following the discussion upon identification of the principle and needed sub-principles, justification of the principles, specification of implementation and/or contingency factors, illustrations of the principles through the use of some positive and negative examples. The authors presented in this handbook are all well-known academic figures or consultants, with a high expertise on their area.

The first part on Selection (Part I), containing studies like “Select on Intelligence” (Frank L. Schmidt and John E. Hunter), “Select on Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability” (Murray R. Barrick and Michael K. Mount) or “Structure Interviews to Hire the Best People” (Cynthia Kay Stevens), identifies principles referring to personality dimensions and intelligence, in a debate which follows the idea of competence at work, aiming organizational objectives and promoting job success. The section deals with the traditional dimensions of personality such as
conscientiousness and emotional stability associated with coping strategies in stress and job performance, analyzing also concepts such as job requirements, the right of privacy, effects of impression management and socially desirable responding on the validity of tests.

In the second part on Training and Performance Appraisal (Part II) with topics such as “Design Training Systems Systematically” (Eduardo Salas and Janis A. Cannon-Bowers) or “Design Performance Appraisal Systems to Improve Performance (Angelo S. DeNisi and Jorge A. Gonzalez)”, the subjects circle around the major theme on performance appraisals, improving performance, the accuracy of appraisals and criterion measures, focusing on constructing evaluation instruments, realistic standards for performance and performance improvement.

The third part on Turnover and Satisfaction (Part III) with the chapters “Promote Job Satisfaction through Mental Challenge” (Timothy A. Judge) and “Control Turnover by Understanding its Causes” (Thomas W. Lee and Terence R. Mitchell) puts into relation the well-known association between job satisfaction and performance. The authors also discuss this “liaison” with the employees’ quality of life and standards, anticipation on the employee's leaving, monitoring job attitudes, global withdrawal cognitions, shocks, paths and the management of the quitting process.

In the fourth part on Motivation (Part IV), with a generous topic like “Motivate Employee Performance through Goal Setting” (Gary P. Latham), “Cultivate Self-Efficacy for Personal and Organizational Effectiveness” (Albert Bandura), “Motivate Performance through Empowerment” (Jay A. Conger), “Pay for Performance” (Cathy C. Durham and Kathryn M. Bartol), “Provide Recognition for Performance Improvement (Fred Luthans and Alexander D. Stajkovic)” and “Promote Procedural Justice to Enhance Acceptance of Work Outcomes” (Jerald Greenberg), the principles of goal-setting are set, with connections on performance and job satisfaction. The authors give new examples on commitment and other variables like praise, feedback, involvement in decision-making processes and the self-efficacy theory. They point out the vital positive effects of self-management trainings the autonomy of employees in setting their goals.

The fifth part on Team Dynamics (Part V), with topics such as “Compose Teams to Assure Successful Boundary Activity“ (Deborah Ancona and David Caldwell), “Excel Through Group Process” (Gerardo A. Okhuysen and Kathleen M. Eisenhardt) and “Manage Intra-Team Conflict through Collaboration” (Laurie Weingart and Karen A. Jehn), puts into light the differences among teams and work groups when making decisions and resolving conflict. The view debates upon the engineering and design of a team, various types and evolution process, with focus on the collaborative team as an invaluable tool for managing objectives and dynamic organizational situations.
The sixth part on Leadership (Part VI), with the studies “Use Power Effectively” (Gary Yukl), “Lead Through Vision and Values” (Markus Hauser and Robert J. House) and “Foster Trust through Competence, Honesty and Integrity” (Sabrina C. Salam), gives away scientific knowledge about the power concept and influence tactics, bringing into discussion the expert and referent power, position or personal power.

The authors build up a fine perspective upon the outcomes of influence at work, the context, the skills and their tactics, reminding of the consultation, inspirational appeals and the rational persuasion in order to fulfill important objectives, after an essential diagnose of the situation and the selection of tactics that are appropriate for the organizational situation.

For the seventh part on Organizational Processes (Part VII), generous in topics as “Design Structure to Fit Strategy” (Lex Donaldson), “Use Participation to Share Information and Distribute Knowledge” (John A Wagner III), “Make Good Decisions by Effectively Managing the Decision-making Process” (Glen Whyte), “Stimulate Creativity by Fueling Passion” (Teresa Amabile), “Manage Stress at Work through Preventive and Proactive Coping” (Ralf Schwarzer), “Manage Conflict through Negotiation and Mediation: M. Susan Taylor” (Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland) or “Lead Organizational Change by Creating Dissatisfaction and Realigning the Organization with New Competitive Realities” (Michael Beer), the authors conduct a rigorous analysis of the multiple facets of the organization – its design, its leadership, and its people in close accordance to its strategy. The phenomenon of resistance towards change it is described as well, in terms of environmental pressures, poor performance or the prospect of poor performance and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Solutions are discussed for mobilizing energy, developing a new compelling direction, identifying organizational barriers to implement the new strategy, developing a task-aligned vision of the future organization, communication of the vision and involvement of people, supporting of behavior change through coaching, and continuously monitor change. In this manner the very role of management is put to the test, while following organizational performance, economic value and organizational effectiveness.

The last part, that is the eight part on Work, Family, Technology, and Culture (Part VIII), with the topics “Promote Equal Opportunity by Recognizing Gender Differences in the Experience of Work and Family” (Nancy P. Rothbard and Jeanne M. Brett), “Use Information Technology as a Catalyst for Organizational Change” (Maryam Alavi and Jonathan Palmer) and “Make Management Practice Fit the National Culture” (Miriam Erez), analyze the cultural differences, and how they can shape the managerial practices. The authors draw attention towards cultural values, motivation of employees and managerial practices, aiming the principles of sense of self-worth and well-being, where it is vital to understand the
distinct cultural backgrounds, for a successful management inside the organization and outside of it.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The handbook identifies the most important principles in organizational field, sustained by a strong collection of arguments, debates and research models, focusing on the identification, description, justification and explanation of such principles. Moreover, exceptions are not left behind, but implemented as subject to discussion, using a wide range of case examples.

The 29 titles of this academic research handbook cover most of the topics in the field of OB, presenting major concepts and perspectives in a close to reader view, while at the same time structuring in a rigorous manner the theoretical line with the vital applications inside the organizational domain.

Each of the authors had the possibility to structure in an individual manner the contents of their research or lecture, some following the practical perspective with case examples, others promoting the theoretical approach in describing concepts and approaches. Thus, the complete works present in a unique manner the most important findings until now inside the organizational field of expertise, associating the empirical sides of the matter with the theoretical line of argumentation.

The actual handbook aims also at collecting in an integrative way the research topics, which can also be viewed as stand alone academic subjects. In other words, the work managed to connect various themes into a high standard academic paper, which develops a professional course among the fundamentals of organizational psychology, human resources policies and management, as well as economics and social theories inside organizations and job development.

Concentrating the principles of OB, the handbook gathers in a comprehensive manner new links between concepts, theories, case examples, practice, theoretical models and solutions to the everyday organization, caught in the daily transformation process. In this light of things, the new challenges of change and the dynamic context lead only to provoking new debates, questions and a need for further research, a framework which highly recommends the present handbook as a vital tool in every organizational expert’s collection of “must have” instruments.
3. REFERENCES


