

training can lead to more effective group functioning.

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Job Stress: A Complex Yet Timely Subject

Rick Crandall and Pamela L. Perrewe (Eds.)

Occupational Stress: A Handbook
Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis, 1995.
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paperback

Review by
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As made evident by recent discussions of health care reform in the United States, rising costs associated with chronic ill health represent a massive drain on the U.S. economy. Not so evident, however, is the fact that many chronic health problems are work related, and nowhere are the rising costs of work-related chronic ill health more evident than in the area of occupational stress. California worker compensation data, for example, show a rapid increase, beginning in 1981, in the rate of mental problems, whereas compensation rates for all types of claims continued a modest decline (California Workers' Compens-

sation Institute, 1990). Similarly, a study by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company found that the percentage of stress-related disability cases managed by the company rose from 6 percent in 1982 to fully 13 percent in 1990 (Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, 1991). It follows that the understanding and control of occupational stress should be of concern to policymakers, the general public, and the behavioral science community.

Occupational Stress: A Handbook offers the reader a valuable guide to understanding the increasingly important and complex topic of occupational stress.

The book is divided into five parts dealing with job stress theory, model testing, moderators of the stress-health relationship, burnout, and job stress interventions. Each part contains chapters by noted job stress researchers and, by and large, the chapters are well written.

The introductory chapters in Part 1 of this volume provide the reader (especially those new to the job stress arena) with a concise review of the merits and limitations of some major job stress approaches. The first chapter, by Richard Lazarus, nicely summarizes 30 years of his work using a transactional approach to stress that emphasizes the stress process, the stress context, and the individual worker's appraisal of stress. Arthur Brief and Jennifer George, in the second chapter, take issue with the Lazarus ideographic approach and offer some insightful thoughts on how the stress and coping process should be studied within a work context. The next two chapters continue the theme of examining the merits of Lazarus's transactional approach to job stress, and the final two chapters in this section discuss the causes of job stress and methods of job stress assessment. On the whole, this part of the book offers a relatively good introduction to the job stress concept. However, it contains only a very brief discussion of job decision latitude theory (Karasek, 1979), which represents a shortcoming.

The sources and consequences of job stress are discussed in the second part of the book. Each chapter within this section presents and empirically tests a different job stress model. In the first chapter, for example, William Hendrix, Timothy Summers, Terry Leap, and Robert Steel examine the effects of 18 job stressor and individual factors on 10 outcome measures ranging from performance appraisals to self-reported symptoms. In combination, the chapters in this section provide the reader with an appreciation of the complexity of the job stress phenomena and an excellent review of the growing body of literature linking stressful job conditions to both individual and organizational health consequences.

Part 3 of the book focuses on the role of dispositional factors and individual coping strategies in the stress process. In the first chapter in this section, Wayne Hochwarter, Pamela Perrewe, and Russell Kent examine the moderating effects of persistence on the stressor-strain relationship, and Daniel Ganster and John Schaubroeck assess the moderating effects of self-esteem. Stephen Havlovic and John Keenan explore individual and

work context determinants of five different coping strategies and Alan Wolfgang, in the final chapter in this part, assesses relationships among job stress; job dissatisfaction; and cognitive, behavioral, and avoidance coping styles. Although the studies reported in this section are well conceived and executed, together they do not offer the reader an appreciation of the multiplicity of individual factors that have been hypothesized to moderate the relationship between job demands and health and performance consequences that might be expected to be found in a handbook.

The fourth part of the book provides a comprehensive examination of burnout as a consequence of exposure to stressful job conditions. Two of the chapters, one by Shimon Dolan and the other by Ester Greenglass, Lisa Fiksenbaum, and Ronald Burke, clearly illustrate the challenges of understanding occupational stress. Each chapter reports a study examining social support as a buffer-moderator to burnout but each finds a different result. Such discrepant findings are in many ways typical of research in the job stress field and raise important questions regarding job stress research methodology.

The last part of the book contains two chapters devoted to the topic of job stress interventions. Cary Cooper and Golnaz Sadri describe an empirical evaluation of an in-house stress counseling service and Steve Jex, Paul Spector, David Gudanski, and Ronald Newman examine the effects of exercise on worker responses to job stress. After reading this section, I was disappointed by not seeing at least one additional chapter devoted to organizational change approaches to job stress reduction. It is clear that from a pragmatic standpoint, effective stress management interventions need to incorporate primary prevention strategies at the organizational level aimed at reducing or eliminating stressors at work.

In summary, I believe that the reader will find this book to be interesting and useful. It should be of particular value to empirical researchers seeking a compendium of current knowledge regarding the constructs, theories, and methods of job stress research. The book is likely, however, to disappoint the practitioner seeking definitive solutions to the increasingly important and costly problem of job stress.

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Outplacement Counseling: A Guide for the Curious

Alan J. Pickman
The Complete Guide to Outplacement Counseling
Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1994. 150 pp.
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0-8058-1648-8 (paperback). \$39.95
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Although the author promises to provide a complete guide to the field of outplacement counseling, he does not promise to tell you everything that you need to know to start doing outplacement counseling. That would be an unrealistic goal for a 150-page paperback book. After finishing this book, however, the reader will know something about the history of the field; some of the philosophical and conceptual ideas prevalent in the field; the major professional groups engaged in developing, promoting, and governing the field; and some of the core practice and ethical issues facing the field.

The intended audience for this book appears to be human resource professionals with some familiarity with but not necessarily expertise in basic counseling methods and counseling and clinical psychologists who have in-depth expertise in counseling methods but who are unfamiliar with the outplacement process. As a starting point for either group, this book seems like a good choice. The book is well written and easily read, is straightforward in its structure and layout, and provides the basic information

necessary for the reader to do more research if interested. It is not a sufficiently comprehensive book, however; to allow either group to include this service in their professional practice. Recognizing these limitations, the author provides some very useful appendixes for the reader (competencies standards, standards of ethical practice, and resources for outplacement practitioners).

For the human resource professional with limited exposure to counseling methods, the author provides a primer on counseling models that will be of use in an outplacement setting—loss (Kubler-Ross), stress (Holmes and Rahe), dream interpretation, values and interests (Strong and Campbell; Holland), and temperament or interpersonal style (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). Although all of the models should be familiar to counseling and clinical psychologists, their inclusion in the discussion of counseling theory will undoubtedly bolster the self-confidence of counseling and clinical psychology practitioners in venturing into this practice area.

On the other hand, the author's discussion of important issues to be consid-