Occupational Health Psychology: A multilevel framework of healthy workplace

Meeting time: 9:00 am - 11:40 am (Wednesdays) – Break at 10:10.
Room: Varied
Office hour: Any time

Course Overview

According to the Society for Occupational Health Psychology, Occupational Health Psychology (OHP) is an interdisciplinary specialty which blends psychology and occupational health sciences. The ultimate goal is to build a healthy workplace in which workers can “use their talents and gifts to achieve high performance, high satisfaction, and well-being” (Quick, 1999). To build a healthy workplace, physical-related systems (e.g., air quality, radiation, tools, etc.) and human-organizational systems should be taken into consideration. OHP, arguably, is one of the most heavily researched areas within the work domain, even though it is not well known in the conventional discipline-specific trainings. Topics such as employment assessment, job design, job analysis, organizational changes, leadership, person-environment fit, shift work, job stress, coping and adjustment, personality, work-family balance, safety behaviors and safety climate, workplace violence, and so on, are often studied in the OHP. In this seminar, we will focus on human and organizational systems from a multi-level approach, and explore how human-organizational systems augment physical systems while building a healthy workplace. Conceptually, human and organizational systems in any workplace consist of, at least, four interdependent levels: external contexts (e.g., economic, political, legal, technology), organizational contexts (e.g., policies, surveillance, management, supervisory practices, culture/climate, prevention/promotion/intervention), work context (job design, job characteristics, social support, job control, etc.), and worker characteristics (e.g., interface between work and family; individual characteristics). Each of these levels would likely facilitate or interfere workers from utilizing their talents and maximize their potentials.

Objectives
1. To acquire knowledge of the empirical literature on the covered topics.
2. To enhance skills in critical thinking.
3. To gain expanded appreciation of how an intervention program is proposed and developed.
4. To acquire needed competencies prescribed for OHP psychologists.

Expectations

This seminar is an interactive and participative class, which requires readings and writings outside of the meeting time, discussion and debate during the seminar. Reading materials are chosen to provide a basic foundation to assist you to pursue in-depth understanding. To achieve the goals described above, everyone is expected to discuss the reading materials in class.
Topics and Calendar

8/26  Expectations, goals, and clarifications (LWS 208)

9/2  Overview of OHP (LWS 217)

9/9  Job stress: Past to Present (LWS 208)

9/16  Methodological issues (LWS 232)


9/18 **Interventions (LWS 205)**


9/30 **Social support and control (LWS 217)**


10/7 Person and environment (LWS 217)


10/16 Leadership (LWS 232)


10/21 Counterproductive behaviors (LWS 217)


10/28  Safety, health, security (LWS 217)


11/11  Job analysis and job design (LWS 208)


11/13  Work and family integration (LWS 217)


11/18  Career management, organizational socialization, and mentoring (LWS 217)


11/25  Thanksgiving

12/2  Translation to Practice (LWS 217)


12/9  Research Proposal Presentation (LWS 217)

Grade

90 points or above will receive an A; 80-89, a B; and so on
Learning Assignments

1. Getting started. In 1-2 double-spaced pages, describe and offer your own definition of workers’ health and organizational health. Note a few reasons how your own research projects would make differences on workers’ health and organizational health. Be prepared to discuss your responses in class to these questions 9/2. Individual papers will not be assigned a grade, but adequate completion of the assignment will be considered as a component of your class participation grade.

2. Class participation (40%). Each participant is expected to generate 2 discussion questions for each reading material per week. These questions will provide the stimulus for discussion in class of the material. Participation is required of all students. Questions can be anything including your reactions, thoughts, research ideas, concerns, or criticisms pertaining to each reading. Questions are not graded, and there are no good or bad questions in the seminar. How to ask questions? "Tao of conversation."

3. Research Proposal (40%; Due on 12/2/09) and Oral Presentation (20%; 12/09/09)
Complete a 15-20 page research proposal, excluding tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts. The evaluate criteria are (a) Significance: Does this study address an important scientific occupational health problem? If the aims of the proposed study are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or practice be advanced? What will be the effect of this proposed study on the concepts, methods, technologies, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field? (b) Approach: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the proposed study include potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? (c) Innovation: Is the proposed study original and innovative? For example: Does the proposed study challenge existing paradigms or practice, or address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the proposed study develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area? (d) Diffusion: How does the proposed study address dissemination, diffusion, or implementation after the project is completed, and how would research to practice efforts and results be evaluated?