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Teoh, Kevin (2017) Occupational Health Psychology: Authors: Irvin S. Schonfeld & Chu-Hsiang Chang, Publisher: Springer Publishing Company. [Book Review]

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Title: Occupational Health Psychology
Authors: Irvin S. Schonfeld and Chu-Hsiang Chang
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Reviewer: Kevin Teoh

The discipline of Occupational Health Psychology (OHP) has few “one-stop” textbooks that provide an overview of the field. In addition, the rapid evolution of the discipline means that existing textbooks and resources quickly become outdated. This textbook therefore provides a contemporary introduction to OHP that is suitable for both undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as wider practitioners and the general public who have an interest in the field. In addition, by primarily drawing on longitudinal studies and meta-analyses, the textbook provides a comprehensive summary of the extant higher-quality evidence that will be useful for most researchers.

Separated into 11 chapters, Chapter One introduces the origins of OHP and charts the developments of the field into a widely recognized discipline. It includes the setting up of NIOSH, the *Work & Stress* and *JOHP* journals, as well as our own EAOHP. Chapter Two provides an overview of research methods in OHP. Although the designs and constructs visited here may be somewhat simplistic to the more experienced researcher, the OHP examples are quite useful in gaining an insight to some of the issues and controversies within the discipline.

Chapters Three and Four focus on the evidence for the impact of psychosocial working conditions on mental health and physical illness. It is here that the main stress theories are introduced before their evidence base is reviewed. The discussion of reverse causality, the impact of socioeconomic status, the timing of data collection and the wide-ranging reliance on self-reported measures provides a more critical lens to consider the existing evidence, and hopefully inform researchers to control for, or at least consider, these factors in future research.

The research surrounding workplace violence and psychological aggression is reviewed in Chapter Five. The focus here is more on the prevalence, risk factors

and consequences of these behaviors, rather than a discussion of the debate around the definition and measurement of these constructs. Chapter Six moves beyond the individual to consider the impact of organizational climate and leadership on employee health and safety. Interestingly for a general OHP textbook, Chapter Seven is devoted to summarizing the OHP research in seven different occupations. These include teachers, agriculture workers, soldiers and nurses. The intention here is to highlight some of the differences across occupations and sectors, and how care needs to be taken when attempting to generalize research.

Chapter Eight examines occupational safety, including the individual and situational antecedents to safety performance. This is much more focused on the individual, as safety climate in general was covered in Chapter Six. In Chapter Nine, the textbook introduces work-family balance. It acknowledges both the negative and positive impact through a discussion of work-family conflict and work-family enhancement respectively. The chapter ends with consideration of the broader context, including how social policies impact work-family issues. This is followed by Chapter Ten that focuses on OHP interventions, providing examples of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions. These are separated into interventions that focus on work-life balance, physical health and safety, and psychological health and wellbeing.

The final chapter reflects on the future of OHP. It considers the issues discussed in eight of the preceding chapters and identifies future directions. For example, for mental health the chapter argues that we should consider how money, personality and social factors, and job crafting impacts on employee mental health. Similarly, in relation to the work-family balance chapter, the authors propose that families with other care responsibilities and the self-employed are two groups where more research is needed. The textbook ends by advocating stronger action to influence employment factors beyond work, including job insecurity and unemployment.

The textbook is designed to support the development of the field of OHP. Educators in this area can contact the publisher for an Instructor Manual that contains resources for classroom discussion and assessment based on the textbook. In addition, throughout the book there are tips for the interested reader on additional resources (e.g., accessing the EAOHP and APA OHP listserves) and towards existing research controversies and future directions. To make space for the thorough review of the research in each of the broad areas covered in the book has perhaps been at the expense of some of the theoretical background that accompanies these topics. Notable omissions include the positive OHP movement, the systems perspective of error and accidents, and the organizational intervention cycle. Nevertheless, the textbook is well-written, thorough and easy to read. I would argue that it provides an important resource not only for students but for educators, researchers and practitioners with an interest of OHP.