

## Occupational Health Psychology: Understanding the Relationships between Work and Health

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### DESCRIPTION

Occupational Health Psychology (OHP) is a field of psychology that focuses on the relationships between work and health. OHP is concerned with the promotion and maintenance of the physical, mental, and social well-being of employees, as well as the prevention and management of workplace hazards and risks. This brief study explores the history of OHP, its key concepts and theories, and its practical applications in the workplace. The roots of OHP can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when industrialization led to the emergence of health problems associated with work. However, the field of OHP did not emerge until the 1970s, when concerns about the effects of job stress and dissatisfaction on employee health gained attention. In the 1980s and 1990s, OHP gained momentum as a distinct field of psychology, with the publication of influential books and the establishment of research centers and professional organizations.

One of the key concepts in OHP is the job demand-control model, which proposes that high job demands combined with low job control can lead to job strain, which in turn can lead to health problems such as cardiovascular disease and mental health disorders. Another key concept is the effort-reward imbalance model, which suggests that employees who perceive a lack of reward for their efforts are at risk for poor health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Other important concepts in OHP include work-family conflict, social support, and job insecurity. Work-family conflict refers to the tension that arises when work demands interfere with family responsibilities, or vice versa. Social support refers to the resources and assistance provided by colleagues, supervisors, and family members, which can buffer the negative effects of job stress. Job insecurity refers to the perceived risk of job loss or job instability, which can have negative

effects on mental health and well-being. OHP has many practical applications in the workplace. For example, OHP researchers have developed interventions to reduce job stress and improve employee health and well-being. These interventions may involve changes to work organization and job design, such as reducing workload, increasing employee autonomy, and providing social support. Another practical application of OHP is the assessment and management of workplace hazards and risks.

OHP researchers may conduct assessments of workplace hazards such as noise, chemicals, and physical strain, and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate these hazards. OHP researchers may also develop programs to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses, such as ergonomic interventions to reduce musculoskeletal disorders.

OHP can also be used to address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. For example, OHP researchers may study the effects of discrimination and prejudice on employee health and well-being, and develop interventions to promote a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

Finally, OHP can be used to promote employee well-being and work-life balance. OHP researchers may develop programs to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors such as exercise and healthy eating, and to support employees in managing work and family responsibilities. Occupational health psychology is a growing field of psychology that focuses on the relationships between work and health. OHP has many practical applications in the workplace, including the assessment and management of workplace hazards and risks, the promotion of employee well-being and work-life balance, and the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. As the world of work continues to evolve, OHP will continue to play an important role in promoting the health and well-being of employees.

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