

President's Editorial

On "Managerial", "Organisational", "Psychology" and "Behaviour"

by Professor Hal Leavitt

Stanford University, USA
President of the Editorial Advisory Board



The occasion of this auspicious birth gives me a welcome chance to fulfil an old timer's prerogative — to emote a little about how it was in the old days.

Most of us don't win many clean victories in our lives, but when we do we remember them. Mine happened back in 1958 with the publication of the first edition of *Managerial Psychology*. I had sent the manuscript to ten or more commercial publishers. All rejections! An interesting book, they all said, but it had no market. No such field existed. Were I to write a book about personnel management or industrial psychology, they might be interested. Happily they were all wrong, and I, for a change, was all right. There really was a market there. Many people in many places were becoming interested in the issues raised in that manuscript. Managerial psychology, as a domain for scholarship, research and application, was just getting going.

But while it got underway fast, the concept of "managerial psychology" has not had smooth sailing in these two and

a half decades: By the mid-sixties, at least two books titled *Organisational (not managerial) Psychology* had been published, and Division XIV of the American Psychological Association had changed its name from the Division of Industrial Psychology to the Division of Industrial and Organisational (again not managerial) Psychology. At first the substantive differences between managerial and organisational seemed trivial, with organisational carrying a slightly more respectable academic flavour. By either name, both sets of ideas were based in social psychology, rather than in the individual psychology that underlay the predecessor, *industrial psychology*. Both focused on issues like motivation, interpersonal relations, group behaviour and leadership. Yet there were real, albeit implicit, differences between the two words, and those implicit meanings tended, over time, to drive divergent sorts of research and teaching. *Managerial* psychology worked from the perspective of the manager, a rather applied, active, almost engineering perspective.

Organisational psychology developed into a more descriptive field, taking a more external perspective. It tried to describe and explain the observable behaviour of organisations.

The other word in the phrase, *managerial psychology*, also soon gave way to permit the inclusion of other disciplines like sociology. We replaced it with the more acceptable (perhaps because it seemed less mentalistic) word behaviour. And that new phrase, *organisational behaviour*, really caught on. While some parts of the original notion of *managerial psychology* prospered under the *organisational psychology* label, and then prospered even more under the even bigger OB umbrella, both the *managerial* and the psychological emphases did not. As the new *organisational behaviour* evolved, it fulfilled its destiny by taking a more and more macro stance, moving to the whole organisation as its unit of analysis, and even reaching out — as it now has — well into interorganisational space.

Somehow in that process the original focus on *managing* and on human *psychology* got lost along the way. And only over the last decade has the significance of that loss begun to be felt. While we were learning and teaching more and more about organisations, we were *not* necessarily learning or teaching more and more about how to manage the people in them. And many of the people in many organisations were not being managed very well.

So along with many others around the world, I welcome this new journal. Some of us live under the large OB umbrella and some outside it, but we share a concern for improving the processes by which we manage human beings. This journal will surely help to legitimise that concern, and may even give us some insights that will help us do it better. □

REVIEWS

Evaluation of Management Education, Training & Development

Mark Easterby-Smith
(Gower Publishing, Aldershot, 1986)

This is a thought provoking book which gives an insight into a broad range of issues concerned with evaluating management development activities. The book is aimed at the practitioner and its major objectives are to provide a theoretical updating of the evaluation

