



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN INDUSTRY- AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Background: With rapid technological advancements and constantly evolving workplace environments, understanding human behavior in organizational settings has become increasingly important. Industrial psychology addresses this need by examining how individuals and groups interact within industrial and organizational systems.

Objective: This paper aims to explore the foundational concepts and psychological approaches in industrial settings, and to analyze the impact of psychological principles on industrial work styles over time.

Methods: The study is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on defining industrial psychology, examining its scope, identifying major psychological approaches, and exploring the link between psychology and industrial accidents. The second part includes a comparative analysis, using a case study to evaluate the psychological influence on workplace practices in the late 1990s versus in 2025.

Results: Findings suggest that psychological approaches have significantly influenced safety, productivity, and employee well-being across decades. The case study illustrates notable shifts in management strategies, employee engagement, and adaptation to technological change, demonstrating the evolving role of psychology in the industry.

Conclusion: Industrial psychology plays a vital role in shaping modern workplace dynamics. As industries continue to evolve, integrating psychological principles becomes crucial for fostering safe, efficient, and adaptive work environments.

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Introduction:-

Psychology refers to the study of human behaviour in a group or as an individual, in short, it is about how people think, feel and act. Understanding psychology provides us with many scopes, some of which are significant findings in emotional wellbeing, relationships, and behaviour offering both theoretical as well as practical knowledge. Psychology acts as science as well as art because it values insights from theoretical and practical analysis equally. Psychology is transformed into art by its creative, intuitive, and expressive attitudes, as well as its application of several theoretical tools to actual situations. Its methods of discovery through numerous experiments and research

projects have also earned it recognition as a science. The basis of psychology is human behaviour. To cope with constant evolution and dynamic nature of human behaviour, there comes a need to study psychology.

Industrial psychology is a small portion of psychology that mainly focuses on the behaviour of individuals in the workplace. Its emphasis is on improving employee performance, job satisfaction and overall productivity at workplace. It bridges gap between psychology and management, hence fulfilling the people and organisational goals effectively and efficiently. It maintains a balance between organisational success and employee wellbeing.

Industrial Psychology:

According to American Psychology Association (APA), "Industrial psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour in organizations and the workplace." According to Morris Viteles, "Industrial psychology is the application or extension of psychological facts and principles to the problems concerning human beings operating within the context of business and industry". In simple words, industrial psychology does not only increase efficiency, but it also helps in creating a workplace, which provides an organization as well as an individual with potential growth together. It facilitates a bridge between business goals and human needs, making it a crucial domain in today's competitive and dynamic world.

Essence of Industrial Psychology:

Industrial psychology is scientific in nature as it relies on experimentation, observations which makes it more reliable for making unbiased and relevant decision making, at the same time it is practical as well as its problem-solving methodology helps in efficient recruitment, selection and development, improves conflict management skills in addition to job satisfaction and motivation among employees. Psychology is bound by human behaviour, needs and satisfaction. Its primary focus is on employees (workers) rather than machines/equipment or profits hence, it gives greater emphasis on human well-being. Thus, it is human-centered.

This branch of psychology is interdisciplinary because it does not work in isolation, it grasps knowledge, theories and methods from multiple segments i.e., psychology with management, sociology, economics and other sciences to improve both human well-being and organisational performances. The blend of all these segments creates a broader understanding at workplace. This field of psychology involves various systematic observations, surveys, and test instead of relying on trial-and-error methods this makes it analytical in nature. This analysis helps to identify various causes of complex problems thus recommending suitable measures.

This part of psychology has a tendency of being preventive as well as developmental at the same time; in simple words, having preventive nature enables it to identify problems before they become unmanageable. It works towards reducing absenteeism, dissatisfaction and conflicts between employees. It can be developmental at the same time as it focuses on improving leadership qualities, abilities and career opportunities. It encourages formulation of better policies; motivation strategies coupled with enhancing training.

Approaches Related to Industrial Psychology: -**1. Behavioral Approach:**

Behavioral approach in industrial psychology focuses on employees' actions and habits at work instead of internal thoughts or feelings. It observes employees' behaviour at workplace. Employees enhance the quality of work when they are appreciated and are provided with incentives, but employees also refrain from doing the act that attract penalties. In organization, it is applied in areas like performance management, skill development, incentive schemes and behavioral regulation.

Examples:-

- An employee gets bonus as they meet the targets in deadline hence, next time they would work harder as good work is rewarded.
- Google is one of the examples as it provides flexible working hours, let employees spend time on projects they want to, and food & gym services, which makes employees satisfied.

2. Cognitive Approach:-

Cognitive approach tells that what is happening in the employees' head. The word cognitive has come from cognition, which technically means all the mental behaviour behind how people perceive, act, reason and make

meaning. It is relatively a modern approach in the human behaviour. This approach studies how the process of perceiving, understanding, decision-making and learning affects the human behaviour and emotions. In simple words, cognitive approach transforms work into well-designed thinking environment. By carrying out certain duties, like aligning jobs, equipment, training, and feedback with employees' mindsets they can process information and industry goals are maintained.

Example:

- An employee works harder if they believe their effort will be noticed and fairly rewarded (like a promotion or appreciation).
- HR uses structures assessments and tests to avoid biasness in hiring decisions.

3. Humanistic Approach:-

This approach in industrial psychology considers employee as integrated self rather than just a worker. Its emphasis on morale principles, self-respect, morality, self-fulfillment, individual progress. Its emphasis on self-actualization need of Maslow's theory which states that employees motivated not just by salary or job security but they also seek personal growth, creativity, full potential. This approach can be implemented at workplace for job enrichment and enhancement, work life balance, guidance and support, professional development, interpersonal relationship.

Example:-

- A company gives employees flexible work hours and chances to learn new skills, so they feel happy and grow personally.
- The Vygon group has a policy for not only working towards customer satisfaction but also towards employee satisfaction thus, interconnecting both.

4. Psychodynamic Approach:-

Sigmund Freud originally developed the psychodynamic approach. This approach focuses on unconscious motives, inner conflicts, emotions and early life experiences that shape the behavior of an individual and personality in future. This studies the hidden motives, unconscious dynamics and emotional conflicts that influence the employee behavior, group interactions and organizational culture.

Example:-

- An employee dislikes authority figures unconsciously because of experiences, leading to conflicts with managers.
- A worker procrastinates due to hidden anxiety about failure.

5. Biological Approach

Biological psychology is linked with how brain, nervous system, hormones and genetics influence human behaviour and personality, their decision-making as well as emotions in workplace. It emphasizes that human behaviour is strongly associated with biological processes such as brain activities and physical health.

Example:-

- Designing shift schedules for workers that align with their natural sleep cycle improves productivity and health efficiently.
- An employee in depression is unable to perform at their best; they lack motivation and are unable to complete duties.

6. Social and Cultural Approach:-

The social and cultural approach studies the workplace behaviour. It considers factors like social interaction, group dynamics and cultural values that modulate workplace behavior. This approach focuses on aggregates rather than individuals. It concentrates on social environment i.e., teams, leaders and group influence and cultural backgrounds i.e., organisational cultural and national cultural that affects how an employee think, feel and act.

Example:-

- A multinational company finds that the employees in U.S company values quick promotions and independence more but on other hand, its employees in Japan company values teamwork and long-term job security more. Hence, the social-cultural approach will explain the differences and guide HR policies.
- Training managers to reduce groupthink and encourage diverse perspectives.

Industrial Accidents:-

An industrial accident is an unanticipated, unexpected event in a work place that can lead to injury, illness, damage or even death. They are most likely to occur in places like factories, construction sites, warehouses or laboratories etc. Industrial accidents are a major concern because they not only influence physically but it also causes psychological distress hence, reducing productivity and having financial losses at the same time hampering the performance of the industry. Thus, it is important to understand causes, consequences and preventives for creating a safe working environment.

Comprehensive overview of factors behind the industrial accidents:

1. **Human Factors:** - Distractions, Health conditions, Lack of proper training and skills, Fatigue or Lack of motivation.
2. **Technical Factors:** - Malfunctioning machinery, Inadequate safety guards or Outdated machinery.
3. **Environmental Factors:** - Poorly maintained housekeeping, Noise pollution, Inadequate lighting, Mishandling of chemicals, unsafe layout of plant or unforeseen incidents (fire, theft or earthquake).
4. **Managerial Factors:** - Weak safety policies, Inadequate monitoring& control or Negligence in proper management.
5. **Psychosocial Factors:** - High stress, Conflicts, Miscommunication, Overconfidence, Job fatigue or peer pressure.

Safety Preventives of Industrial Psychology in Accidents:-

Psychological processes often influence human behaviour, attitude and decision-making process and analyze the nature and strength of relationships, safety practices and performance outcomes within professional and personal boundaries.

Personal Measures:

- Skill enhancement
- Work load balance & wellbeing program
- Maintaining positive work culture
- Avoiding distractions
- Time management training
- Mindfulness & meditation practices

Technical Measures:

- Regular inspections
- Timely Audits
- Periodic maintenance
- Repair faulty machinery
- Replace obsolete machinery

Environmental Measures:

- Ensure proper housekeeping
- Adequate lighting & ventilation
- Proper chemical handling
- Noise control
- Proper plan for unforeseen events
- Risk identification

Managerial Measures:

- Clear safety policies

- Clear communication
- Supervise operations
- Efficient reporting
- Ensure synchronization

Psychosocial Measures:

- Reduce burnouts & stress
- Grievance redressed
- Workforce involvement
- Resilience
- Mental-health awareness campaign
- Stress management initiatives
- On-site counsellor services

Real Life Case Experience as an Example:-**CASE STUDY 1-INFOSYS (LATE 1990s)**

Founded in 1981, Infosys grew rapidly after liberalization 1991. By late 1990s, it was one of the fastest growing companies in IT sector. It was known for its progressive and innovative HR practices in business world. Due to fast growth and development, it faced various hurdles, which are closely interlinked with industrial psychology.

Various Constraints Faced by Infosys:

1. Employee stress and burnout: - Employees working in Infosys faced strain and fatigue due to long working hours, strict deadlines, multi-tasking and performance pressure.
2. Work life balance: - Employees faced difficulties in managing their professional and personal lives due to work pressure.
3. High employee turnover: - Due to high level of dissatisfaction, work life imbalance and stress, there was high employee turnover.
4. Cross-cultural adaptability: - Employee faced difficulties in adapting different cultures during overseas project and assignments. This led to cultural and communication barriers.
5. Employee motivation and job satisfaction: - Infosys faced declining team morale and lack of employee motivation in late 1990s. The high pressure of work lowered the motivation level. Lack of performance appraisal led to decrease in their morale.
6. Lack of effective leadership and management: - The rapid growth required effective management and leaders but leadership development was still in its early stages.

Strategies Enforced by Infosys:

In late 1990s, to overcome the constraints Infosys implemented several industrial psychology related strategies related to stress, motivation, leadership and organisational growth. Some of which are as given:

1. Employee training and development: - Infosys established Infosys Leadership Institute in Mysore 1997, which enhanced skills like leadership and management. It focuses on technical as well as professional skill development, which leads to reduction in stress from skill gap.
2. Stress and burnout management: - It introduced systematic schedules and encouraged time management skills. They provided consultation to address the problem of stress and burnout.
3. Motivation and morale improvement: - It implemented performance-based rewards such as bonuses, incentives or promotions to increase morale and motivation of employees. They encouraged team-building activities as well.
4. Leadership and management enhancement: - They took initiatives to launch programs to make the future managers and leaders efficient to deal with rapid expansion. They also conducted workshops to bridge these gaps.
5. Cross-cultural and Transnational support: - Company provided training to employees for overseas assignments to make it easy for them to adapt different environment. They tried to enhance the communication skills of the employees to ease the international project work.
6. Work life balance initiatives: - They encouraged flexible working hours while providing structured breaks in between work to maintain productivity without overwork. They also reduced burnout and promoted personal well-being.

Analysis of Case Study:-

Infosys efficiently executed principles of motivation, employee loyalty and employee wellbeing to enhance performance. It uses HR as a strategic asset by taking initiatives like skill development workshops, employee focused policies and transparent methods, which helped Infosys to reach the competitive edge. The company prioritized both psychological and technical needs. Behavioral mechanism helps in recognition, autonomy and development opportunities, which encourages internal drive beyond salary consideration. It implies sustainable techniques dealing with developmental needs and supportive psychological environment. Infosys achieved continuous productivity and secured employee retention.

CASE STUDY 2-JSW STEEL (2024-25):

In late 2024, a minor industrial explosion occurred at JSW Steel's Bhilai plant, where several workers were seriously injured. Besides injuries many employees also experienced post-trauma (PTSD) and emotional distress.

Industrial Psychological Challenges:

1. Emotional Turmoil: - After this incident worker, experienced severe emotional distress leading to fear and anxiety to return to their workplace.
2. Distrust in Management: -The erosion of trust in management reluctant the employees to rejoin their work.
3. Reduced Inefficient: - The stress and anxiety lead to decline in employee's performance that affected overall productivity.
4. Group Harmony: - The feeling of unity among employees weakened and they felt disconnected from both peers and management.

Protocols Introduced by the Industry:

The following are some recovery plans introduced by JSW for their employees:

1. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD): - Psychologists held many debriefings one-on-one sessions with the workers so that they could share their fears and emotions in a supportive environment.
2. Employee Assistance Program: - These programs were initiated to provide continuous emotional support to those employees who were impacted by the accident.
3. Managerial Involvement: - Managers conducted regular empathy-based check-ins acknowledging trauma and focusing on regaining employee's trust.
4. Safety Openness: - New protocols were communicated to all the employees along with systematic updates on how potential accidents were being addressed.
5. Strength building workshops: - Strength building sessions were organized to help employees coping up their skills and adapt themselves to post accident obstacles.

Analysis of Case Study:-

The Bhilai blast demonstrated that industrial accidents produce psychological as well as physical harm, with trauma, anxiety, and uncertainty directly affecting productivity.

1. JSW Steel's restoration plan reflected that industrial psychology is integral to crisis management, aside from HR support.
2. By using CISD, counselling, and peer networks, the company-controlled trauma symptoms and regained employee trust.
3. Empathetic leadership and Open safety communication restores trust, a core element in organizational commitment.
4. Endurance workshops elevated interpersonal alignment, shifting a crisis into an opening for deepened team integration.
5. The on-going consequence was a cultural transformation towards psychological wellbeing, rooting emotional comfort into the overall safety structure.

Differences in Analysis of Case Study 1 and Case Study 2:-

1. **Aspect:** Infosys – Late 1990s
JSW Steel – 2024–25
2. **Context:** Infosys: Intense growth in the IT sector; broadening workforce, global projects.
JSW Steel: Industrial accident (plant explosion) at Bhilai; workplace harm and trauma.
3. **Main Challenge:** Infosys: Elevated turnover, strain, insufficient leadership development, motivational gaps.
JSW Steel: Psychological trauma (PTSD), workplace re-entry stress, eroded trust in safety.

4. **Psychological Issues:** Infosys: Employee fatigue, cultural adaptations, poor workplace morale, leadership shortfalls.
JSW Steel: Trauma, anxiety, mistrust in management, lack of collaboration, declining effectiveness.
5. **Approach Taken:** Infosys- Staff empowerment, Distributed HR Management, Leadership development, Employee supportive policies (stock options, communication).
JWS - Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), Peer support networks, Counselling (EAP), Stress management workshops, Clear safety protocols.

Conclusion:-

Industrial psychology bridges the gap between industrial goals and personal well-being of the employees. Since long time it experimented and used many approaches to understand the human behaviour in different situations. In 1990s, companies like Infosys used it to improve employee leadership skills, morale and for efficient productivity. By 2025, as seen in JSW Steel, the role of industrial psychology expanded to trauma recovery, mental health and resilience. This transformation shows that psychology is no longer just supportive but is also plays a role of strategic necessity for sustainable industrial success.

Conflicts of Interest Declaration:-

The authors hereby declare that none of the work described in this publication is influenced by any known conflicts of interest, whether they be financial, personal, or professional. There was no outside financing or influence from institutional, political, or commercial entities that would profit from the research's conclusions.

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