



Book review

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by [Smulders P](#)

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Occupational Health Psychology by Leka, Stavroula & Houdmont, Jonathan (editors). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 343 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4051-9115-9. (Cost €44.90, soft cover).

Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology: Global Perspectives on Research and Practice, Volume 1 by Houdmont, Jonathan & Leka, Stavroula (editors). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 373 pages. ISBN: 978-0-470-68265-4. (Cost €83.90, hard cover).

Recently, two books were published on occupational health psychology (OHP), both were edited by Stavroula Leka and Jonathan Houdmont who work at the Institute of Work, Health & Organizations at the University of Nottingham in the UK.

The first book (*Occupational Health Psychology*) is meant to be a textbook on OHP introducing students to the discipline, as the editors write in their preface. The textbook starts with an introduction to OHP, followed by nine chapters, written by internationally well-known experts in the field from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, and the Netherlands. It is striking that US-input is lacking in this textbook, especially considering that authors such as James Campbell Quick, Lois Tetrick, Steven Sauter and Joseph Hurrell more or less started the discipline of OHP two decades ago.

The nine chapters deal with such topics as work-related stress, work organization and health, interventions techniques, psychosocial risk management, health promotion, positive OHP, the physical workplace, corporate culture, health and well-being, and research methods. The book concludes with a chapter on future directions in OHP.

Every chapter starts with an outline and concludes with a summary and conclusions, as well as suggestions for further reading. In addition, in every chapter one or two boxes are presented describing central research results with respect to what is discussed in the chapter.

A point of discussion, at least in my opinion, is that some relevant topics are missing in this textbook. One could argue that chapters on human relations in workplaces (social support and aggression), engagement and burnout, work-home interference, absenteeism and inability to work, retirement and the older worker, etc, should be included in a textbook on OHP.

The second book, entitled *Contemporary OHP-Global Perspectives on Research and Practice*, is the first volume of a biennial series published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology and the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. The main goal of the series is to pro-

vide comprehensive state-of-the art reviews of the literature in a topic area. The editors write that the series “will address a wide range of contemporary topics that concern the application of psychological principles and practices to occupational health challenges and opportunities”.

Some of the authors of the first textbook (eg, Bakker, Kompier, Leka, Nielsen, Taris), reappear as authors of this second book. But chapters from American, German, Swedish, Israeli, and Spanish authors are also included. This book consists of seventeen chapters. Again we come across two chapters on interventions and one on corporate culture. But in addition, several new topics are introduced in this review book. There are two chapters on the work-family balance, and one each on leadership, burnout, (personal resources and) engagement, social support, aggression, safety climate, and internet addiction.

Since the banking crisis and the economic recession, I was very interested in reading the review by Sinclair and colleagues on economic stress and employee well-being. The authors argue that economic issues ought to be at the forefront of attention in OHP research. I could not agree more. They distinguish between antecedents and moderators of economic stress at individual, organizational, and macroeconomic level. In addition they discuss intervention types to prevent economic stress. Finally, the authors suggest a number of future research directions that can contribute to improved theory. To make OHP more relevant for political decision-makers, I hope that economic matters – not only stress but also norms and values of managers and employees in the financial sector – will get more attention.

The chapters on the effects of different types of leadership on health by Theorell and colleagues and on the neglected employees (low-qualified workers) by Busch et al open new perspectives on two areas in the field of OHP that need more attention. Another interesting review chapter is that of Karanika-Murray who deals with curvilinear relations between work and health. She starts with highlighting the limitations of the linearity assumption in examinations of the relation between work characteristics and health and well-being. The chapter provides an overview of the available theoretical models that incorporate the possibility of curvilinear effect. Conflicting findings need future examinations, she concludes.

Though, as may be expected, some chapters are stronger as a review than others, this first volume of a series on contemporary OHP by Nottingham University and Wiley-Blackwell is a commendable initiative.

Peter Smulders
TNO Work & Employment,
Hoofddorp, Netherlands