THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT
AND SELECTION

BOOK REVIEW

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Book information


1.2. Review

The present international handbook is a distinguished work which provides at academic level the main and new research framework for employee selection and assessment. At the same time, the above mentioned scholarly book becomes a vital tool, both for researchers and practitioners in the field, in exploring the immense area of human resources expertise, underlining the main current questions and new research directions. The handbook addresses the industrial/organizational psychology domain and the human resources field of expertise.

Today, the organizational change and development reaches out new boundaries while the dynamic process on human resources management and policies imports new approaches and perspectives. From this point of view, all of these critical factors impose new perspectives from those dealing with the personnel area, both in research and practice, a close study on the associations with employee performance and potential.
The handbook comprises 9 theoretical and practical parts, with a total of 41 themes which analyse and explore a wide variety of organizational subjects from employment evaluation and testing, industrial and organizational psychology, personnel selection and policies, methods and selection of tests, experimental designs and approaches in personnel psychology; evaluation of individual differences, job performance and analysis. Moreover, the content of this book highlights the newly subjects in personnel approaches, upon the web-based assessments, social networking and new global boundaries of the organizations.

The authors of the topics inside the present handbook provide expertise and analysis both from academic and private sector for the following chapters: (1) introduction and overview; (2) historical and social context of selection and the nature of individual differences; (3) Research strategies; (4) Individual difference constructs; (5) Measures of predictor constructs; (6) Performance and outcomes assessment; (7) Societal and organizational constraints on selection; (8) Implementation and sustainability of selection systems; (9) Conclusions and future directions.

The style of presentation addresses the academic field as well as the practitioners’ area of work, offering access to a wide variety of theories, paradigms, examples of good practices and procedures, methods, analysis and quality reports for the personnel domain of expertise, favouring in this manner a good understanding, both theoretical and practical.

The handbook edition of Neal Schmitt includes an introductory overview of the main researchers and guidelines in personnel psychology. The work comprises also a closing chapter, which discusses the main perspectives towards personnel evaluation and selection, with a true guide for future challenges and directions of research in personnel management and policies.

The present handbook follows the publishing line in the Book Series in Oxford library of psychology, focusing on occupational and employment testing, industrial and organizational psychology, with an aim for different subjects and areas of professional and research psychology.

Ph.D. Professor (Emeritus) Neal Schmitt is a Distinguished University Professor of Psychology and Management at Michigan State University. He is the author of six books focusing on personnel selection and research methods, with over 160 peer-reviewed papers and numerous articles published in journals such as Personnel Psychology, Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance and the Academy of Management Journal.

His interests focus on the research topics such as personnel selection and test validation, performance appraisal, job attitudes and decision making. Professor Schmitt provided expertise as a consultant to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, SOHIO, Ford Motor Company, Haworth, Marathon, National Institute of Occupation Safety and Health.
Moreover, he is the past editor of the Journal of Applied Psychology and also an active member of the Academy of Management, the American Psychological Association and the Society of Organizational Behaviour.

At academic level, professor Schmitt’s research interest focused also on academic admissions, where he developed procedures to assess college students’ ability and motivation in non-cognitive domains, as predictors to their success in college. Moreover, he focused on construct and predictive validity of different measures and their impact on users, subjects and institutions in relation with the decision making process.

The first part (Part I), “Introduction and overview” (Neal Schmitt), puts into discussion the conceptual outline of the Handbook of Assessment and Selection, describing each part of the present book, its position inside the research framework and area of interest, the main developments for the personnel psychology and future trends to come.

The second part (Part II) on “Historical and social context of selection and the nature of individual differences” contain topics such as “A history of personnel selection and assessment” (Andrew J. Vinchur and Laura L. Koppes Bryan), “Individual differences” (Kevin R. Murphy), “The social and organizational context of personnel selection” (Robert E. Ployhart and Benjamin Schneider) and “Employee recruitment: Current knowledge and suggestions for future research” (James A. Breaugh). This part debates upon the historical background of employee selection and the major research results upon assessment, organization procedures and performance in the past.

Part three (Part III) – “Research strategies” with the topics “The concept of validity and the process of validation” (Paul R. Sackett, Dan J. Putka and Rodney A. McClay), “Job analysis for knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics, predictor measures, and performance outcomes” (Michael T. Brannick, Adrienne Cadle and Edward L. Levine), “Organizational strategy and staffing” (John P. Hausknecht and Patrick M. Wright), “Meta-analysis as a validity summary tool” (George C. Banks and Michael A. McDaniel), highlights the major research strategies for employee selection, the scientific procedures and evidence, the job analysis and study, the validation basis all in relation with the success of a business.

Part four (Part IV) – “Individual difference constructs”, contains themes such as “Cognitive abilities” (Deniz S. Ones, Stephan Dilchert and Chockalingam Viswesvaran), “Nature and use of personality in selection” (Murray R. Barrick and Michael K. Mount), “Person–environment fit in the selection process” (Cheri Ostroff and Yujie Zhan), “The assessment of physical capabilities in the workplace” (Todd A. Baker and Deborah L. Gebhardt), “Using composite predictors in personnel selection” (Kate Hattrup), which describe and discuss in detail the individual differences at work in relation with the job performance and personality dimensions, when confronted with selection situations and assessment. The subject also follows task improvement, job performance and diversity at work.


The authors of this section analyze the main features, changes and behaviours inside the applicant area, seen as an active element in the selection process. Moreover the changes in the organizational behaviour and research are discussed as well as the multi-level evaluation procedures (e.g. individual, group, organization etc.). The section highlights also the legal constraints upon the selection process from a legislation perspective, time as an influencing factor on the predictor-criterion relation, the cultural differences across the world and their impact on the selection steps, the main methods for decision making processes and the issues of contingent or temporary work opportunities.

As for part eight (Part VIII) – “Implementation and sustainability of selection systems”, the section presents the following topics “Implementation issues in employee selection testing” (Nancy T. Tippins), “The life cycle of successful selection programs” (Jerard Kehoe, Steven Brown and Calvin C. Hoffman), debates upon the features of a selection program and process, taking into discussion the major challenges, difficulties and details of generating and developing such a framework.

The last part (Part IX) – “Conclusions and future directions”, highlights the major future directions for research and practice in the personnel area of expertise, putting to question also the next in line systems for employee selection and assessment.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The handbook presents some of the most challenging and intriguing themes of the personnel psychology of the past, present and future, with a strong scientific basis, putting into analysis a wide collection of research methods, paradigms and perspectives on this matter. Moreover, case studies and exceptions are also confronted, as subjects to discussion, completed by a wide range of relevant examples.

The 41 topics of this academic research handbook cover the major themes in personnel psychology, presenting the most important research and practice lines around employee selection and assessment matters, in an easy accessible reader view, combining the theoretical frame with the rigorous structure of practical applications and procedures related to selection programs.

Each of the well-known authors presents an individual manner of analyze, yet the final product being a complex and structured content.

Thus, the present handbook follows on a complete logical and challenging structure the most important findings concerning selection inside the organizational field of expertise, putting them to the test and configuring the future directions for researchers and practitioners to develop on these specific issues.

The subjects of this handbook connect into a high standard academic paper but at the same time they are able to be read as standalone academic subjects. From this
perspective the paper addresses the fundamentals of organizational and personnel psychology, human resources management, business performance, job development and performance.

In this light of things, the handbook is an important and vital “survival kit” for the challenges to come in the selection area, providing the instruments and guidelines needed for a good and efficient management inside organizations.

REFERENCES


