CURRENT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RESEARCH AND THE PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT**


A symposium “intended to provide some perspectives for an evaluation . . .” The four parts of the volume have the following titles: “Scholars and Practitioners: the Human Relations Movement,” “The Urban-Industrial Setting: Human Relations in Context,” “Industrial Organizations: Theory and Research,” and “Trade Unions.” Most of the contributors are from academic circles, but labor and management are also represented among them.


Focuses on recent university and private industry research projects of significant use in “attaining maximum profit from work teams . . .” In addition to project summaries, the writer comments on the climate in which such personnel research can grow.


A critical appraisal of the most significant research publications in the following areas: “Union Government and Union Leadership,” “Collective Bargaining,” “Wage Determination in Theory and Practice,” “The Economic Effects of Unionism,” “Employee Benefit Plans,” and “The Labor Movement Abroad.”

*Compiled by Arthur B. Shostak.
**Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.

Suggests new attention to the union as a challenger and to management as a respondent in industry. Reviews past research and finds little of it applicable. Discusses research which should be carried on both inside and outside of industry.


An historical review, analysis, and evaluation of research in industrial and labor relations. Concludes that “the challenge of research in union-management relations has never been more attractive and opportune. We stand at the threshold, not the climax, of developing, if not a “science”, at least a well-organized body of knowledge and theory.”


Reports on a 1952 survey of six government agencies and 54 industrial concerns. Specific attention is paid to on-going research projects, or the lack of them, in personnel selection and classification, training programs, evaluation of employee performance, job evaluation, safety programs, and morale. “Perhaps the most encouraging result of the survey,” the authors conclude, “was that many of the companies were either planning or already engaged in personnel research.”


Brief descriptions of the four industry research projects considered most significant in a recent American Management Association survey. Those chosen were: (1) the University of Michigan Survey Research Center's studies of the relationship among productivity, morale, and supervision; (2) the studies at Yale on the human aspects of technology and on organizational theory and problems; (3) William Foote Whyte's Cornell studies of the psychology of groups, and (4) the leadership studies under way at Ohio State University.

Describes personnel research projects under way in 1957 in 177 research organizations in the United States and Canada. While primarily concerned with problems of public service employment, the material has implications of broader scope. A helpful annotated bibliography is included.


Considers from the management point of view the values and limitations of five categories of research: generation of primary or basic data, library and re-compilation studies, personnel research, interpersonnel and inter-group relationship studies, and laboratory studies. Criticizes pedantry in reporting research and cautions against research that is “too long, too wordy, and too late.”

Industrial Relations Research Association. Catalog of current industrial relations research. Madison 6, Wis. (Sterling Hall). 1959. 53 pp. 50 cents, members; $1.00, non-members.


A critical review of human relations theory. Warns that “unless major developments take place, human relations, like scientific management, may be reaching a dead end.” Counsels continued attention to the application to industry of concepts and research in the social sciences and abandonment of a current mystical, cultist trend in human relations.


Includes the following papers, each of which outlines and evaluates current research findings; “Questioning Old Theories” and “Toward Improving Organizational Life,” by Rensis Likert; “People and Organization,” by Chris Argyris; “A Behavioral Theory of Decision Making,” by James March; and “Wider Participation in Management,” by Herbert Shepard.

Concerned with the resistances from businessmen encountered by the UCLA Human Relations Research Group when searching for suitable industrial organizations for social research. Concludes with a plea for further and increased cooperation, since when “science learns more about what really happens when human beings join in productive endeavors, managers will have less and less reason to criticize university research for being ‘too theoretical’.”


Advises application of the new science of mathematical programing to various areas of personnel work and describes such “frontier” research currently undertaken by one business concern in health insurance, turnover, safety, and counseling.


Assesses the present status of organization research, details the problems researchers face, and calls for more organization research. The writer counsels against a “continued outpouring of dogmatic writing.”


Among “the more significant frontiers of personnel research,” the writer mentions studies of the emotional problems of workers, plant-community relations, more clearly defined status and recognition of supervisors, and the role of the personnel officer. Attention is called to certain universities now identified with “classical” personnel research areas.


The author draws upon the findings of numerous significant research studies and upon his own experience and observation in search of answers to the following questions: “To what extent can men, through will and skill, build the kind of human relations they desire in organizations?...” “What are the major concepts that we need to use in analyzing the behavior of men in organizations, and how do these concepts relate to each other?”... “How do we relate research to action?”