Work Measurement: Some Research Studies

Studies in Management

General Editor: SAMUEL EILON, D.SC (ENG.), PH.D, D.I.C, M.I.MECH.E, M.I.PROD.E
Professor of Industrial and Management Engineering, Imperial College, London

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Preface

In the British Standard *Glossary of Terms in Work Study*,¹ work measurement is defined as 'the application of techniques designed to establish the time for a *qualified worker* to carry out a specified *job* at a defined level of performance'.

This present volume is concerned mainly, but not exclusively, with such techniques; some reference is also made to sampling and other techniques, which may be applied to non-productive periods as well as to productive activity and to vigilance tasks which can be measured more appropriately in terms of mental work load than in terms of the time occupied by visible movements.

In modern productive industry, the practice of work measurement is not only of vital importance, it is also, unfortunately, highly controversial. Work measurement is necessary in order to provide the data required for effective production planning, for estimating costs in advance of production, for cost control purposes and as a basis for worker remuneration where payment by results schemes operate. The controversy which is associated with much work measurement practice may be attributed, in part, to the inadequacy or misapplication of techniques and, in part, to the preoccupation of many work measurement practitioners with financial incentive schemes. Not until the practitioners are regarded as the custodians of the time standards, and are removed from the area of bickering about wage rates, is it likely that any substantial improvement in standards of practice will be achieved.

This volume is not concerned, primarily, with this latter problem. It is concerned with research on work and on techniques of measuring work undertaken in most cases with the object of improving the techniques and their application. For the most part, this research has had, as yet, little impact on industrial practice. This may be due to the conservatism or vested interests of those employing traditional techniques found acceptable over many years of industrial experience, but it may also be due to lack of knowledge of the researches and of their practical implications. It

is with the object of presenting a review of work measurement research with which the author has been associated, paying particular attention to some of the implications for industrial practice, that this book has been written.

N. A. DUDLEY

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