Chapter 67

The Relationship between the Fulfillment of the IT Professional's Psychological Contract and their Organizational Citizenship and Innovative Work Behaviors

Sandra K. Newton
Sonoma State University, USA

Linda I. Nowak
Sonoma State University, USA

J. Ellis Blanton
University of South Florida, USA

ABSTRACT

Little is known about the relationship between of the level of fulfillment of the IT professional's psychological contract and their innovative work and organizational citizenship behaviors. Using psychological contract and social information processing theories, this study proposes to answer the research question: What is the relationship between the level of fulfillment of the IT professionals' psychological contract and their organizational citizenship and innovative work behaviors? Survey data were collected from 209 IT professionals using group-administered paper and on-line surveys. Results show positive relationships with the level of fulfillment of the IT professional's psychological contract and their innovative work behavior, as well as four of their organizational citizenship behaviors, specifically loyalty, advocacy participation, obedience, and functional participation. Extending the body of knowledge, the dimensional approach of the psychological contract was used resulting in the scope, focus, and tangibility dimensions being the most significant predictors of the organizational behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Management continues to view information technology (IT) professionals as human capital, and use this resource to maximize organizational effectiveness, enhance performance, and maximize organizational goals, all while perhaps cutting IT costs (Josefek Jr. & Kauffman, 2003). In coordination with these strategic goals, IT departments are expected to be leaner, yet remain multi-talented and innovative (Koch, 2006). Pring (2003) calls attention to the fact that organizations still need innovation and value delivered from their IT professionals, even when organizations are focusing on cost management issues, such as IT service providers. And while organizational effectiveness is affected by the productivity and performance of employees, there are other work behaviors beyond the dependable role performance that are also sought after by management. Two such extra-role behaviors are innovative work and organizational citizenship.

Research and practitioner literature stress the importance of innovation and organizational citizenship in IT professionals. While an IT professional's job may have an implicit degree of creativity and innovation required, organizations may have difficulty monitoring creativity and innovation objectively. Koch (2006) states that IT departments continue to need IT professionals who have not only in-depth technology knowledge, but can also create new products and capabilities. Innovative work may also be an acknowledged element to the job, as evidenced by one IT professional who was quoted saying, "…it's all about solving problems of the business…and there's always something new to learn" (Murphy, 2005). According to CIO Magazine, even when organizations are faced with cost cutting mandates, chief information officers (CIO) are still charged with emphasizing innovation and creating competitive advantage (Varon, 2005). In fact, 65 percent of the CIOs surveyed believe that "bringing ideas for IT-enabled business innovation to the table

is a significant or dominant aspect of their roles" (Varon, 2005).

Organizational citizenship continues to be seen as a vital component to organizational effectiveness. Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Blume (2009) found organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) is related to a variety of organizational-level outcomes including productivity, efficiency, reduced costs, customer satisfaction, and turnover. In Ang and Slaughter's (2001) research specific to IT professionals, contract workers exhibit lower extra-role (citizenship) behaviors than permanent systems developers, and supervisors evaluate a contract workers loyalty and obedience lower than permanent systems developers. Moore and Love (2005) find differences by job category, in that levels of organizational citizenship behaviors are lower in the IT employees than the employees from work areas other than IT.

The current IT job market complicates this situation as organizations consider management strategies to keep their IT professionals engaged, productive, appreciated, and on the job, or lose them to another company (McGee, 2005; Motti, 2006). The psychological contract, the employee-employer relationship with respect to perceived obligations to each, has been theorized to unite the employee with their organization and regulate their behaviors (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). One online poll found that 69 percent of the IT professionals surveyed were looking for a new employment position, and the number one reason given was that they did not like the current employers' management or culture (McGee, 2005). Research shows that when the employee's psychological contract is breached or violated, it can lower job satisfaction (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), organizational commitment (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Suazo, Turnley, & Mai-Dalton, 2005), and organizational citizenship behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995), and increase intentions to quit (Suazo, 2009).

Related Content

Improving Virtual Teams through Swift Structure

Daphna Shwarts-Asher, Niv Ahituvand Dalia Etzion (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM (pp. 510-517).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/improving-virtual-teams-through-swift/13275

Human Resources Outsourcing Strategies

Veronique Guillouxand Michel Kalika (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM (pp. 477-481).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/human-resources-outsourcing-strategies/13270

Using Integrative Development to Create a Coaching Culture in a Professional Services Firm

David B. Drake (2019). *Evidence-Based Initiatives for Organizational Change and Development (pp. 506-514).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-integrative-development-to-create-a-coaching-culture-in-a-professional-services-firm/225177

Supporting Collaboration with Trust Virtual Organization

Aizhong Lin, Erik Vullingsand James Dalziel (2008). *Handbook of Research on Virtual Workplaces and the New Nature of Business Practices (pp. 473-485).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/supporting-collaboration-trust-virtual-organization/21916

Using People-CMM for Diminishing Resistance to ITIL

Nelson Gama, Raúl Nunes da Silvaand Miguel Mira da Silva (2013). *Enhancing the Modern Organization through Information Technology Professionals: Research, Studies, and Techniques (pp. 83-98).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-people-cmm-diminishing-resistance/72522