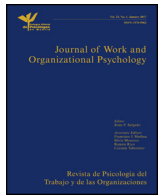




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When and which employees feel obliged: A personality perspective of how organizational identification develops

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the indirect effect of interpersonal and informational justice on organizational identification through psychological contract fulfillment across different levels of equity sensitivity. The data were collected using self-reported measures from 656 permanent employees working in five commercial banks in Pakistan. The statistical results of the study confirmed that the indirect effect of interpersonal and informational justice on organizational identification through psychological contract fulfillment is significant. However, the statistical results of the study also demonstrated that the indirect effect of interpersonal and informational justice does not differ across different levels of equity sensitivity. This study offers some implications for managers to maintain an effective employment relationship with the employees inside the organizations.

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Cuándo están agradecidos los empleados y a qué aspectos: el desarrollo de la identificación con la organización desde la perspectiva de la personalidad

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza el efecto indirecto de la justicia interpersonal e informativa en la identificación con la organización a través del cumplimiento del contrato psicológico en los diferentes niveles de sensibilidad a la equidad. Por medio de medidas de autoinforme se recogieron datos de 656 empleados fijos de cinco bancos comerciales de Paquistán. Los resultados estadísticos del estudio confirman que es significativo el efecto indirecto de la justicia interpersonal e informativa en la identificación con la organización a través del cumplimiento del contrato psicológico. No obstante, dichos resultados demuestran también que el efecto indirecto de la justicia interpersonal e informativa no es distinto en los distintos niveles de sensibilidad a la equidad. El estudio propone algunas implicaciones para que los directivos mantengan una relación eficaz de empleo con los empleados en el seno de las organizaciones.

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Organizational identification is a cohesive force for maintaining the relationship between employee and employer in today's increasingly complex and boundaryless organizations (Epitropaki, 2013). The research has revealed that the employees having a

strong perception of organizational identification are highly likely to exhibit positive organizationally desired behaviors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Smidts, Pruyn, & Riel, 2001). Unfortunately, the increasing organizational reliance on temporary workers, resulting from some factors, including globalization, technological advancements, and the recent financial crisis, has significantly affected employee's perceptions of organizational identification (Epitropaki, 2013; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Moreover, the declining employee benefits (e.g., job security, rewards, and promotion)

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are continuously challenging their organizational identification. Consequently, employees have started realizing that employers have failed to fulfill their obligations (Epitropaki, 2013). Previous research has shown that such employee perceptions result in low levels of employee performance (Turnley & Feldman, 1999), trust (Robinson, 1996), commitment (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000), employee engagement and citizenship behavior (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002), and organizational identification (Epitropaki, 2013) and produce high turnover intentions (Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004).

There is a mutual consensus among the scholars of the employment relationship discipline that the deteriorating perceptions of employee's organizational identification can be repaired by fulfilling the psychological contract of the employees. Particularly, they believe that the employees' tendency to identify with their organizations is highly reliant on the tendency of the employer to fulfill the psychological contract (PC). Thus, the organizational scholars (Masterson & Stamper, 2003; Rousseau, 1998) have conducted research to identify mechanisms for maintaining the employment relationship, particularly studying the relationship between psychological contract and organizational identification. Masterson and Stamper (2003) proposed a model of perceived organizational membership framework and demonstrated that psychological contract and organizational identification are the two sub-dimensions of this framework. They recommended advancing research on the relationship between sub-dimensions of this framework by considering the contextual variables. Recently, Epitropaki (2013) investigated the interrelationship between psychological contract breach and organizational identification by considering procedural justice as a contextual variable. The psychological contract breach and psychological contract fulfillment are two conceptually different variables on a fulfillment-breach continuum (Bal, Chiaburu, & Diaz, 2011; Conway, Guest, & Trenberth, 2011); yet, psychological contract breach has different effects on employee outcomes as compared to psychological contract fulfillment (Conway et al., 2011). Previous research has shown various positive outcomes of psychological contract fulfillment, like affective commitment and in-role and extra-role performance (Chen, Tsui, & Zhong, 2008; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Robinson et al., 1994; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Although the recent stream of research is focusing more on the negative aspects of perceived organizational membership, yet there is still a need to examine the extent to which an organizational focus on positive aspects of perceived organizational membership strengthens the employment relationship. This is more interesting for a better explanation of the employment relationship mechanisms to incorporate the effect of some contextual variables whilst investigating the relationship of psychological contract fulfillment with other sub-dimensions of perceived organizational membership framework. The objective of the current study is to extend the research on the interrelationship between different sub-dimensions of perceived organizational membership framework by investigating the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organization identification. Moreover, this study has considered organizational justice as a contextual variable of the interrelationship between psychological contract fulfillment and organizational identification. The two dimensions of organizational justice, i.e., interpersonal and informational justice, explain a significant proportion of justice perceptions of an employee as compared to the procedural and distributive justice (Mikula, Petrik, & Tanzer, 1990). Moreover, interpersonal and informational justice may also have a significant effect on reducing the risks associated with various current organizational issues like downsizing (Molinsky & Margolis, 2006). Thus, we investigated the indirect effect of interpersonal and informational justice on organizational identification through psychological contract fulfillment.

Since individual differences also affect the employment relationship (Ho, Weingart & Rousseau, 2004; Kickul & Lester, 2001; Raja et al., 2004), we have also proposed equity sensitivity as an individual difference in the overall indirect effect of interpersonal and informational justice on organizational identification through the psychological contract fulfillment. Equity sensitivity is an individual difference explained by the equity theory that represents an individual's unique sensitivity to equity which leads individual's reactions to the perceived inequity (King, Miles, & Day, 1993). The theoretical support for the study is obtained from the perceived organizational membership framework (Masterson & Stamper, 2003), cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1979), the social identity view of dissonance theory (McKimmie et al., 2003), and the equity theory (Adam, 1965). The forthcoming section of the study discusses the theoretical foundation of hypotheses.

Theory and Hypotheses

Organizational Justice and Psychological Contract Fulfillment

Organizational justice is one of the factors affecting employee's perception of psychological contract (Epitropaki, 2013; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Tekleab, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2005). Organizational justice refers to employee's perception of fairness within an organization (Greenberg, 1990). Organizational justice communicates the message of respect and dignity to employees, that makes them feel proud to be members of a particular organization (Tyler & Blader, 2003; Epitropaki, 2013). Four different dimensions of organizational justice include procedural justice, distributive justice, and interpersonal and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1993). The effect of organizational justice on the psychological contract remained the key focus of existing research on employment relationship. For instance, Shore and Tetrick (1994) examined the effect of distributive and interactional justice on the transactional and relational psychological contract; Tekleab et al. (2005) examined the impact of procedural justice and interactional justice on the psychological contract violation; and Epitropaki (2013) investigated the effect of procedural justice on the psychological contract breach. However, the impact of interpersonal and informational justice on the psychological contract fulfillment remained overlooked. We intend to fill this void by investigating the impact of interpersonal and informational justice on psychological contract fulfillment.

Interpersonal justice is the degree to which people are treated with politeness, respect, and dignity during the implementation of procedures in a particular organization, while informational justice is the degree to which people receive information and explanation about how certain procedures are implemented and outcomes are distributed in the organization (Colquitt, 2001; Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Greenberg, 1990). Fair treatment represents interpersonal justice and fair communication represents informational justice and the level of both interpersonal and informational justice significantly affect the employment relationship (Cropanzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002; Greenberg, 1990; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Siegel, Christian, Garza, & Ellis, 2012; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993). Interpersonal and informational justice is also an important input for employees to assess the quality of their relationship with their organization (Masterson et al., 2000).

In various situations, events, actions, and perceptions are more critical in psychological contracts as compared to formal procedures; therefore, fair interpersonal treatment is one of the most important antecedents of psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Supervisors are organizational representatives

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