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Assessing job self-efficacy and organizational commitment considering a mediating role of information asymmetry

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Abstract

This study establishes a model by drawing from key postulates and findings under information asymmetry to explain the formation of organization commitment and job self-efficacy. In the proposed model, organizational commitment and job self-efficacy are influenced indirectly by social support, knowledge creation, and information intensity via the mediation of decision-making quality and perceived opportunism. Knowledge creation is influenced directly by both social support and information intensity. Empirical testing of this model, by investigating personnel from firms in one of Taiwan's well-known industrial zones, confirms the applicability of information asymmetry in understanding employees' organizational commitment and job self-efficacy. The test results indicate that all the model paths except one (linking perceived opportunism and job self-efficacy) are significant. Finally, the research provides managerial implications and limitations.

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1. Introduction

The issue of organizational commitment continues to receive attention from both practitioners and researchers in organizational behavior research (e.g., Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005; van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Organizational commitment is seen as individuals' attachment to or identification with their organization (Bartlett, 2002). Nevertheless, organizational commitment can be also considered an emotional response to a positive appraisal of the work environment (Testa, 2001). Such an emotional response may be viewed as an attachment, especially when the individuals believe strongly in the values and goals of an organization or display a strong desire to maintain their membership in the organization.

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In addition to organizational commitment, efficacy beliefs are another important issue in organizational behavior research. Self-efficacy perceptions, concerning self-regulatory behaviors, affect the goals people set, the strategies people choose, the effort people extend, and the perseverance people show (Bandura, 1991). Job self-efficacy of business organizational members is defined as employees' judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of organizational performance (Mosley, Boyar, Carson, & Pearson, 2008). Job self-efficacy is as important as organizational commitment, because they are both critical to great performance (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). For example, previous research indicates that job self-efficacy is a cognitive self-appraisal of the ability to perform well in individuals' job, and thus the job self-efficacy positively relates to psychological and physical health and job performance at the end of workers' work terms (Lubbers, Loughlin, & Zweig, 2005).

A critical consideration in influencing individuals' job self-efficacy and organizational commitment is the existence of informational asymmetries in business organizations. Information asymmetry in an organization is defined as the difference between the information possessed by different employees of the organizations. More specifically, information asymmetry is considered a situation in which one party in a business organization has more or better information than the other. This phenomenon often occurs in the organization where managers know more than employees, even if the reverse may happen as well (e.g., Bradford, 1987). Information asymmetry often creates an imbalance of power in the organization which can substantially cause the business operations to go awry. Information asymmetry adds a sense of uncertainty in an organization, which makes the information asymmetry difficult and costly for employees to ascertain their actions (e.g., making the right decisions), leading to both adverse selection and moral hazard (Nayyar, 1990). Whereas some theories based on individual behavior in organizations highlight some important benefits (e.g., improved organizational commitment, job self-efficacy, etc.) from a participative aspect (Sivaramakrishnan, 1994), information asymmetry helps understand the benefits from an aspect of information economics.

This study differs from previous research in at least two important ways. First, previous research often sees job self-efficacy as an antecedent to influence employees' behavioral outcomes (e.g., performance) without understanding how such self-efficacy is formed. For instance, a majority of previous studies have focused on the importance of self-efficacy for predicting learning achievement (Zimmerman, 2000), memory performance (Bandura, 1993), health (Lubbers et al., 2005), employment outcome (Moynihan, Roehling, LePine, & Boswell, 2003), job satisfaction (Bradley & Roberts, 2004), burnout (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008), and so on. This study is a critical complementary research that explores the formation of job self-efficacy and thus shows an efficient direction for management to boost employees' job self-efficacy.

Second, even though the issue of organizational commitment has been frequently discussed in previous literature from various aspects, few have discussed the organizational commitment from the aspect of information and knowledge (e.g., information intensity and knowledge creation) based on information asymmetry. Previous literature implies that organizational commitment is determined mainly by social-interaction between the firm and its employees (e.g., information exchange) (Martin, 2008). Thus, examining the applicability of information asymmetry in detecting organizational commitment in business organizations is a necessary

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