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Editorial

Ute Schmidt-Brasse, Angela Carter

Dear Colleagues,

The summer holiday season is getting closer and you may already be dreaming of sandy beaches, high mountains, your cosy terrace or balcony Time to look out for something to read, so here is EWOPinPractice No. 2! This issue is not too voluminous as you will see – perhaps just the right thing to print out and take with you.

What will you find? In the first article, Thomas Calvard and colleagues from the University of Sheffield, U.K. offer a case study looking at the psychological contracts of contingent workers. He examines work behaviour and perspective-taking and offers advice of how to best engage employees.

Delia Vîrgă from Romania, in the second contribution, draws our attention to the fact that dynamic changes in the economy and workforce call for new Human Resource strategies with regard to recruitment and selection of employees as well as training interventions. High adaptive potential for change both at the level of task and the organization is needed.

Finally, as a novelty you will find a review by Angela Carter on a book by Meg Bond using the metaphor of a chemical reaction to describe a concrete hands-on series of interventions striving to promote diversity in a company.

Like last time, we encourage you to:

1. Comment, critique, follow-up the articles presented in this issue
2. Send us your feedback on EWOPinPractice – what you like, what you dislike, what creative idea you have ...
3. Contribute a practice-related paper yourself or stimulate a colleague to do so in order to enhance European experience and knowledge exchange and thus improve applied Work and Organisational Psychology.

We are looking forward to your communication! Deadline for No. 3 is October 31, 2008.

Have an enjoyable, recreating, and inspiring summer!



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A tenuous link: Psychological contracts and perspective-taking between a promotion agency and its workers

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationships between employees' psychological contract perceptions, perspective-taking between employees and employers, and employees' responses to declining job satisfaction (e.g., absenteeism). Fifteen employees of a promotion agency participated in semi-structured telephone interviews, and their comments were explored qualitatively using template analysis. Employees' work behaviour was related to their perceptions of employers' psychological contract violation and the perspective-taking attempted by both parties. Implications for employment relationships and contingent workers are discussed.

Introduction

Theoretical Background

Just over ten years ago, employees' individual beliefs about their exchanges with their organization was recognised in research as a 'psychological contract' (Rousseau, 1995). As the world of work changes, so too do the connotations of this psychological contract. Specifically, the term can also refer to the move to a 'new deal' in employment, characterized by less security, more flexible career moves and an upsurge in temporary contractual work (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). Newer forms of work are also often carried out remotely, with an increasing reliance on information and communication technologies (ICT) to ensure organizational control and aligned employee interests (Limburg & Jackson, 2007). Promotion campaign work is one example of this type of work where people can earn money flexibly and are employed on an "as needed" basis.

When employees become dissatisfied with the terms of their employment, several responses are possible (Farrell, 1983; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers & Mainous, 1988). *Job dissatisfaction* has been explored through the well-established framework of the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect (EVLN) typology (Farrell, 1983). These dissatisfied responses are defined as: a) *Exit*: to quit or search for a new job; b) *Voice*: to appeal or make constructive suggestions; c) *Loyalty*: sustain their work efforts and hope that conditions will improve; or d) *Neglect*: behave with laxity or disregard.

EVLN responses are made when employees believe their psychological contracts are being violated. Specifically, employees that perceive higher levels of contract violation are found to be more likely to attempt to exit their job, to be neglectful, less loyal or to voice displeasure to management (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Employees are especially likely to exit when there are attractive alternatives, insufficient justifications for the violation, and they perceive the decision-making processes to be unfair (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). In promotion work, a payment or work difficulty on one campaign, combined with many alternative companies to favour next time, may often evoke responses of exit and/or neglect.

For an employment relationship undermined by dissatisfaction or violation, voice can be regarded as the most desirable response from workers. In the EVLN typology, voice is high on both active and constructive dimensions, whereas absenteeism, lateness, misuse of work time can be passive or destructive (Farrell, 1983). Contract perceptions such as sensemaking, comparison and interpretation mediate between dissatisfaction and deciding which action (EVLN) to take (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Specifically, employees compare their contributions against the company's gestures, and also try to determine whether the company is deliberately *renegeing* on a deal, or if there is simply innocuous *incongruence* or misunderstanding (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Employees in their subjectivity are somewhat biased toward taking the company's actions as intentional renegeing. This stems from the *fundamental attribution error*, a biased tendency to explain other's actions in terms of their personal traits, rather than their situation (Ross & Ward, 1996). Promotion workers, for example, may automatically label the company as incompetent for waylaying advertising materials, rather than consider alternative situational explanations such as courier breakdown or accident – which are beyond the company's control.

Perspective-taking is defined as the ability to understand the thoughts, feelings and motives of another party's viewpoint (Galinsky, 2002; Galinsky, Ku & Wang, 2005; Parker, Atkins & Axtell, 2008). At work, higher levels of perspective-taking relate to greater helping, extra-role performance, call-centre customer service, and more constructive perceptions of team conflicts (Axtell, Parker, Holman & Totterdell, 2007; Parker & Axtell, 2001; Sessa, 1996).

Often individual employees are likely to use their own predicament as an egocentric anchor, where it takes cognitive effort to serially adjust away from it and take another's viewpoint (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven & Gilovich, 2004). For example, when a promotion worker is uninformed and dissatisfied about a product or promotions venue, they will see their own situation clearly but often fail to account for others or may evaluate their viewpoints less favourably.

Fortunately, perspective-taking can be promoted via information sharing, personal contact and explicitly imagining what another party's thoughts, feelings and intentions are likely to be (Davis, Conklin, Smith & Luce, 1996; Malle, Knobe & Nelson, 2007). Perspective-taking has been shown to reverse the fundamental attribution error (Regan & Totten, 1975). Thus, it may follow that a worker can begin to take into account the organizational constraints surrounding a psychological contract, rather than just focusing on (and blaming) the characteristics of the organization.

Perspective-taking between employees and employers has received relatively little research attention. Yet promotion campaigns often take place far from any central workplace and require appreciative social thinking to solve problems across time and distance.

Figure 1: Proposed model of dissatisfaction, contract perceptions and perspective-taking

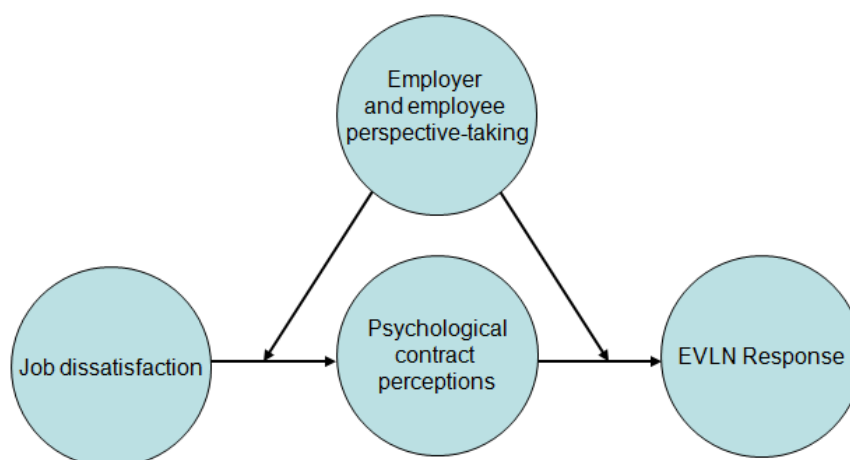


Figure 1 shows the proposed model for the current research. It was expected that perspective-taking efforts are related to the quality of dissatisfaction responses and psychological contract perceptions within an employment relationship. The perspective-taking efforts and abilities, or

lack thereof, evidenced by both employer and employee are important to a shared understanding.

Research Aims

This paper aims to build on and extend existing work on the psychological contract in three main ways. The current study and analysis a) addresses repeated calls for more research into initial contract development (Rousseau, 2001; Turnley & Feldman, 1999); b) considers contract dynamics under relevant, minimalistic 'new deal' conditions; and c) focuses on process (perspective-taking) as well as content, where previous research has been dominated largely by content alone (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). Overall, the research integrates ideas from job satisfaction and psychological contract research using perspective-taking as a social psychological lens.

Research Context

The present research is qualitative in nature, and was conducted in the distinctive setting of a promotions and marketing company in the UK. The company studied, referred to here as *Promote*, has the largest network of promotion staff in the field in the UK, spread across all 70 cities. They work across a wide array of industries and brand leaders within them, including many high-street retail stores, well known travel and leisure companies, internet sites, telecoms and technology products, international fashion brands, cosmetics companies and many food and drink products and services.

Promote acts as a resource for helping its clients plan their marketing strategies; offering staff and services to help with promotion campaigns involving leaflet distribution, field marketing (e.g., product sampling), experiential marketing (e.g., costumed characters), and non-traditional marketing (e.g., promotional vehicles).

The research aimed to explore some of the challenges Promote faced. One particular problem was absenteeism. Promotion workers who had agreed to take on a particular marketing campaign frequently tended to fail to show up on the day of the campaign. If there were multiple absentees, or a designated 'team leader' charged with bringing materials was absent, the consequences were sometimes severe enough for a whole campaign to fail to take place at all. Promote wanted to understand why some workers expressed dissatisfaction with neglect and exit responses (Farrell, 1983).

Employees are recruited via online application forms and may never meet anyone from Promote, instead being contacted and supported for work opportunities predominantly over the phone. Thus, the structure of Promote exemplifies that of a cloverleaf; a dwindling 'core' of operations staff at head office, weakly connected to a vast 'peripheral' network of contract workers (Handy, 1994).

The work done by Promote through its employees is strongly symptomatic of a 'new' employment deal. Large numbers of promotion staff are employed part-time and agree to work in small teams on marketing activities (i.e., leafleting and demonstrating for well-known brands, products and services). A minority of promotions workers remain with such companies for several years, usually where there are recurring or longer-running campaigns. However, most promotions workers view the role as opportunistic, and engage in it temporarily, alongside or as a prelude to more permanent forms of employment. People commonly work for more than one promotional company.

In sum, the context of promotion work is varied, unpredictable and often lacking in steady communication. Thus, it was an appropriate setting for testing theory on perspective-taking, psychological contract violation and job dissatisfaction responses.

Method

Sample and Design

Participants were selected from Promote's database. Given that the questions of interest were open-ended and answers not easily anticipated, we decided to employ a semi-structured interview design. Interviews were conducted by telephone to reach the distributed employees efficiently, and because telephone was the communication medium they were used to in this context.

The sample represented a broad range in age, gender, tenure, type of promotion campaign and absenteeism record. There were 15 participants in total; seven men and eight women. Twelve of the participants were listed as DNAs ("does not arrive") and thus had a track record of more than one illegitimate absence for Promote. The remaining three had no record of absenteeism. Workers ranged in experience from entirely new recruits to individuals who had worked on as many as 10 campaigns over a period of two to three years. Five of the participants had been designated 'team leaders' for their most recent campaigns. This entailed some extra responsibility of bringing materials and being nominally in charge of a group of two or three others. The main characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1, along with ID numbers, which have been used to reference quotes in the results section.

Every participant had been booked to a piece of promotion work for Promote within the three months prior to the study, regardless of whether the work had fallen through or not. Virtually everybody contacted agreed to participate and was working or had worked for other rival promotion companies.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

<i>ID Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>DNA (Does not arrive) (Y/N)</i>	<i>Number of Prior Campaigns with Promote</i>	<i>Length of Service (Months)</i>	<i>Team Leader (Y/N)</i>
1	M	Y	10-12	36	N
2	F	Y	1	2	N
3	M	N	3-4	6	N
4	F	Y	1	1	Y
5	M	N	2-3	6	Y
6	F	Y	5-6	12	Y
7	F	N	10	24	Y
8	M	Y	8	24	N
9	F	Y	2-3	6	N
10	M	Y	1	1	N
11	F	Y	1	2	N
12	F	Y	6	3	Y
13	F	Y	1-2	6	N
14	M	Y	6-7	18	N
15	M	Y	2-3	6	N

Interviews

Participants were led through a semi-structured interview schedule (see below). Interviews lasted between 15 and 25 minutes. The interviews were conducted flexibly and iteratively around four broad questions. The questions were sequenced so that relatively more sensitive questions (e.g., absenteeism) were asked later in the schedule, when participants would be likely to feel most comfortable disclosing such information. In some questions, the role of team leader was cued for those workers who had taken this position. These cues are indicated below enclosed in brackets. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants from the outset. The study was presented to participants as research into 'how to improve the working experiences of promotion workers and their agencies'. The interviews were conducted at such a pace that the first author was able to make detailed notes of the comments of the participants.

The four major questions were as follows:

1. When did you last work for this promotions company and what was the work you did for them? (What did you do as a team leader?) Have you worked for them (as a team leader) before?
2. Describe the experience of working for them. What did you like and what did you not like about the experience?
3. Have you or anyone else on the campaigns you have worked on, ever not turned up for work with this promotion company? Why was this? What was the impact on the piece of work; was this avoidable; what could be done?
4. What other promotional companies do you work for? Is their way of working different to this promotion company? (Can you be specific about team leader activities?) Which do you prefer and why?

It should also be noted that on the second question, further probes were used to help the participant elaborate where necessary. The participants were expected to cover issues of comprehension, feedback, pay practice and contact with the company.

Analysis

Participant comments were analysed by the first author using template analysis (King, 2004). The text of the comments was organised into a hierarchical structure of codes. The initial template simply consisted of four higher-order codes; one corresponding to each of the four major questions outlined above. Second-order codes were typically selected by frequency (i.e., a theme mentioned by three or more individuals), but exceptions were made for emphatic answers judged by the researcher to be subjectively important to the worker. The advantages of this technique are that it is flexible whilst forcing out a disciplined structure from the data and works well for capturing particular group perspectives in organizational contexts (King, 2004).

The analysis is best described as *phenomenological*. This means accounting for responses being shaped by the nature of the interview but also reflecting that the comments made by the respondents partly converge on some shared, valid representations of their wider experiences (King, 2004). Thus, a middle-ground is struck between the idiosyncrasy of the employees' interview experience and the objectivity of the coding to draw out a rich representation of the interactions between the participants and other targets (such as central employees, the organization).

Results

This section summarises promotion workers' comments, dealing with each of the four major questions in turn, and the most relevant aspects of the second-order codes. Particular attention is given to (dis)satisfaction responses, and reflection on the employer-employee interface, or psychological contract perceptions. The overall template or code structure is presented in Figure 2.

Question 1: Types of Work

Firstly, at the outset of the interview, participants were encouraged to talk about the basic work characteristics and types of promotion campaigns they had been involved with for Promote. Eight of the fifteen participants reported that they had mostly been involved with handing out flyers, magazines and promotional materials to the public. Locations cited were a variety of cities and towns across the UK. Ten participants typically reported having worked for Promote for one or two years, taking the odd promotion campaign every three months. Four of these ten reported having worked on six campaigns or more for the company, so some basic loyalty was expressed, but only by about a quarter of the sample. The remaining five had only worked on between one and three occasions.

Two participants commented on campaigns that were slightly more sophisticated demonstrations involving props, costumes and some degree of performance. Two others further mentioned cold canvassing surveys as slightly more detailed sales and marketing tasks.

Figure 2: Final promotion worker template

1) Work Type

1. Leafletting/flyering
2. Costumes
3. Surveys and questions
4. Cold canvassing
5. Promotions/demonstrations

2) The Experience

a) Good

1. Handy, convenient work
2. Enjoyable performance with props
3. Pay can be a good incentive (no emergency tax)
4. Freedom and relaxation elements

b) Bad

1. Solitary photo-taking tasks
2. Lack of props
3. Poor task specification (locale, materials etc.)
4. Pay misspecifications
5. No improvements or expertise feedback
6. Poor awareness of varied nature of jobs
7. Lack of due notice for cancellations
8. Unexpected burdens on the day
9. Lack of beginner support
10. Feelings of disrespect (mutual)

3) Reasons and Impact of DNAs (Do Not Arrive)

1. Geographical uncertainty or displeasure
2. Misspecifications may render work pointless/degraded
3. Doubts on ethical grounds, 'faceless' relationship
4. What is the job exactly?
5. Confused responsibility
6. Miscommunication
7. Other jobs took priority
8. Can't be bothered
9. Payback; resentment
10. 'Take the Mickey' attitude
11. 'Pull sick' for undesirable days

4) Competitors, Preferences and Suggestions

1. The way they pay
2. Choice or input into the job(s)
3. Professional, timely contact
4. Good scheduling and supplies
5. In-person support and geographical research
6. Recruitment of better clients
7. Varied tasks
8. Good teams reunited
9. Head office briefings
10. Thorough, friendly communication

Interestingly, in terms of initial psychological contract perceptions, three participants cited work that had fallen through or they had decided not to take, and two of these individuals were new to promotion work (ID 10 and ID 11). Examining the comments more closely, it appears that 'cold feet' and uncertainty may make novel employees dissatisfied and steer them towards an exit response.

The employer may need to empathise more and take the perspective of a worker more closely in these situations than was the case here. For example, one worker could not make sense of the materials she had been sent: "They sent me aerial photos of an area and some postcodes, but I couldn't for the life of me see how these related to what I would be doing" (ID 4). Another worker commented: "They thought I was booked, but they also told me I might not be needed and I didn't turn up because I never received proper confirmation" (ID 10). The employers were frequently cited as "they", indicating these workers' sense of distance and discrimination (Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Question 2: Pros and Cons of the Work Experience

Secondly, participants were asked to describe their most recent promotion job for Promote in more detail, with reference to what they felt were the major pros and cons. Participants varied in their evaluations of working for this employer. Six expressed 'generally positive' feelings about Promote and intended to work for them again (IDs 1, 6, 7, 8, 13 and 15); four were critical over work processes but relatively indifferent (IDs 2, 5, 9, and 11); the remaining five described long-standing problems and 'generally negative' evaluations of their employer. For the present purposes, examples of positive and negative scenarios provide further insights.

On the positive side, two long-standing employees described a good understanding between themselves and the employer over how to get the most out of the work and do a good job at the same time. "There is recognition of the fact that the work should involve elements of freedom and relaxation, as well as seeing new places and meeting new people" (ID 8). Similarly, another male worker explained how "this work has been a handy way for me to raise money as a student, there have never been any annoying tax problems with my pay that you sometimes get with other companies, and I've been given the opportunity to work at the centre of some colourful and lively promotion campaigns, which have been fun and satisfying to be involved in" (ID 1).

Consistent with the proposed model, both these participants described a shared perspective, voice behaviours and a sense of empathy. When probed about disadvantages, the first male participant replied "I understand the nature of the work from the company's point of view. It's very competitive; and there's a need to cooperate in the face of demanding clients at short notice" (ID 1). The other participant remarked "I think it's usual for head office to have to deal with frequent changes of staff and inevitable areas of disorganization" (ID 8). An example of voice behaviour is captured in the quote: "I wish there were more jobs with more varied tasks than leafleting sometimes. I've fed this back before and I think there will be more opportunity in the future to help develop the attractive sides of the campaigns" (ID 8).

On the negative side, five participants described similar problems in their promotion jobs; generally accompanied by a breakdown in perspective-taking and understanding. Major causes for dissatisfaction included pay and feedback problems. "I found the work at times quite demanding and wanted to ask how did we do? Or how can we improve? But there has been no opportunity for me to do that" recalled a female participant (ID 12). Another participant described a particularly heated dispute with the company over a geographical location: "They had no idea where I was; the region was miserably empty and the campaign clearly hadn't been researched properly. My concerns seemed to fail to register with them and there were doubts raised about whether I should be paid; they just had no idea of my situation" (ID 3).

Dissatisfaction with pay and notice provided more evidence of mutual withdrawal and neglect responses, coupled with psychological contract violation and a lack of empathy. A female participant new to the world of promotion work described how the company: "seemed faceless and potentially illegitimate. They were taking my personal details, promising me information up front but instead only giving me last minute warnings to prepare from poor quality materials. I won't work for them again" (ID 4). "I don't feel respected and I feel exploited. I have had to chase pay issues, and have not been paid adequately" complained another worker (ID 14). Finally, a female participant expressed problems symptomatic of poor perspective-taking: "I feel

things are bad when it gets casual, and neither side feels responsible for explaining their situation; there's just an attitude of 'oops!' over pay delays, waylaid materials, vague job details and the like" (ID 9).

Question 3: Absenteeism

Thirdly, participants were specifically asked if they themselves and/or other workers had failed to turn up for a promotional piece of work, and the circumstances surrounding the absenteeism. Absenteeism tended to be viewed as a neglectful, dissatisfied response, consistent with expectations. One participant (ID 9) described how absenteeism is a self-serving strategy for some workers; i.e., apply to several jobs and turn up for favourite one, or call in sick on a particularly tough day's work.

Reasons cited for absenteeism included: bad weather conditions, inability to find geographical locations, doing other promotion work, unexpected demands/workload and misunderstanding. Participants generally expressed dissatisfaction with communication, undesirable tasks (e.g., working in a rough/secluded area) and a lack of perspective-taking from Promote. One woman commented: "I had to dispense information aimed at people with reading difficulties, which meant approaching people I thought might have this problem, and it felt ill-thought out. There simply has to be some consideration given to these things at their end" (ID 7).

The sense of mutual obligation was put across by a male promotion worker: "I would say absenteeism works on a campaign-by-campaign basis. If they mess me around with booking notice, pay and weird tasks, I will mess them around back. On the other hand, where they have respected my needs, I have felt obliged to be honest, not to take the Mickey, and to do a decent job" (ID 14).

Question 4: Competitors and Best Practice

The fourth and final question concerned participants' thoughts on other promotional companies, the variety of practices used in this field, and explanations of which features they preferred the most. In keeping with the transactional nature of the work, five participants explained briefly that all they wanted was to be paid as quickly as possible and always on time (IDs 1, 2, 6, 7, and 10).

The remaining ten participants consistently made comments that can be interpreted as expressing a need for more relational elements in the contracted work. Companies were generically described in terms of how they ranged along this continuum. Typically, the promotion workers said how they wanted more expanded pieces of work, more contact, professionalism in the way work was paid and scheduled, and for like-minded people to be given the chance to work together again.

In relation to other companies, one interviewee said: "The top promotion companies and campaigns are timely and efficient. I had a month-long project where they were always spot on with more supplies, in-person support, task scheduling and even free gifts and perks" (ID 5). By contrast, in criticism of Promote, another interviewee said: "I wish they had more jobs and random tasks than it being leafleting nearly all the time. They should pull us together a bit more. Good teams should work again. We should talk about structure, concrete times and places" (ID 8). The latter comment seems to make use of multiple 'us', 'we' and 'they' pronouns; perhaps as a result of a confused need to feel belonging towards something socially in the work (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

As well as evidence that employees' psychological contract perceptions relate to their (dis)satisfaction, three participants mentioned the perspective-taking possibilities between promotions employers and employees. In terms of employers' perspective-taking, one participant said: "More clear and reassuring communication is always appreciated. If they ring me an hour before and let me know things are going to plan, it shows they are in synch with me" (ID 11). Similarly from a female participant: "The employers need to work on getting the best clients and the tasks that most appeal to me. The best companies have a cool and funky reputation, and a sense of the varied roles and fun workers look for" (ID 9).

Workers talked explicitly about taking the perspective of the people working in the main office: "I know the people who book the jobs at head office have a tough job; and I suppose the

successful enterprises depend partly on central staff being treated better rather than lynched every time something goes wrong” (ID 8).

In sum, the analysis presented here demonstrates broad support for the associative sequence proposed in Figure 1. That is, employees can encounter dissatisfaction in many ways when performing uncertain work, and they will perceive contract violation very early on. They then will try to respond with some loyalty and voice behaviour, but where the means for these responses are limited, they will typically respond in terms of exit and neglect. Perspective-taking, reciprocally between employers and employees, can act as a buffer throughout this negative cycle. Giving closer consideration to the viewpoints, needs, intentions, and feelings of others facilitates more compromising relational contract perceptions, as well as promoting more constructive responses to job dissatisfaction.

Discussion

The main finding of this study is that where a promotions company fails to take its employees' perspectives, negative work behaviours emerge. Employee perspectives on pay/rewards, autonomy, advancement and social atmosphere (i.e., contract perceptions) need to be acknowledged so they are not seen as violated. There is also some evidence for the idea that where employees feel they are supported, they will reciprocally take the perspective of the employer and exhibit positive behaviours of loyalty and voice.

The research generalises to any organization that outsources all of its major operations. An employment relationship made up of nothing more than a website and a smattering of phone calls may be one that has gotten ahead of itself.

Recommendations to the Company

Employees have different values, and will seek corresponding information about these values being satisfied in their psychological contract perceptions (De Vos, Buyens & Schalk, 2005). One implication is that employers should be quick to seek feedback on these values, so that they can understand the most salient aspects of their employees' experiences through sincere, constructive voicing of pros and cons.

For the sake of some inconvenience in terms of time and money, the findings also suggest that some human touch and more contact are vital. One key moderator of how employees respond to satisfaction within exchange relationships is investment size (Rusbult et al., 1988). Investments in employees in the traditional employment relationship, such as generous long-term retirement funds, may have had their day. However, the company can make simple investments that will still have an impact, such as rudimentary training and social events.

It has been argued that to elicit performance freely from workers, it is important to utilise positive feedback, recognise the value of fun, and to persuade, not manipulate (Fielder, 2006). The research has particularly strong implications for recruitment and retention practices. For the company studied here or any organization with a flexible workforce, the employer can reach out by sharing information with candidates at recruitment fairs, holding head office tours or open days, and awarding extra responsibility to its most long-standing workers.

Some of the most practical work problems were caused by frantic phone calls, last minute garbled materials and even a 'faceless' organization. E-mails and infrequent phone calls are often referred to as 'lean communication'. Lean communication can undermine the potential for perspective-taking and any ongoing beneficial negotiation (Gelfand et al., 2006). Debate is still raging over the insensitivity of text messaging at work (Brockett, 2006). More structured, formal means of communication that enhance remote workers' grasp of their employers' perspective are recommended wherever possible. An example of this might be a richer telephone protocol that covers frequently encountered problems and contingency plans.

Overall, it is important for employers to take their workers voiced perspectives, particularly early on in the employment relationship, to avoid immediate dissatisfied exit responses. The employer was clearly often unaware that the workers were in doubt, or even receiving contradictory information. Employees in turn need to know that the employer is 'doing all it can' to avoid blame and start to care about welfare and needs on both sides (Batson, Eklund,

Chermok, Hoyt & Ortiz, 2007). The workers 'out in the field' are a valuable source of information for the employer to acknowledge and learn from at every available opportunity.

Reflections on the Research

The results found here begin to answer the question of how to promote mutual perspective-taking so that problems like absenteeism can be avoided in temporary workforces. Temporary workforces often involve psychological contracts so basically transactional in format that any valuable relational elements drop away.

A *transactional* contract is one focused on easy-to-exit, well-specified agreements of very limited duration. Transactional contracts by their very nature foster little commitment or high-performance behaviour in employees, and exist in contrast to longer-term, more collaborative *relational* contracts (Rousseau, 1995). Transactional exchanges often involve strategic deception and an exploitative mindset, particularly if a joint information state is not reached (Goffman, 1970).

On the other hand, *relational* contract elements include intense socialization, realistic job previews and clear, timely communication (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). These elements are crucial to ensure some minimal shared perspective, so the work itself and the goals of the work can be trusted and respected. Future research could aim to quantitatively assess how accurately employers understand the motives, intentions and feelings of their temporary employees and how this provokes various forms of employee behaviour.

The study also lends credence to the argument that employees adjust their contributions in response to their satisfaction with the contract. If they are dissatisfied and cannot appreciate why their employers have let this happen, a "love me or lose me" absenteeism/exit response is to be expected (Deery, 2005). For voice and loyalty responses to occur, employees need to be able to openly weigh up what they are doing for the company versus what the company is doing for them (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

The promotion workers with longer company tenure made some reference to the difficulties of its situation. This is evidence of perspective-taking with the organization; the employees' reversing their fundamental attribution error to socially appreciate the constraints underlying the employer perspective. This study links this perspective-taking to voice; airing ideas about helping to make the work processes better for all concerned. Future longitudinal research could usefully track how perspective-taking, trust and cooperation matures within contract employees who stick around for longer.

In conclusion, contract workers face a tension between enjoying enormous freedom and wanting to belong to work socially (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). At best, this can be managed with fun, flexibility and professionalism. At worst, it can create meaningless and even abusive working conditions. Employing contingent and temporary workers is typically assumed to be an initiative that yields greater efficiency. However, this efficiency may never come to fruition without a basic foundation of mutual understanding.

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Adaptability – a new indicator for selection in Romanian companies

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Abstract

The research and practice effort of this paper firstly strives to understand the role of managerial adaptability within the context of a dynamic organizational change. Secondly, it aims at increasing the value of adaptability indicators for professionals responsible with personnel recruiting in Romanian organizations. This paper presents a selection model based on the interaction between cognitive and personality factors. Practical aspects of these research efforts are reflected by the development and implementation of a new recruiting and selection strategy in changing organizations.

Introduction

We tend to describe the Romanian organizational field as being in a permanent transition, like being in a sort of continuous convalescence, with a reserved prognostic, and the organizational environment in constant change. This is an environment that faces a lot of resistance coming from employees.

Several years ago Romanian employees did not respond to complex motivational initiatives, mainly due to the importance of basic needs like salary, working hours, the job itself, working conditions, and accessibility of organizational resources. By that, individual performance was easy to predict and sometimes to control. But the qualified and cheap Romanian workforce attracted a lot of foreign companies that found a good place to develop branches and business units at the eastern European border. This represents a major contribution to the maturity of the Romanian workforce and to an increased professionalism in the organizational environment.

In 2007, Romania has a mature workforce, who are client oriented, and sensitive to differences in organizational culture and climate. Moreover, Romanian employees show an increased respect for managers that set high performance standards, appreciate clarity in internal communication and career development opportunities.

Thus Romanian employees create and participate in a functional market economy, understand organizational requirements and have increased expectations towards their employers.

Given the latest changing context in the balance between offers and demands in the job market, the need for job stability has decreased visibly. These are some conclusions from the Best Employer survey, a global survey carried out by Hewitt Associates International implemented for the first time in 2006 by Pluri Consultants Romania in partnership with Business Media Group (Drăgan & Ardelean, 2007). The employee survey was realized in 2006-2007 in 10 Central and East European countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Poland, Romania and Russia. The survey concluded that companies having human resources policies that focused on talents, professional development and performance were paying increased attention to recruitment and selection of employees.

Organizational change context

Digitalisation, the Internet and global high-speed data networks are allowing organizations to shift knowledge work to lower-waged countries; Romania is a good example of this change. Globalisation, expanded capacity, and advances in technology have combined during recent years to make it imperative that organizations are fast and flexible if they're to survive. Jobs are being continually redesigned; tasks are increasingly being done by flexible teams rather than individuals; and jobs are being subcontracted out to other firms (Robbins, 2005). Workers need to update their knowledge and skills continuously to perform new job requirements. Today's managers and employees have to learn to live with flexibility, spontaneity and unpredictability. An important consequence of this new environment is that employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are subject to continual obsolescence and displacement (Howard, 1995). An approach to managing human resources in a dynamic environment is to hire individuals who are capable and willing to work in a changing environment (Le Pine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000). That is, you have to rely on the organization's selection and staffing systems to provide the organization with people who are more adaptable.

The combined effects of globalisation and new IT&C technologies have produced major changes both in organizational structure and the level of organization's employees. Pressures from external and internal organizational environment make employees keen to learn and to transpose learning into practice. The environment produces subtle changes in work tasks at one hand, and at the level of employees that perform those tasks on the other hand.

Continuous learning, innovation, technical expertise and functional knowledge tend to become essential attributes for recruitment and selection, especially for upper positions in competitive companies (Vlăsceanu, 2003). Beyond these requirements, persons that want to work in such companies need to have other critical skills and abilities as well.

Adaptability to change in a complex environment is an important feature that leads to success in organizations. For instance, in a global company like Microsoft an important principle that guides the selection process is to employ people that are "well fitted" with the organization. The term "organizational fit" refers to the degree to which the applicant approximates to the organization's modal personality and value profiles (Herriot, 2003). Bill Gates describes the ideal candidate for Microsoft as having a good technical expertise together with an increased capacity to develop new skills and abilities, in order to keep in line with technological changes and developments. Smart employees are creative, well informed about market movements, have entrepreneurial spirit and abilities to solve problems, and abilities to perform in the absence of procedures and detailed rules (Dainty & Anderson, 2000).

Recruiting and selection practices

Conventional selection practices are geared toward hiring employees who's KSAs provide the greatest fit with requirements of specific jobs. Traditional selection techniques rarely consider organizational specific features in which the jobs reside. These selection practices often ignore characteristics of the person that are irrelevant to immediate job requirements. A new model of selection is emerging, however, that is geared toward hiring the "whole" person who will fit well into the specific organization's culture (Bowen, Ledford & Nathan, 1991). This reflects a fundamental reorientation of the selection process toward hiring "people", not just KSAs for "organizations" and not just jobs. This leads to hiring practices that seem peculiar, and somehow extravagant, from a traditional human resource standpoint, but well integrated in the new characteristics of human management practices, especially to that of human capital management.

Personality traits have been linked to success in a wide range of jobs. As a result, many companies have altered their selection system to emphasise personal characteristics. Personality measurement has also assisted companies in job transfer decisions. Personality assessment is not limited to improving the fit between the individual and the job, but also the fit between the individual and organization (Parnell, 1998). Specifically, personality affects the ability to embrace change within an organization.

Person-organization fit requires that two types of fit be achieved in the hiring process:

- between individual KSAs and the task demands or critical requirements for the job; and
- between the overall personality of the individual and the climate or culture of the organization (Bowen, Ledford & Nathan, 1991).

Decision-making and organizational change

When the organizational environment is dynamic, full of uncertainty and has poorly structured problems; goals are often either unclear or not defined. Decision-making takes place in a series of activities that have varying results over time. Situations requiring strategic decision-making within a changing context whilst maintaining high quality standards will involve high levels of stress. Decision-makers will be under time pressure, and alternative strategies are diminished.

Organizational change programmes require the involvement of individuals placed at all organizational levels, and consist of both individual and organizational activities. Participation in decision-making is a strong requirement in organizational change. But the plurality of decision-makers makes the decision-making process difficult. The organizational context, goals and norms of the organization are likely to impact on the decision-making process, with ambiguity, conflict and uncertainty being features of these processes.

Approaching decision-making in the context of organizational change, we start from current theoretical assumptions (for example, bounded rationality) founded in individual decision-making research studies. We need to examine change both on the organizational environment and on its managers. Decision-making performance before the change is a good indicator of performance in the current task. Decision-making performance after the change is a good indicator of the type of adaptability required within an organization.

Preliminary experimental research revealed the importance of *personality factors*, together with *general cognitive abilities*, in predicting the adaptability to change in complex decision-making tasks. Although general cognitive ability predicts decision-making performance before the change, the intensity of such relationship is significantly increasing after the first and subsequent changes in the decision-making task. Moreover, although personality factors do not influence the initial decision-making performance, they become more and more important (even more so than general cognitive abilities) in predicting the decision-making performance after change has occurred. Thus, we can say decision-making during change has different requirements than decision-making in stable contexts; where information is processed more automatically and behavioral requirements are usually explicit.

The organizational context investigated

The model described was tested and applied in the organizational environment of a multinational company; a global player in telecommunications industry. Testing coincided with a major strategic change that was reflected differently to an organizational and departmental level. The organization is structured in five departments; four are software developers for fixed telephony, mobile communications, data transmission on optical fiber, and integrated services for mobile communication. In addition, there is an operations department offering technical support to clients in installation, maintenance and development of the telecommunication devices. Research was carried out in the technical departments with the agreement of the top management and the co-operation of departmental managers.

The organization's headquarters has a parenting role in defining and implementing general strategy. Regional and local units have the role to adapt corporate strategies and policies in order to integrate as best as possible to the local context. Rapid changes in the telecommunication industry today leaves little chance to adopt and implement best practices models; while best fit models seem to be more adequate. From a strategic integration perspective the organization acts like a prospector. The Human Resources department has the objective to sustain organizational structural changes, and thus is focused on identifying, developing and retaining the best employees, good performers (experts), and creative and

independent persons in order to achieve the higher levels of innovation necessary in the telecommunication industry today.

This research was carried out due some external factors (mainly related to job market) and some internal pressures (a significant and spectacular increase of need for new people in all company departments). There had been significant organizational changes in the Romanian branch of this company over the last four years. These changes varied from a job position freeze to a high increase in the need for newcomers to be involved in new corporate projects. There are far more job openings than qualified candidates on the local market. New departments have been developed (especially in R&D area) and other departments have been developed in terms of personnel (like a Financial Services Center for the entire group). Thus there is strong pressure on Human Resource management to recruit and select the best people.

The selection process within the organization was complex and well structured using multiple methods (technical tests, cognitive abilities assessment, structured interviews, psychological testing and employment interviews). Due to internal pressures and external context the initial focus on person-job fit was changed to an assessment of the learning and development potential and on person-organization fit. Particularly person-department fit have the same importance in this changing context due to different development paths of the various departments.

The research model

The need for adaptation to change leads to a more nuanced value of cognitive factors that contribute to decision-making performance of managers in changing organizations. In the theoretical model the focus was on the importance and the role of *cognitive competencies*. Thus, together with general cognitive abilities, were introduced *decision-making capacity* (as a measure of sensibility to errors and cognitive heuristics) and *cognitive complexity* (as a capacity to process information from multiple approaches), along with *personality and coping style*.

General cognitive abilities are related to work performance in different contexts. Decision-making is a cognitive task requiring mental representation and processing of information from long-term memory and environment stimuli. Therefore, general cognitive abilities are correlated with decision-making performance. High levels of general cognitive abilities increase individual capacity to process dissimilar information and to make decisions. In addition, personality factors are viable predictors of decision-making efficiency both in stable and in changing organizational contexts. Style type variables such as *rational decision-making style* and *vigilance* as adaptive coping styles are moderators within the model indicating the value of an adaptation approach in decision-making in situations of organizational change. Decision-making style and coping style are both individual variables that facilitate adaptation to change and help decision-making performance. *Decision-making performance*, as a specific type of task performance, is a criterion for managerial efficiency in the case of organizational stability. These factors are illustrated in Figure One below.

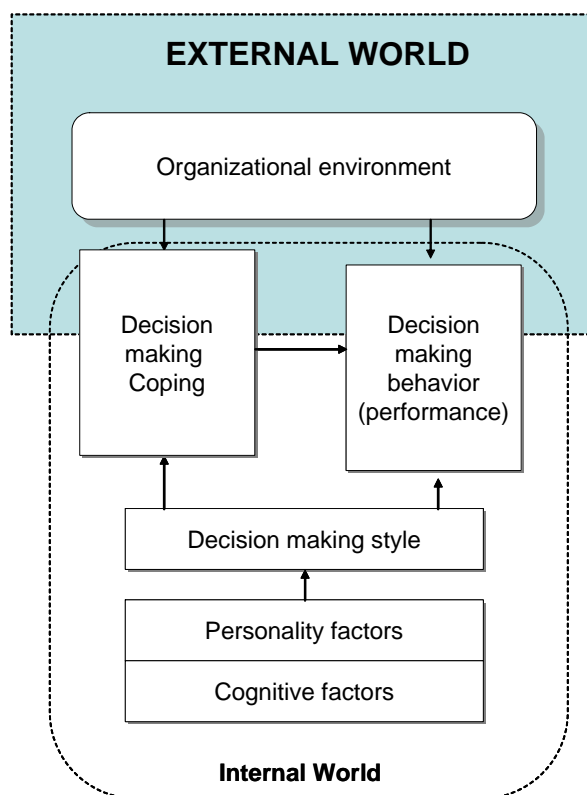
After discussing our preliminary objectives we now move on to discuss the theoretical model that we have elaborated. There were applied measures of model variables in the organizational environment both at the managerial and operational levels. Model validation was conducted at managerial level (N=88) and a comparative study between subjects with different performance included the whole sample (N=193).

The instruments used in this research are: two instruments specially developed for the study, plus the California Personality Inventory (CPI 260), the General Decision-Making Style Questionnaire (GDMS), the Decision-Making Questionnaire (DMQ), Decision-making capacity (included in the BTPAC set), Raven Progressive Matrices test (*Plus* form), and the Melbourne Decision-Making Questionnaire (MDMQ).

The main research objective was to provide evidence for the influence of cognitive and non-cognitive factors on decision-making efficiency, through construction and review of a theoretical model showing links between cognitive variables, personality variables and decision-making performance. Thus, persons who are approaching a *rational decisional style* are characterized by: cognitive complexity, good judgment, ability to explain their decisions, ability to manage

interpersonal relations, strong leadership skills, ability to cope under pressure, are self confident, able to apply procedures, and evaluate issues from a practical point of view.

Figure One: The research model



Persons who are approaching *vigilance* as a mechanism for adaptive decisional coping have: good decision-making capacity, are less sensitive to decisional errors, able to apply a rational decisional style using less general decisional heuristics, have strong leadership skills, are self confident and strongly motivated to accomplish themselves in fluid situations, have a preference for work that allows initiative and independent thinking, are skilled at defining their own objectives.

This illustrates that style-type variables, *rational decision-making style* and *vigilance* indicate an adaptation approach to decision-making in situations of organizational change.

Persons who are able to represent more information in the cognitive space where behaviours are processed, are able to learn faster from their own experiences and are able to gain greater working knowledge and skills. They are likely to be responsible, self confident, tasks oriented, and have efficient work habits. They are motivated by accomplishments in a clear structured environment, and will be respectful towards other's rights and beliefs. They will tend to have *good performance in decision making-tasks* at the organizational level.

In this study hierarchical regression analyses established that in conditions of uncertainty cognitive competencies (described in behavioural terms) together with personality factors predict best organizational decisional efficiency and performance.

In stable conditions, general cognitive abilities and dimensions of personality are predictors of decisional performance. Thus dimensions of personality significantly contribute to the explanation and prediction of decisional performance. Further, rational decision style and vigilance as adaptive coping mechanisms are seen as measures of adaptability in conditions of organizational change.

Comparative research with people with different levels of decision-making performance

In order to investigate adaptive performance in situations of variable decision-making performance we used three selection criteria:

- job level (executive level vs. operational level)
- decisional efficiency in tactical decisional tasks (high vs. low performance)
- decisional efficiency in strategic decisional tasks (high vs. low performance).

Using these criteria we found important differences. *Persons of executive level* have a higher resistance to errors and cognitive heuristics, are more analytical towards decisional alternatives and are more cautious in their decisional choices, being characterised by a higher capacity for information processing and transmitting more information. They are also able to differentiate and integrate information better and to tolerate informational ambiguity.

Persons efficient in *tactical decisional tasks* in stable conditions with sufficient information and low risk are characterised by higher cognitive capacity, a strong desire to learn, and a more pronounced intellectual curiosity for observing and establishing causal relations between events and behaviours. They also possess better tolerance to ambiguity meaning that they can manage a larger quantity of undefined or contradictory information and are able to emotionally tolerate new, uncertain, fast, undefined or contradictory change than less efficient persons in tactical decisions. Differences were also found between subjects regarding cognitive level, but not personality.

Persons having good performance in *strategic decisional tasks* are likely to be self confident, to have strong leadership skills, and to be purposeful with efficient working skills. Differences between subjects were also found at personality level, but not with cognitive level.

In summary, these results sustain the position that *while there is uncertainty and a high degree of risk situations are less predictable, the importance of the individual personality factors in decisional performance increases.*

Design of a modal profile of the high performing decision-maker and the implementation of a new recruitment strategy

The last stage of the research involved the elaboration of a modal profile of decision-making at an organizational level and the identification of inter-departments differences. This information was the basis for implementing change in the selection strategy.

Based on our research the *modal profile* suggests the typical employee is an ambitious person who accepts and respects the rules and procedures of the organization, is well organised and disciplined, task oriented and orientated to achieve their objectives. They have moderate confidence in their abilities, are conscientious but don't like routine work. They will be sociable but may sometimes prefer to work alone. They manifest a strong need for social recognition, and will be driven by the motivation for success and accomplishment in an organised and structured working environment. They prefer to work in conditions that allow initiative and independent thinking even if they are not always interested in new ideas and things.

Our research demonstrated some differences of profile between departments signifying the importance of the relation to the modal departmental profile during the selection process.

Practical application of this work

A paradigm change in personnel selection has turned the focus away from the evaluation of skills and knowledge at job level to the adjustment between an individual and the organization specifically in relation to adaptation to organizational change. As jobs change constantly in content tasks, they are more frequently accomplished by flexible teams of people. Employees have to continuously update their knowledge and abilities in order to meet the new job market

requests. Managers and employees have to learn to live flexibly, almost spontaneously and in unpredictable conditions.

Successful companies are characterised by an alignment between individual and organizational values placing new emphasis on identifying specific values held by organizations.

The use of psychological testing of candidates within the selection process can provide valuable information about the employee's profile. This will enable organizations to select candidates with higher adaptability potential. Candidates with development potential and learning capacity, motivation and a higher level of cognitive complexity will have more chances to be employed in a company that has a changing environment. For the Human Resources Manager who is focused on innovation, creativity and diversity; it is probable that those candidates differing from the modal profile are the best choice.

Configuration of psychological tests batteries for selection both at managerial and operational levels was the applied component of our study. The outcomes of our research represented the base of revising the selection strategy for new employees. This strategy was quickly implemented within the organization and successfully applied during 2005 for recruitment and selection in departments. The implementation of the selection strategy involved several stages, one of them consisting in organising a training session in each department involving all those people responsible for recruitment projects.

Other training sessions were organised for people with responsibility for selection from each department inside the organization. These individuals play a significant role in the selection process and need to have a vision of the whole selection process as described by the Human Resources function. Training sessions provided coherence for the selection process and generated compatibility of processes at departmental level. This was important due to the complexity of the selection process, it's important to ensure a sense of coherence and a good collaboration between the HR department and the executives.

In addition to describing a model for selection, the use of psychological testing also increased the accuracy of data contributing to the selection decision. Moreover, the assessment of cognitive competencies, transposed in behavioural terms like decision-making ability and cognitive complexity, helped to better select managers with higher adaptive capacity to organizational change.

In practical terms a psychological test battery was constructed at managerial and operative level that could be used for evaluation purposes such as promotional decision-making, in order to encourage selection of the best candidates who will be able to adapt to organizational change.

In summary, due to this organizational context the focus of the selection processes was translated from an evaluation of technical KSAs to an assessment of learning and development potential at individual level and the adaptability capacities towards organization or department. The modal profiles can be used as landmarks in the selection processes, in order to identify the best-fitted candidates with the organization, individuals that will easily integrate in the organization culture (Vîrgă, 2005). However, an important point is to evaluate person-department fit, using specific modal profiles, because there are significant differences between the company departments, generated by the respective activity itself.

Candidates with developmental and learning potential, motivated and with high levels of cognitive complexity will have increased chances to get a job within this organization. If the HR management focuses on innovation, probably candidates with a somewhat different fit from the modal profile will be the best option.

After newcomers are hired they are introduced to training and formation programmes aimed to get the best fit of the individual with the job and with the department or even the project team. One possible action regarding future research is to investigate the relationship between personality and organizational values.

Conclusion

This research was in an organizational environment overcoming many operational obstacles. This work offers many benefits both from the researcher and the practitioner view in the field of

organizational and work psychology. The transfer of scientific discoveries into organizational practices brings valuable benefits for all concerned.

In conclusion, the research was undertaken in the context of some intense organizational changes and emphasises the significance of cognitive and personality factors in relation with the identification of adaptive potential of managers and operators.

The optimisation of the decision-making process starts, practically, with the adequate selection of the persons with high adaptive potential for change both at the level of task and organizational level. These individuals will make good quality decisions in turbulent environments. It is helpful that training programmes stimulate these attitudes enabling the internalising of adaptive behaviour in the context of organizational change.

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Bond, M. A. (2007). *Workplace Chemistry: promoting diversity through organizational change*. University Press of New England: Lebanon NH

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Co-editor EWOPinPractice

This attractive 256 page hardback¹ details the seven-year history of organizational change in a US chemical manufacturing company that aimed to make it an equitable, efficient and diverse workplace.

Bond's co-researchers (Thomas and Ely) emphasised the integration of three approaches to motivate managers to diversify their staffing: a) the fair treatment for all agenda; b) the ability to read and develop niche markets; and c) the ability to integrate and learn through organizational systems and functions to appreciate the benefits of diversity to be realised. The author was assisted by an economist, a training consultant and a group of students and some university seed funding to develop this work; and was guided during a sabbatical year by a women's writing group to produce the story as a publication.

The metaphor of a chemical reaction is used to describe relationships between people – “good” chemistry when people mix and complement each other and “bad” chemistry when personal elements collide. While friendships can be chosen on chemistry workplace relationships throw people together from diverse environments and orientations. The challenge for organizations is to develop a context that will support worker diversity in a complementary manner enabling effective working.

Bond, a professor of psychology, uses the framework of ecological theory to explore the change process. This focuses on the multiplicity of experiences occurring to resources within a system as they develop and change at individual, team, organizational and societal levels.

The story commences in 1995 when ChemPro (a pseudonym) employed 211 people of which 70% were white men. Women and minority workers were segregated in specific job roles and departments. ChemPro was aware of increasing local competition for potential workers, and the need to develop a slimmer workforce more able to work effectively together and across boundaries. This need emphasised the importance of developing an increasingly diverse workforce with interpersonal skills that would foster positive relationships.

The workplace chemistry initiative had three interwoven dimensions; a) diversity activities supported by assessment of the diversity climate, interviews and departmental-level feedback exploring inequities of women and non-whites; b) team capacity building and training supported by communication and leadership development, facilitation of strategic planning and conflict resolution; and c) institutionalisation of the value of diversity championed by a steering team overseeing the weaving of diversity into selection, socialisation, evaluation and succession planning.

In 2003, when the collaboration with Bond ended, the company had more men and women of colour; with some in leadership positions. The Board had increased its female membership to 50% (previously it had only 14% women). This long-term case study offers a realistic example of the change process. While significant challenges still remained within the organization the employees felt better supported and were more satisfied with their jobs.

¹ Available from Amazon for \$29.95.

Evaluation

I found this an accessible book, written in an engaging style that was not overly detailed with academic material while still offering support to the frameworks and arguments used. Further, the inclusion of an economic argument brought depth to the description. Bond appreciates the multiple dimensions of diversity and was clearly working with multiple elements. However, the book focused mainly on aspects of race and gender increasing the clarity of descriptions.

The introduction had helpful tabular descriptions of the various sections allowing the reader to dip in and out of the book. The long-term nature of the case study enabled description of unplanned events such as reorganisation and downsizing common place in organizational life to be explored. The author acknowledged the difficulties the company had sustaining regular training programmes and described strategies used to keep diversity issues alive. The intervention activities were fully described; along with the participants, evaluations, reactions and reflections. In-keeping with the traditions of participant enquiry Bond explored the possible advantages of being a female consultant that may have helped others reveal their vulnerability; that may have been more difficult for a male consultant.

However, I found the supporting notes too brief to be helpful (often just giving the names of the authors and little detail about the context of the study mentioned) requiring you to refer to the reference section for details of the publication or appendices. I found the introductory chapter, while carefully signposted, over long and contained too much information about the models and theories used as well as explanation of the research and consultancy relationship with ChemPro. I feel this would have been better divided into separate chapters helping the non-academic reader to maintain their interest. In addition, subsequent chapters were also long and detailed, and may also have benefited from some sub-divisions. I found information about the number and activities of the consultants in the various parts of the intervention missing; this would have deepened the understanding of the practical nature of this work.

In summary, I found this an extremely useful book for those involved in diversity investigation and change management. Bond had hoped to give lessons and insights for practitioners and researchers in this field and I feel she has accomplished this task admirably.

3 May 2008