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# NEUROTICISM AND EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK: THE MODERATING ROLE OF GOAL AMBIGUITY ON PERFORMANCE IN TEAM SITUATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*The role of dispositional differences in explaining organizationally relevant phenomenon has recently seen renewed interest among organizational researchers (Judge & Ilies, 2002; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). In group situations, dispositions have been used to explain such outcomes as cooperation (Wagner, 1995), teamwork (Clinebell & Stecher, 2003), group effectiveness (Kiffin-Petersen, 2004; Prussia & Kinicki, 1996), leader effectiveness (Antonakis, 2003; Prati, Douglas, Ferns, Ammeter, & Buckley, 2003) and performance (Barry & Stewart, 1997). In this paper, the notion that many work group characteristics have been linked to group effectiveness (Cohen, Ledford, & Sprietzer, 1996) is further developed using a disposition approach. First, a general model of disposition effects on team performance related outcomes with situational factors as moderators is presented. Using this model, the effects of the individual dispositional tendency 'neuroticism' and the situational factor 'goal ambiguity' are explored. Several hypotheses are developed regarding the effects of neuroticism on performance in team situations with goal ambiguity as a moderator.*

## INTRODUCTION

There has recently been renewed interest among organizational researchers in the role of dispositional differences in explaining organizationally relevant phenomenon (Judge & Ilies, 2002; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). Dispositions have been used in group research to explain such outcomes as cooperation (Wagner, 1995), group effectiveness (Prussia & Kinicki, 1996) and performance (Barry & Stewart, 1997). In this paper, a disposition approach is combined with the notion that many work group characteristics have been linked to group effectiveness (Cohen, Ledford, & Sprietzer, 1996). A general model of disposition effects on team performance related outcomes with situational factors as moderators is presented. This is developed into a model of the relationship between neuroticism and performance in team situations with goal ambiguity as a moderator. Several hypotheses are developed from this model.

## TEAM RESEARCH AND DISPOSITIONS

There has recently been renewed interest among organizational researchers in the role of dispositional differences (Judge & Ilies, 2002; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). There are several justifications for this renewed interest, specifically with regards to team research. First, the main criticism of dispositional work in organization studies has been that organizations are 'strong' situations. 'Strong' situations suppress the effects of dispositional differences (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989). House, et al. (1996) cite "organizational transformations, structural changes, cultural changes, violations in traditional concepts of psychological contracts, and other organizational situations that are unstable, ambiguous and confusing for individuals" as challenges to the notion that organizations are 'strong' situations. Today's context of teamwork can more appropriately be described as 'weak' situations, because the

environment fails to provide unambiguous cue as to appropriate behaviors (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). The second main justification is that progress is being made in the area. Many researchers are addressing group issues with a dispositional or individual difference approach (Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999; Campion, Papper, & Medsker, 1996; Prussia & Kinicki, 1996; Shepperd, 1993; Barry & Stewart, 1993; Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993; George & James, 1993). A third justification is the practitioner trend to consider personality characteristics in selection and staffing decisions. Recent research has looked at the construct validity of using personality measures in personnel selection (Schmit & Ryan, 1996), matching management style and personality (Stevens & Ash, 2001) and when to value personality characteristics over specific skills (Behling, 1998). The last justification is the trend towards increased use of teams in organizations, especially self-directed teams. Self-directed teams are particularly 'weak' situations which allow dispositional effects to surface. The increased use of teams increases the need for research that can be translated into useful advice for practitioners.

### **TODAY'S CONTEXT OF TEAMWORK**

**Teams in General.** There are many definitions of teams and groups. The one adopted here is offered by Newcomb (1961:3) where a group is defined as "shared norms and interlocking roles which presuppose a transitory relationship of interaction and communication". This definition focuses attention to the importance of interaction and on member roles along with the patterns of member interaction and the roles assumed by members of the group develop over time. (note - because there is no clear, widely accepted differentiation of the terms 'team' and 'group' in the literature, they will be used interchangeably) Much is known regarding the advantages of teams. For example, groups tend to perform better than individuals when the complexity of the task is high since individuals are bounded by intellectual and information-processing capabilities (March & Simon, 1958). Groups have the advantage since they offer a diverse pool of skills and information (Ray & Bronstein, 1995). We know, however, that groups take more time to make decisions than do individuals. This is especially true when groups rely on normative, rational decision making processes compared to individuals who often rely on more timely, heuristically based processes (Allison, 1971; March & Simon, 1958). There is also the danger of such phenomenon as social loafing and groupthink. Social loafing is when individuals in work teams do not expend as much effort in the group setting as they would have if they were working alone (Latane, 1981). However, this dysfunctional situation can be remedied if individual effort can be identified (Latane, 1981). Groupthink is a "mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive group, when the members striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action" (Janis, 1972:8). To avoid group think, team leaders must serve as critical evaluators and apply techniques such as devil's advocacy and dialectical inquiry (Janis, 1972).

Finally, the internal dynamics of work teams may also be affected by their assumptions about the views and functions of top management. For example, the members of a work team may think that top management is generally unsupportive of team approaches and is not living up to its obligation to provide resources and guidance in determining goals and procedures. The members of another team may view management as being supportive, see it is a responsibility of the team to find their own resources, and appreciate the flexibility that they have in determining their direction and methods. The performance of these two teams will be different.

### **DISPOSITION RESEARCH**

Dispositions are a general category of individual differences, psychological in nature, that may be viewed as stable, consistent tendencies to respond to situations in a predetermined manner.

Common dispositional characteristics are personality, needs states, attitudes, preferences and motives (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). Research has suggested that five central traits, the “Big Five”, explain most of the variance in individual personality (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Goldberg, 1993). Although the “Big Five” are not without their critics (Block, 1995), they are generally accepted by researchers (Goldberg, 1993; McCrea & Costa, 1987). The “Big Five” are neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Digman, 1990).

Many disposition constructs have been studied in organizations. Recent studies (Lievens, De Fruyt, & Van Dam, 2001; Smith, Hanges, & Dickson, 2001; Stevens & Ash, 2001; Caliguri, 2000; Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999; House, Spangler, & Woyke, 1991; Burkhardt, 1992; Earley, 1986) and meta-analyses (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Judge & Ilies, 2002; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991) provide support that individual dispositions and traits can predict organizationally relevant outcomes. Among the organizationally relevant phenomenon being current investigated using a disposition approach are employee assessment and selection (Lievens, De Fruyt, & Van Dam, 2001; Smith, Hanges, & Dickson, 2001; Stevens & Ash, 2001), work team composition (Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999), intent to terminate assignments (Caliguri, 2000), job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), and performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002).

### **DISPOSITION EFFECTS ON TEAM PERFORMANCE RELATED OUTCOMES**

**Antecedents.** Some researchers have used dispositions to explain behavior in groups (Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999; George, 1990; George & James, 1993). For example, Prussia and Kinicki (1996) found group efficacy positively related to group effectiveness. Several of the “Big Five” personality dimensions have been also been used. Collectivism and individualism have been used in group research (Earley, 1993), specifically to explain cooperation (Wagner, 1995) and social loafing (Earley, 1989; Erez & Somech, 1996). Extraversion and Conscientiousness were used to explain performance (Barry & Stewart, 1997). Some recent work has examined the big-five at the group level, addressing both the level and variation in various factors (Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999).

**Moderators.** Many work group characteristics have been linked to group effectiveness. Cohen, Ledford, & Sprietzer (1996) identify 24 characteristics in 4 general categories. Campion, Medsker, & Higgs (1993) and Campion, Papper, & Medsker (1996) identified 19 characteristics in 5 general categories. Goal specificity has been linked to work group outcomes (Koch, 1979; Erez & Somech, 1996). The level of the performance measure, group or individual has been investigated in several studies (Prussia & Kinicki, 1996; Erez & Somech, 1996).

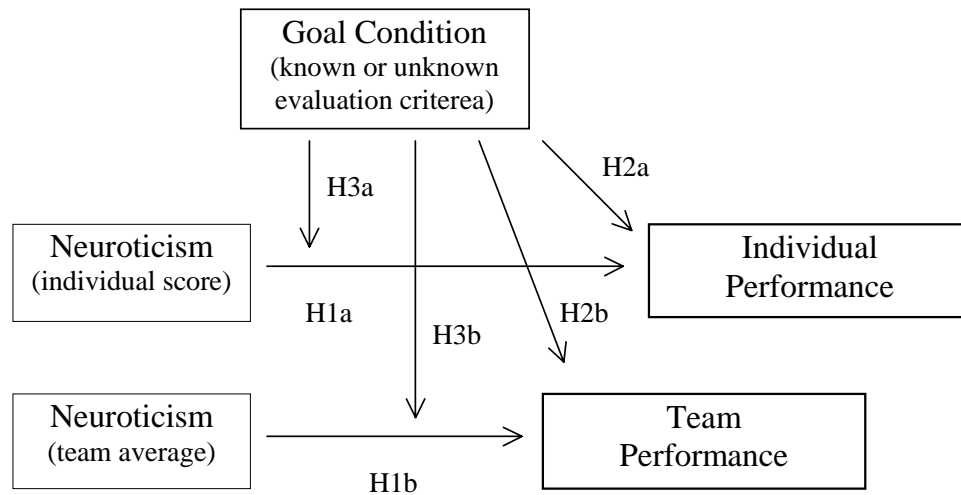
**Outcomes.** Just as with dispositions and work group characteristics, many team related outcomes have been identified. Cohen, Ledford, & Sprietzer (1996) identify 13 group effectiveness outcomes in 4 general categories. Disposition approaches have successfully linked individualism/collectivism and social loafing (Erez & Somech, 1996; Earley, 1989) and cooperation (Wagner, 1995).

### **NEUROTICISM, GOAL AMBIGUITY AND PERFORMANCE IN TEAM SITUATIONS**

A model of the relationship between neuroticism and performance in team situations with goal ambiguity as a moderator is presented in Figure 1. This model follows the notions of the previous section with a disposition (neuroticism) as an antecedent and a work group characteristic (goal ambiguity) as a moderator.



Figure 1  
The Relationship Between Neuroticism and Performance With Goal Ambiguity as a Moderator



**Neuroticism.** The antecedents in the models are neuroticism, at the individual and the group level (average of individuals). Recent meta-analyses show mixed results on the relationship between neuroticism and performance. Tett, Jackson & Rothstein (1991) found a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and performance. Neuroticism is not linked to willingness to adapt to new environment as are the other personality dimensions of openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (McCrea & Costa, 1987). The trait of neuroticism accentuates stress or inhibits coping with it effectively (Nasurdin, Ramayah & Kumaresan, 2005; McMartin, 1995) and new situations can be stressful.

*Hypothesis 1a: Individual neuroticism will be negatively related to individual performance*  
*Hypothesis 1b: Team average neuroticism will be negatively related to team performance*

**Goal Specificity/Ambiguity.** Role expectations are a major concern in work teams (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). Goal specificity, that is knowledge of performance evaluation criteria and goals are a major part of establishing role expectations. Goal specificity has been shown to improve performance in work groups (Koch, 1979)

*Hypothesis 2a: Goal ambiguity will be negatively related to individual performance*  
*Hypothesis 2b: Goal ambiguity will be negatively related to team performance*

**Interactions.** Research has found situational conditions to have a moderating effect on the relationship between personality dimensions and performance. Barrick & Mount (1993) found autonomy does moderate the relationships between conscientiousness and performance, and extraversion and performance. Tett, Jackson & Rothstein (1991) showed moderators affecting the relationship between neuroticism and performance, but did not look at goal ambiguity. Barrick & Mount (1991) found no significant main effect for emotional stability (neuroticism) and performance, but found considerable variation indicating an interaction with the setting. Endler (1973) also found the interactions between neuroticism and the situation.

*Hypothesis 3a: The interaction of individual neuroticism and goal ambiguity will be negatively related to individual performance*

*Hypothesis 3b: The interaction of team average neuroticism and goal ambiguity will be negatively related to team performance*

## CONCLUSION

A model of the relationship between neuroticism and performance in team situations with goal ambiguity as a moderator was presented and several hypotheses were developed from this model. These hypotheses can be tested with an experimental design, with subjects completing a task (or set of tasks) under 2 conditions – a clear goal condition and an ambiguous goal condition. Various instruments are available to measure neuroticism. The dependent variable is performance on the task. The hypotheses can be tested using linear regression. A regression equation can be computed for each of the two levels, individual and team. An interaction term will be included to test moderator effects.

Neuroticism has been shown to show stability in longitudinal studies (Costa & McCrae, 1994; McCrae, 1993; Conley, 1984) and has a high degree of heritability (Floderus-Myrhed, Pedersen, & Rathmuson, 1980). This indicates that the actions available to managers are selection, job design and assignment, but not training. Implications for practice must be tempered with several considerations. The first consideration is that increased attention to individual dispositional characteristics may cause effects to be exaggerated or suppressed. The second consideration is the managers ability to assess neuroticism. The last consideration is the ethical implications of incorporating personality characteristics in hiring, job assignments and job design decisions.

Further research can explore role dynamics within the team (Stewart, Fulmer & Barrick, 2005). Role ambiguity rather than goal ambiguity may have an effect on neurotic individuals. Roles are at the individual level and may have a more direct effect on the individual than goals at the team level. Also the role of leader within the team as a moderator should be explored because leaders may lessen the ambiguity by providing interpretations and clarification of the situation.



# MULTIPLE JOBHOLDING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TURNOVER: EXAMINING THE DECISION TO MOONLIGHT OR QUIT

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## ABSTRACT

*Organization researchers often assume that 'the job' is the employee's only employment when exploring jobs and job related topics. This assumption simplifies the analysis but is misleading because it does not reflect reality. Multiple jobholding (moonlighting) warrants attention by organization scholars because additional employment provides workers with an alternative source of valuable work related outcomes such as income, training, and benefits. It also potentially changes their perceptions, decisions, and behaviors, and may impact their performance, absenteeism and turnover at their primary jobs. With such potential effects, organization researchers can develop more useful models if they consider the impact of moonlighting on the constructs and relationships they are studying.*

*In this paper, the one-worker/ one-job notion is set aside. First some background on multiple jobholding is presented. This is followed by a comprehensive turnover model adapted to include multiple jobholding. The model provides potential starting points for studying multiple jobholding and serves as an example of how multiple jobholding can be integrated into existing models in organization studies.*

## INTRODUCTION

When addressing jobs and job related topics in organization studies, the underlying assumption is that 'the job' is the employee's only employment. We rarely find an explicit statement acknowledging the possibility of multiple-jobholding. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that 5.0% of workers in the US were multiple jobholders in August of 2005 (BLS, 2005). In the 1980's, studies showed a much higher rate than the BLS reported among mixed occupations/ blue-collar/ rank-and-file workers of between 15.3% (Jamal & Crawford, 1981) and 20.9% (Dempster-McClain & Moen, 1989). Indeed, multiple-jobholding, or 'moonlighting', is a widespread phenomenon that has largely been overlooked in organization studies (Betts, 2002; Baba & Jamal, 1992; Jamal, 1986).

Moonlighting provides workers with an alternative source of valuable work related outcomes such as income, training, and benefits (Factor, 1991; Henry & Rogers, 1986). It also potentially changes their perceptions, decisions, and behaviors, and may impact their performance, absenteeism and turnover at their primary jobs (Aebi, 1998; Davey & Brown, 1970; Habbe, 1957). With such potential effects on the constructs and relationships they are studying, moonlighting warrants attention by organization scholars. Background information on multiple jobholding will be presented first. This will be followed by an example of how multiple jobholding can be integrated into an existing model in the field, by adapting a comprehensive turnover model to include multiple jobholding.

## MULTIPLE JOBHOLDING RESEARCH AND ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Moonlighting is commonly understood as having a second job, usually part-time, in addition to a primary job full-time job. Organization studies can greatly benefit by incorporating moonlighting into the current and classical models of the field. Organizational researchers concern themselves with the factors that influence the perceptions and behavior of the individual and the outcomes, both individual and organizational, of these perceptions and behaviors. Moonlighting or the possibility of moonlighting might change the perceptions, decisions, behaviors and ultimately outcomes of the primary job.

Moonlighting provides an alternative source of valuable work related outcomes. When moonlighting is considered, the primary workplace is no longer the sole supplier of work related outcomes. The outcomes of the primary job are replaced by a package of outcomes, the combined outcomes of the primary and moonlighting jobs. The relationship between the jobs may be supplemental, complementary or a combination. For example, if the individual looks to the second job for additional income, it serves a supplemental role. In contrast if the second job allows someone to express creativity that is suppressed on his/her primary job, the second job complements the first. The utility of the combined outcomes might become the relevant utility, which guides the decisions and actions of the individual.

In addition to providing outcomes of value to the individual, moonlighting might affect the behavior and work attitudes of an employee. It can affect the behavior of an individual by changing their ability or motivation at the primary workplace (Aebi, 1998; Davey & Brown, 1970; Habbe, 1957). Secondary jobs that utilize similar knowledge, skills and abilities to the primary job may result in a training effect with an increase primary job performance (Factor, 1991; Henry & Rogers, 1986). In contrast, a secondary job may be physically demanding and leave an employee physically unable to perform at a high level (Davey & Brown, 1970; Keill, 1991; Miller, Balkin & Allen, 1993).

Along with changes in the physical ability to perform on the job, a secondary job may affect the employee's motivation to perform. In fact, many job related attitudes and perceptions may be changed due to a change in the frame of reference afforded by the second job. Attitudes, perceptions and behaviors may additionally be affected by other factors related to the secondary jobs, such as changes in stress levels, competing demands, or realization of outside opportunities (Jamal, Baba & Riviere, 1998; Pearson, Carroll & Hall, 1994). Changes in attitudes and perceptions lead to changes in decision making and job related behavior, ultimately affecting individual and organizational performance (Jamal, Baba & Riviere, 1998).

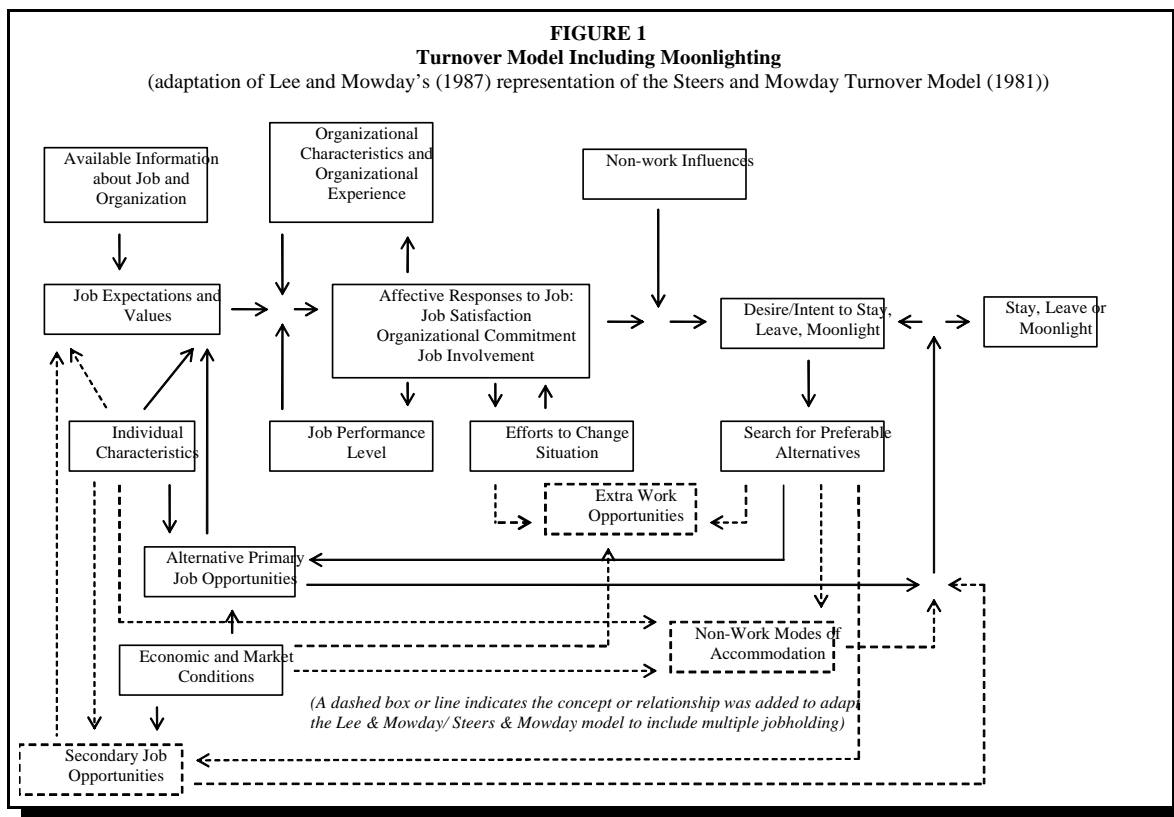
Although moonlighting is a widespread phenomenon, there has been surprisingly little empirical research into moonlighting. A recent review cited only 34 published empirical studies between 1963 to 1998 (Betts, 2002). Much of the research was descriptive in nature and it was primarily presented in economics or occupation specific journals. The available literature suggests several reasons why moonlighting has not been extensively addressed. One reason is that it is not seen as a pervasive enough phenomenon to warrant such attention (Baba & Jamal, 1992). This argument also fails to acknowledge that official government statistics grossly underestimate moonlighting rates (Baba & Jamal, 1992), and moonlighting among their peers might influence the decisions and behavior of many non-moonlighters. Another reason is that moonlighting activity could be viewed as an occupation specific phenomenon, however the literature shows that occupations with high moonlighting rates do not have unique characteristics, but rather have high degrees of characteristics that generally affect moonlighting.

Difficulty in obtaining data is the most valid reason for the lack of a systematic study of moonlighting (Baba & Jamal, 1992). Some researchers have partially addressed this problem by using a population with a comparatively high incidence rate of moonlighting; guaranteeing anonymity; distributing the questionnaires in the workplace; and aggressively following up and

encouraging individuals to respond (Bell & Roach, 1990; Jamal, 1986; Jamal, Baba & Riviere, 1998; Pearson, Carroll & Hall, 1994; Raffel & Groff, 1990).

### A MODEL OF TURNOVER INCORPORATING MULTIPLE JOBHOLDING

A comprehensive turnover model including moonlighting is presented as figure 1. The modifications to the original model are shown as dotted lines. Two critical assumptions of the initial turnover model were that the search for alternatives is associated with a desire to leave an organization, and that the ‘alternatives’ are other full time primary jobs. In the traditional turnover models if the worker strongly desires to stay at the original job there would be no search for an alternative, or vice versa. In the model the search follows the desire to leave the job (Lee & Mowday, 1987; Steers & Mowday, 1981). In other models (Mobley, 1977; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979) the search or desire to search precedes or is concurrent with the desire to leave. It is not necessary to take sides in this debate because it is ‘what’ is being searched for, not ‘when’ the search takes place that is important here. The worker might be looking for a supplemental secondary job instead of, or in addition to, searching for an alternative primary job.



The model indicates that various affective responses as well as ‘non-work influences’ predict the desire to leave or to stay. If the effects of these two sets of influences lead in opposite directions, specifically if the affective responses are positive but the non-work elements indicate that the job is inadequate, there is a desire to stay with a cause to leave. In the traditional models this tension has no clear resolution, but a desire for moonlighting might be consistent with both influences.

In the case of moonlighting it might be that the individual wishes to stay with the organization, yet still initiates a search for alternatives. In this case the 'desire to leave' is replaced by 'desire to moonlight'. The alternatives generated would be potential moonlighting jobs. One reason for such a search might be that the original job does not completely meet the needs of the individual. The moonlighting jobs found in the search would fill the unfilled needs of the worker and enable the worker to keep the original job.

A comprehensive inclusion of moonlighting into the turnover model allows for the search for alternative primary jobs, moonlighting jobs or both concurrently. A concurrent search for alternative primary jobs and moonlighting jobs might be the case if the affective responses and the non-work influences are in conflict as described above. In this case, the worker wants to keep the current job to some degree, but is open to the possibility of other jobs. In other words, when the worker is unsure whether moonlighting will be adequate and preferable to a new job, a search for both alternatives might be initiated.

The turnover model adapted to include moonlighting includes the consideration of secondary job opportunities, but also adds 'extra work opportunities' and changes the position of 'non-work modes of accommodation'. These other changes reflect a theme common in the moonlighting literature, the idea that there might be several ways to meet the needs and wants of the worker. Several moonlighting researchers have formulated the moonlighting decision as a choice between such alternatives as extra work (i.e. overtime), switching jobs (or careers), having a working spouse, moonlighting and adjusting goals (Allen, 1998; Alper & Morlock, 1992; Krisnan, 1990; Lakhani, 1995). Expanding the search to include extra work and changing the position of non-work modes of accommodation reflects this theme from the moonlighting literature.

The changes in the search decision to include moonlighting can be traced through the rest of the model. Although the empirical moonlighting literature is not extensive, it shows support for influences at several points. Consider the economic and market conditions, for example. The economic and market no longer only influences the availability and characteristics of alternative jobs but also of moonlighting opportunities, and other modes of accommodation. In this way the issue is not the availability and attractiveness of the alternative job, but the relative availability and attractiveness of switching jobs, moonlighting, overtime, having a working spouse, and other alternatives. The moonlighting literature supports this idea because moonlighting activity has been found to be related to moonlighting wage rate (Lakhani & Fugita, 1993; Bazzoli & Culler, 1986; Culler & Bazzoli, 1985; Shisko & Rostker, 1976; Lakhani, 1995), labor market constraints (Allen, 1998), supplemental salary (Smith & Cooper, 1967), spouse work status (Buch & Swanson, 1986; Miller & Sniderman, 1974; Jamal & Crawford, 1981; Smith & Cooper, 1967; Lakhani, 1995), spouse's job hours (Krisnan, 1990), and other sources of income (Miller, Presley & Sniderman, 1973).

The individual characteristics of workers, much like economic and market conditions, can influence the choice of mode of accommodation. It has long been established that individual characteristics influence the decision to voluntarily leave organizations (Lee & Mowday, 1987; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Mehline, 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973). There is also ample evidence linking moonlighting to a variety of individual level factors (Betts, 2002; Baba & Jamal, 1992). Since these factors have been found to affect both moonlighting and turnover decisions when examined separately, it seems reasonable that they would affect the choice between moonlighting and turnover.

The impact of considering moonlighting in the rest of the model is largely a matter of sensemaking and perspective. Perceptions of primary employer/job characteristics and job expectations might be altered by comparison with other organizations/jobs. The search for alternatives and consideration of moonlighting changes the frame of reference of the worker and salience of some ideas. For example, if moonlighting could result in significant additional income, the expectations of financial rewards from the primary job become less important.

## CONCLUSION

In the past the prevalence and potential impact of moonlighting have been grossly understated by organization researchers, and the possibility of multiple jobholding has been omitted from the models in the field. However, the influence moonlighting can have on an individual's relationship with his/her primary job justifies it as an object of investigation in organization studies. Multiple jobholding could be addressed as a primary object of study or as an influence in the existing and emerging models of the field. The model of the decision to moonlight provides a potential starting point for studying multiple jobholding itself. The purpose of the examination and modification of a turnover model to include moonlighting was to illustrate how moonlighting can be integrated into an existing model. Hopefully organization researchers will take the opportunity to relax the 'one person- one job' assumption and begin to consider the potential contribution of multiple jobholding to organization studies.

## REFERENCES

*(references available on request)*





## **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN MANAGING HISPANIC AND ASIAN WORKERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Diversity in the work force is growing rapidly and causing managers to have to deal with situations that they never had to deal with before. For many years diversity in the workplace has been a very popular issue to talk about. However, most of the conversations revolved around females and African Americans in the work force. Now a new type of diversity is being seen in the American workforce. Hispanics and Asians are migrating to the United States in large numbers and they are beginning to make up a large percentage of the American workforce. As a matter of fact, these two minority groups already make up over sixteen percent of the American workforce. So today managers have to be prepared to handle a much more diverse workforce. This paper takes a look at what managers must do to hire, manage, motivate, fire, and finally prepare for Hispanic and Asian minorities in the workplace.*



## **PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN THE SPANISH PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

#### **PURPOSE**

*Measure the impact of psychological harassment in the public sector and more specifically within the Galician University System in order to find methods of solving and preventing the problem.*

#### **DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH**

*The study sample consists of all the Administration and Services Personnel as well as the Educative and Investigative Personnel of the three Galician Universities. In this paper the results relating to the Educative and Investigative Personnel are presented. The data Q (question) was obtained through a postal survey that was carried out in 2003. This data has subsequently been supplemented with data L (Life) and data T (Test).*

#### **RESULTS**

*The results of the study allow us to determine which university and which collective is most affected by psychological harassment. A conclusion is also drawn regarding the kind of hostile behaviour employed, the reaction of the victim and the medical-psychological consequences together with the general attitude and the measures taken to deal with the situation.*

#### **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS**

*The consideration of a wide range of study and of a relatively diverse group of people. A low index of answer was obtained to extrapolate the data from the total range analysed. The subject is a sensitive one and can produce feelings of apprehension or reticence on behalf of the person answering the questionnaire.*

#### **POTENTIAL IMPACT. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

*The need to raise awareness among the organisations, in this case the Public University and the need to detect, identify, solve and above all to prevent these types of behaviour which are always going to result in the physical and psychological deterioration of a person. Make sure that people, whether victims or not (perhaps witnesses) are aware of the need to react, pursue, punish and above all to prevent these kind of situations.*

**ORIGINALITY/VALUE**

*This article provides an exhaustive analysis of the most serious work-related problem of our day - psychological harassment, taking into consideration some of the environments most prone to these kinds of behaviour - the public sector and, more specifically, the university system.*

## **AVOIDING THE TURNOVER COST FORMULA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*With United States corporations averaging 6% employee turnover annually and turnover costs ranging between 25% of the employee's annual salary to as high as 100% employee's salary, managers should re-evaluate their corporate culture to determine if it is conducive to enhancing employee retention. Studies have found that turnover cannot be attributed to a single variable, but is instead a factor of groups of variables, each of which changes depending upon the individual. The work environment, management style, job design, co-workers, employee orientation and training are all controllable entities that the organization can harness to maximize employee retention in their respective organizations. This, in turn, may lead to increased employee morale and job satisfaction. Leaders must recognize the importance that their actions and activities have toward attracting and keeping employees. The keys to harnessing these variables to maximize employee retention are outlined in this article. Managers will gain new insight of variables that will aid them in developing a corporate culture conducive to employee retention. Holding organizational leadership accountable for implementing concepts attributable to employee retention is the first step in retaining the organization's most valuable asset—employees, thus avoiding the calculation of the turnover cost formula.*



# **AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION: THE ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS OF HELPING OVERWEIGHT/OBESE EMPLOYEES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*America is the “fattest” nation in the world, and obesity has become an epidemic. Being overweight increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke. In addition, obesity is costing U.S. businesses as much as \$117 billion a year in health care costs, reduced productivity, and absenteeism. This paper defines obesity, discusses the causes, enumerates the costs to organizations, describes what companies can do to help their overweight employees, and describes the benefits organizations will receive.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States has the distinction of being the “fattest” nation in the world. At one time obesity was strictly a personal problem; now, those who weigh enough to be referred to as obese must battle privately with a condition that threatens their health, and a social stigma so insidious that it has been called the last acceptable prejudice in modern society (Kogon, Gaisford & Hutzul, 1999). Obesity is an epidemic in America. Being overweight increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, the number one killer of women, and opens the door to other risk factors like diabetes and hypertension. Add an inactive lifestyle to the mix and the risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke increases (Schmidt, 2003). Not surprisingly, Americans keep getting fatter. In fact, in 2001, more than 44 million people were obese, a figure that was up 74% from ten years earlier (Pofeldt, 2003).

If doctors announced that nearly a fifth of our nation’s children were exhibiting signs of typhoid, there would be a panic. But for the past ten years, public officials have been warning of another problem every bit as life-threatening and even more difficult to treat: childhood obesity. Fifteen percent of children, nine million children, are seriously overweight, a rate that has tripled since 1970. Once kids get fat, the odds of losing weight and keeping it off are depressingly small (Tyre & Scelfo, 2003). The 2001 report “The Surgeon General’s Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity” identified overweight and obesity as major public health problems costing U. S. businesses as much as \$117 billion a year and posing as large a threat of morbidity as poverty, smoking, or problem drinking. In addition, as smoking and cigarette use declines, obesity rates keep growing. In fact, rates have increased across all ages, races and ethnic groups, both genders, and every State (Kuchler & Ballenger, 2002).

This paper will define obesity, discuss the causes, delineate the costs to organizations, describe what companies can do to help their overweight employees, and discuss the benefits organizations will receive.



## DEFINITION

According to the National Institute of Health, nearly two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight and nearly one-third are obese (Roberts, 2003). Men with more than 25% body fat and women with more than 30% body fat are generally defined as obese (Merx, 2004). Physicians consider a person to be obese, if s/he weighs more than 20% above expected weight for age, height, and body build. Morbid or malignant obesity is when a person is over 100 pounds above that expected for age, height, and build (Obesity, 2004).

Appearance matters in the world of business. For example, more attractive people earn more and less attractive people earn less. Researchers have found that good-looking men and women make close to 5% more than average-looking individuals. Unattractive people, especially men, get less (as much as 9% less) and homely women got about 5% less than those with average looks. In addition, height was a critical factor in male earning potential. For each 4-inch increase in height, a male's earnings rose 2%. Height, however, did not statistically affect females' wages, nor did weight affect males' earning. Weight, however, did affect income potential for women. The heaviest 3% of women are 20% less likely to be married, have household incomes averaging \$6,710 lower than those who weighed less and were 10% more likely to suffer from poverty (Laabs, 1995).

Sixty-one percent of adults in the United States are overweight or obese. These numbers have steadily risen, with obesity figures alone tripling since 1980. Overweight individuals are at an increased risk for a wide range of conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer, breathing problems, arthritis and psychological disorders such as depression. Even more importantly, obese adults have a 50 percent to 100 percent greater chance of premature death, with an estimated 300,000 deaths a year attributed to obesity (O'Rourke & Sullivan, 2003).

## CAUSES

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, life expectancy was about half of what it is now, and most deaths resulted from infectious diseases such as cholera, malaria, influenza and the like. With the conquest of most of these diseases in the industrialized world, along with public health measures, the major health threats today are degenerative diseases such as coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke and Alzheimer's disease. We are fat and getting fatter. There are a myriad of reasons why Americans are overweight and/or obese:

1. Ambivalence - Supermarkets are simultaneously filled with "low cal" and "low fat" foods, adjacent to tempting high-caloric, high-fat foods.
2. Excess of food - We are built to eat food when it becomes available. We are now faced with a surfeit, in both amount and variety. A study has found that people consume extra calories from daily snacking. In fact, the average number of daily snacks has risen by 60% since the late 1970s (Koretz, 2003).
3. Advertising - People are being encouraged to eat constantly. Art galleries, bookstores, shoe stores, and have food. (Frumkin, 2003).
4. Reduction in activity - Technology has reduced the amount of physical effort that most people need to earn a living. In addition, the Surgeon General reports that less than one-third of adults get the recommended amount of physical exercise while 40% are not active at all (O'Rourke & Sullivan, 2003).
5. Television and the computer - The leading causes of obesity include genetics, inactivity, and the increased time spent with television, video games, and the computer (Spector, 2003).
6. Emotional eating - Emotional eaters eat no more than nonemotional eaters. They do, however, indulge in foods high in fat and calories.

7. Urban sprawl – Residents of countries characterized by urban sprawl are more likely to weigh more, be obese, and have high blood pressure. The daily commute, which can last hours, encourages eating and drinking and adds calories to our diet. We drive more and walk less (Petersen, 2003).
8. Stress – More than 100 million Americans spend the majority of their day at a worksite. The expanded workweek, an increased reliance on technology, and the escalating stress in today's fast-paced, highly competitive work environment, all present significant barriers to weight loss (Miller, 2002).
9. Overwork – Meetings are scheduled before 7 a.m. and sometimes people work into the night. If an employee flies, his/her biological clock is often a wreck. If people drive, they may be stuck in a car for long periods of time. By the end of the day, they are stressed out, talked out, meetinged out. Thus, the "couch potato work-out" – lying on the bed watching TV - is understandable (Fitness on the Road, 1992).
10. Unpleasant work environment – Employee discontent, high absenteeism, missed production deadlines, accidents, colleagues who are backbiters, complainers, and slouchers all contribute to added stress in the workplace.

The relentless exposure to daily, chronic anxiety is the most toxic form of stress. It can actually be poisonous, wearing down the immune system and increasing the risk of everything from colds to cancer. Stress can damage the brain, causing memory problems, it can lead to heart attacks, and premature death. Also, it can make a person fat. On a daily basis Americans are spending their days awash in a toxic bath of stress hormones (Spencer, 2003). The end result is that every year, the typical American now consumes 149 pounds of caloric sweeteners, 54 gallons of soda and 200 pounds of mostly refined grains (Obesity, 2004).

### **COSTS**

The potential costs associated with obesity should be of significant concern to employers. According to the U. S. Surgeon General, in the year 2000, costs related to obesity totaled \$117 billion - \$61 billion in direct costs and \$56 billion in indirect costs (Obesity, 2004). Obese individuals often take longer to recover from ailments and injuries, experience more absences from work, can suffer injuries more easily and are likely to die sooner than their healthy-weight counterparts. All of those consequences mean it costs more to insure them, and that is raising the cost of insurance and of doing business (Merx, 2004). In addition, obesity is associated with 39 million lost work days, 239 million restricted-activity days, 90 million bed days, and 63 million physician visits (Obesity, 2004).

Today, more than ever, companies understand the need to take proactive measures to ensure the health and well-being of their employees as it has a direct impact on productivity and the bottom line. However, workplaces with prevention programs often neglect to treat obesity as a problem on par with smoking and excessive alcohol consumption when, in fact, obesity has outstripped both in terms of health care costs and its impact on workforce productivity. About one in three Americans is overweight, and one in five is obese (Miller, 2002).

While some employers view overweight and obesity as a personal lifestyle choice, some employers have tried to sweet talk their employees into changing their lifestyles, dangling incentives such as gym memberships and smoking-cessation programs, some employers are now taking a tougher approach. For example, the Union Pacific Corp recently stopped hiring smokers in seven states. In Alabama, public employees who are obese are being charged higher health premiums. Employers say they are targeting smokers, the obese, and those with chronic diseases because they make up a disproportionate, and rising, portion of their health bill (Wysocki, 2004).

## WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO HELP

Happy employees are productive employees, so the saying goes. Today's version might be healthy employees are happy employees who are then productive employees. Although many companies remain skeptical about the cost savings and increased productivity benefits resulting from health promotion, promoters believe that healthy employees will be absent less frequently, will be less likely to injure themselves on the job, will file fewer and less costly insurance claims, and will be more effective and productive on the job (Mason, 1992). There are a number of things employers can do to help their overweight and obese employees:

- Make on-site programs, like Weight Watchers, available at work.
- Sponsor or subsidize health club memberships
- Give a reduction in health care costs to people who do not smoke and people who work to reduce their weight.
- Encourage employees to walk during their lunch hours.
- Ban cars, forcing employees to park away from the workplace so they would have to walk to the building.
- Make elevators slow and make wide-windowed staircases to encourage people to walk rather than ride the elevators.
- Implement a wellness program in the company that targets smoking, alcohol abuse, stress, and obesity.
- Bump up health care deductibles to \$2,500 from \$500 and then give employees a chance to win back the increase: \$500 each for low blood pressure, low cholesterol, non-obese body-mass index, and nonsmoking status (Wysocki, 2004).
- Begin a disease management program which might include flu vaccinations, cancer screenings, smoking cessation programs, 24 hour nurse telephone line, back care, stress management and offer nutritional programs (O'Rourke & Sullivan, 2003).
- Capture senior management support.
- Include family members in a wellness program because 60-70% of healthcare claims come from employees' dependents (Mason, 1992).
- Provide people with a refrigerator in which to keep healthy snack.

## ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS

If American businesses want to relieve the stress of obesity on corporate bottom lines, they need to help their overweight workers slim their own bottom lines (Merx, 2004). Some rewards for taking action include:

1. Improvement of the health and productivity of employees – Employees who are overweight and lose weight usually feel better and work better.
2. Increase in morale of employees – In a poll by the National Business Group on Health, more than half (56%) of the companies reported increased morale among their work force as a result of their fitness and other programs.
3. Savings in health care costs – Successful programs will reduce health risks and result in lower claims on health care costs.
4. A better workplace and work-life balance for employees – The job site is a major part of most people's day. Companies that facilitate and promote fitness can benefit from the knowledge that they are providing better lives for their employees (Obesity, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

As health-care costs increase, a rising number of companies are using workplace-wellness programs to improve employees' health and reduce medical claims. With overweight and obese employees costing American business up to 117 billion dollars a year, it may prove beneficial to help employees with the "battle of the bulge." What companies will receive in return is a happier, healthier, more productive workforce.

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## **TEAMING IN OUACHITA PARISH: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study explores the use of teams in businesses operating in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. Data from a structured interview survey include the types of teams used in work environments, team leadership, development activities, performance measures, reward structures, perceptions of team effectiveness and impact on several performance outcomes. Thirty percent of the thirty-one participating organizations utilize a variety of teaming structures and indicate a high level of satisfaction with teaming. The most common challenges for effective teaming reported by participants were scheduling team meetings and motivation. Nearly fifty percent of the organizations in the study continue to use traditional work group structures and report lower levels of effectiveness. Of the firms using teams, forty percent have plans to increase the use of teaming in the future.*



## **STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

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*Modern American universities often evoke images of laurelled sanctuaries where higher learning is facilitated in a unique and particularly safe environment. Yet, college education is filled with potential safety risks for students” (Bickel & Lake, 1999). Over the past decade, the idea of college campuses being carefree environments where individuals safely transition into independent adults has slowly eroded. Media reports of violent acts toward students illustrate that they are not protected from theft, murder, assault, rape, stalking, harassment, hate crimes, terrorism, natural disasters and other school conditions that may bring harm. Many of these violent acts and harmful conditions put students at risk within the confines of collegiate life, where they presumably feel secure.*

*Through a 3-part longitudinal study of student opinions about safety concerns, this paper explores to what extent college students’ opinions about their own safety on college campuses are impacted by external conditions. College of Business students attending a four-year, regional university were surveyed shortly after 9/11, in the Spring of 2005, and again in the Fall of 2005 after the affects of Hurricane Katrina. Results from this study may provide universities with an indication of which safety issues students are most concerned with, and whether time and/or external conditions affect specific concerns.*





# SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: EXPLAINING THE UNDER-REPORTING OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAIMS

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## ABSTRACT

*Sexual harassment is a pervasive problem in today's organizations. Studies estimate that 50% of women and 17% of men (Fitzgerald, 1990; Gruber, 1990) have been sexually harassed at work. However, while the number of women and men who claim to have been sexually harassed is quite high, few victims of harassment file a formal claim with their organization or with the EEOC. According to Fitzgerald (1995), less than 25% of women who have been sexually harassed inform a supervisor and less than 10% file a formal grievance.*

*Experts on this topic agree that there are still questions concerning what makes an employee more likely to file a sexual harassment charge. To explain why an employee would file a compliant, previous studies have examined issues such as power, aggression, personality and organizational justice (MacKinnon, 1979; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). Unfortunately, current statistical models show that these variables explain only a small portion of the variance in an individual's tendency to file a claim.*

*In this study, we propose the use of economic variables to explain an individual's disposition to make a sexual harassment charge. This approach is significantly different from previous research. Firm by firm data is most commonly used to study sexual harassment, not national level data. However, it is generally accepted that economic conditions would have an effect on an individual's response to sexual harassment (Knapp, 1997). Knapp assumed that during periods of weak economic conditions, a harassed employee would be less likely to make a formal charge of harassment for fear of retaliation or job loss. To help rule out history or other effects at the national level, we also examined other forms of discrimination filed with the EEOC (religious, race, national origin, and sex discrimination) to see if they too were affected by economic data.*

*Monthly data for harassment claims for the previous twelve years was provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was correlated with economic data, specifically the unemployment rate. We included a measure of the general unemployment rate and the unemployment rate for women. Findings from this study show that there is a strong negative correlation between reported sexual harassment cases and the US unemployment rate ( $-.890, p > .001$ ) and between reported sexual harassment cases and the participation rate of women ( $.850, p > .001$ ). However, there were no significant correlations between reported religion/race/national origin/sex discrimination cases and the unemployment rate.*

*These results strongly suggest that a harassed employee may feel insecure in their ability to file sexual harassment charges and still retain their position within the company. Considering the difficulty in filing a sexual harassment charge, some employees may choose to quit their job before filing a compliant with the organization opting instead to sue the company afterward. However, during times of high unemployment when jobs are less easy to find, employees who are harassed may choose to protect their job and not file charges.*



## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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*Over the last decade, students, parents and faculty have been reminded that higher education suffers from the same problems as other institutions. Beginning in the 1980's, several high profile cases alleging sexual harassment by university faculty brought to light significant problems that existed in academia (Fitzgerald et. al., 1988). As time has progressed, it also became increasingly evident that sexual harassment is present not only in colleges and universities, but also in high schools, junior highs and even elementary schools (AAUW, 1993; Bates, et. al., 1996; Lee, et. al., 1996; Shalit, 1993; Stein, et. al., 1993). The purpose of this research is to ascertain the types of sexual harassment that are of most concern to college students and to determine if gender plays a role in how sexually harassing behaviors are reported. In this study, we surveyed 208 undergraduate business students attending a university in the southern U.S. The sample included 88 males and 120 females. Results indicate that there appear to be substantial differences in male and female perceptions about what behaviors are considered sexually harassing. Also, some students in the study had both observed and been victims of sexual harassment on campus by both professors and other students. However, most students reported being a victim of student-to-student sexual harassment rather than professor-to-student.*

*The results of this study may provide information about how college men and women perceive and experience sexually harassing behaviors. Recognizing and addressing student to student harassment is particularly important for schools and educators. The costs of sexual harassment to higher education are high, including possible monetary damage awards to victims and negative impacts on enrollment when the university's level of safety is questionable. More important than the costs of legal action and loss of reputation, universities should be concerned about the potential harm that sexual harassment can have on its victims.*



# THE IMPLICATIONS OF AT-WILL VERSUS JUST-CAUSE EMPLOYMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*There are several different employment relationships that may exist between employer and employee. Two of these relationships include employment at-will and just-cause employment. The type of employment relationship that exists in an organization is very important when it comes to the termination of an employee and the possibility of being sued for wrongful discharge.*

*This information is important because risk management is critical to the well being of every successful institution. Just-cause employment can create many legal problems if an employee is terminated and the documentation was not in place, was not thorough enough, or the termination was simply not justified. An employment at-will relationship will remove many, if not most, of these risks.*

## INTRODUCTION

Employees in the United States are divided into two classes – those employees who are at-will and those employees who are just-cause (Standler, 2000). Likewise, there are two types of employment contracts, definite term and indefinite term contracts, both which may be either oral or written. A thorough research of the nuances of employment relationships has been undertaken and presented here.

## EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL

There are many variations of the definition of employment at-will, although they all have the same basic premise: an at-will employee can be terminated at any time and for any reason, or for no reason at all, with or without notice (Standler, 2000).

Often quoted, the following statement regarding employment at-will appears in the 1884 Tennessee case, *Payne v. Western & Atlanta Railroad Co.*, 81 Tenn. 507, 519-520, 1884 WL 469: “All may dismiss their employees at will, be they many or few, for good cause, for no cause, or even for cause morally wrong, without being thereby guilty of legal wrong” (Standler, 2000). This at-will doctrine from the 1800’s provided employers with the flexibility to control their workplace by discharging employees when there was a loss of economic demand. This doctrine also provided employees with an easy way of leaving a job if better employment became available or if working conditions were tolerable (West Group, 1998).

Over the years, courts and the legislature have modified the employment at-will doctrine. One exception is the whistleblowers’ legislation, which recognizes that an employee “should not be terminated because the employee refused to act in an unlawful manner, attempted to perform a duty prescribed by statute, exercised a legal right, or reported unlawful or improper employer conduct” (West Group, 1998).

In the absence of a union contract or a written employment contract, “the at-will rule acts as a gap filler: absent a separate employment contract guaranteeing job security, the employment is presumed to be at-will – permitting the employer to discharge the employee for any reason, so long as no statute is violated” (USA Today, 1998).

The employment at-will rule has changed over the years with exceptions being created for certain classes of employees. Those represented by trade unions and civil servants were the first to be excluded from the at-will doctrine. There are now numerous statutory exceptions to the employment at-will rule, including the following: National Labor Relations Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Consumer Credit Protection Act. Michigan also has several state exemptions based on the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act, Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act, and the Michigan Whistleblowers' Protection Act (Glazier, 2001).

Employment contracts can be categorized as definite term or indefinite term. A definite term contract is for a fixed period of time whereas an indefinite term contract has no stated duration. "Indefinite term contracts are frequently called at-will contracts" (Brodie, 1991). The individual employee's contract may be written or oral, however, most are oral contracts. In many cases there was little or no negotiation about the terms of the contract, and the employer's offer may have been accepted merely by the employee showing up for work (Brodie, 1991).

Employee handbooks are often mentioned along with the impacts they may have on employment at-will status. Employment at-will can be altered by policies, such as discipline policy, which may include a list of misconducts that could result in discharge. This could imply that an employee could only be terminated for just-cause. Legal experts suggest a disclaimer in handbooks declaring that employees are considered at-will and may be terminated at any time (Alexander Hamilton Institute, Inc., 2000).

Although employment at-will was the legal governing concept of most employment relationships, prior to 1970 the term "employment at-will" was never talked about in personnel offices. It was so obvious that the employment relationship could be terminated "at-will" that there was no need to discuss it. Today, however, the situation has changed. More and more employers have found themselves in "expensive hot water after exercising their historic right to terminate any employee for 'any reason, no reason – even a bad reason'" (HRnext, 2000). While all of the employees do not win, the threat of litigation and damages means increased responsibility for the personnel department and the added cost of legal representation. Lawyers charge by the hour – often from \$125 to \$500 – and when a case goes to trial it can last months or even years, costing tens of thousands of dollars (Sorkin, 2001).

## JUST-CAUSE EMPLOYMENT

Many companies have personnel policies that provide that employees will only be disciplined or discharged for just-cause. Just-cause means having legitimate reason to invoke formal discipline. It means a real cause for dismissal as distinguished from an arbitrary whim . . . what a reasonable employer, acting in good faith in similar circumstances, would consider a good and sufficient reason for termination ('Lectric Law Library, 2001). Over the years, Indiana University Human Resources developed seven elements that set the standard of just-cause. All seven of these elements must exist: adequate warning, reasonable related rules, fair investigation, substantial proof, equitable treatment and past practice, appropriateness of discipline and pre-determination meeting (University Human Resources, 1998).

Just-cause employment is further defined as "misconduct on behalf of the employee that prejudices the employer's business" (Atkinson, 2001). Misconduct may be habitual neglect of duty, incompetence, willful disobedience, insubordination, dishonesty or intoxication. It should be noted that an allegation of just-cause is serious and could affect an employee's ability to find future work. Just-cause should not be treated lightly, as the courts for false or unsubstantial allegations of just-cause have awarded damages. In cases of poor performance, employers have a general duty to warn the employee about his performance or lack of and the need to improve. The employee must be

given sufficient time to improve before being dismissed on the grounds of just-cause (Atkinson, 2001).

The simplest and most beneficial way to establish a just-cause contract is to enter into a written employment contract for a specific period of time (Mycounsel, 2000). In *Toussiant v. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan* (1980), the court recognized that just-cause was implied in a contract for a particular period of time (Employment Law Central, 1998). "Unless a contract for a specific term expressly contains language supporting the employers right to terminate at-will, it will be construed to require a good reason for termination" (Glazier, 2001).

One of the most important aspects of just-cause employment is the employee evaluation process, by which just-cause can be determined. Just-cause employment requirements, or definite term contracts, potentially give greater job security to employees than at-will contracts. The employee can reasonably expect that favorable evaluations will contribute to job security. When the employee avoids actions that may be considered just-cause, again, they can reasonably expect a more secure future. On the other hand, when the employer can show the existence of cause for the employee's discharge, the employer has the strongest defense in the event of wrongful discharge (Brodie, 1991). It is important to be honest and consistent with employee evaluations. If a discharged employee files a lawsuit, a judge or jury will analyze the employer's evaluations and other actions regarding that employee as well. "It's just as damaging to give an employee glowing praise in report after report – perhaps to make the employee feel good – and then to fire him or her for a single infraction . . . unfair employers often lose court fights, especially in situations where a sympathetic employee appears to have been treated harshly" (Nolo Law For All, 2001). Employees who receive excellent evaluations shouldn't need to be fired for poor performance.

The just-cause concept consists of a procedural component and a substantive component. The procedural component is concerned with the evaluation process that will determine if just-cause exists. The substantive component deals with the identification of specific actions or omissions on the part of the employee that may lead to discharge. Many employers issue an employee handbook, which lists specific examples of just-cause violations. Courts have generally agreed that such listings are illustrative and not complete or exclusive.

The courts have further identified economic conditions as being adequate basis for a finding of just-cause dismissal. This allows employers to respond to changing economic conditions and take action related to relocation, reorganization or reduction in workforce (Brodie, 1991).

## SUMMARY

Many organizations currently use both at-will and just-cause employment in the course of hiring. This scenario can be confusing to the employees and to supervisors. It may not be clear to employees or supervisors just what employment at-will or just-cause employment means or how termination of an employee differs depending on their current employment relationship.

During the course of this research, it was determined that raising the level of knowledge regarding employment relationships is very important, as supervisors are unclear as to grounds of dismissal and documentation required.

After exploring the different alternatives, between at-will and just-cause employment it appears that the best proposal would be to change to one type of employment, and add in the component of employee and supervisor training at specified intervals during their employment. This would reduce confusion, increase knowledge and lessen the risk of lawsuits caused by unknowledgeable supervisors.

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# **MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION YOUR FIRST PRIORITY: AN EMPIRICAL LOOK AT DETERMINING THE RELIABILITY OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Many decisions we make in our everyday lives are based on judgments made from minimal or limited interaction. When you enter a retail store for the first time, why do you select a particular sales clerk to assist you? When hiring a person, what traits do you look for? In teaching, what tone do you set on the first day? These and many other concerns are all affected by first impressions.*

*First impressions are important. Most people evaluate you within the first three or four seconds you meet. Often a decision is made based on your appearance, how you walk (your body language) and how you speak. These judgments are normally irreversible. We sometimes wish that people did not make these judgments, but they do.*

*First impressions can be identified in many forms. Some of these might include: the business card, the web page, the voice on the phone, the appearance of the office or store, your logo or brand image, how the employee is dressed, their speech patterns, their body language and other methods.*

*Most of these first impressions are made based on "snap judgments" or stereotypes drawn from prior experiences. As an example, if you see a male sales representative with long hair and an earring, a prior bad experience with a person with long hair and an earring might cause you to project your impressions of that bad experience on a new person you meet for the first time, without giving them the chance to prove otherwise. As educators, we are preparing students for the real world of work. An all-important aspect of the real world experience is getting a job. It may seem simple but in some cases it is not.*

*A good resume may get you in the door but you still must sell yourself and a key factor of selling yourself is making a good first impression. There are no second chances at making a spectacular first impression. Those first few seconds of contact set the tone of the interview and become a benchmark for every subsequent impression you make.*



# **EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Employer of Choice (EOC) status has been touted as yielding competitive advantage in securing human resources. The attainment of Employer of Choice is believed to provide an edge to the organization in the competition for the recruitment and retention of top talent. The assumption is that such a strategy will yield a competitive advantage for the employer yet this assertion has not been subjected to the rigors of academic study. This paper discusses the issues surrounding EOC as a strategy and presents, based on existing theory, empirically testable propositions.*



## **EDITORIAL TIPS TO IMPROVE THE PUBLISHING PROBABILITY OF YOUR MANUSCRIPT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Seven years as the editor of a state educational association's refereed journal and current experience as editor of a large national association's yearbook have provided insight into the do's and don'ts of getting a manuscript published. Major blunders are a sure-fire way to have your manuscript rejected outright. Other not-so-major mistakes may delay your publication date; or, where extremely competitive journals are concerned, even minor problems may result in rejection. Even authors whose manuscripts report extensive and innovative primary research may find their publication delayed or rejected when editorial guidelines are not followed meticulously.*

*There are several steps authors may take to improve their chances of having their manuscripts accepted for publication. Likewise, there are pitfalls to avoid. Factors to consider include writing style, consistency, coherence, organization, structure, formatting, software selection, and graphical representations.*

*Actual samples (authors not identified) from manuscript submissions will illustrate positive examples to emulate as well as mistakes that might result in rejection.*



## **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: IMPORTANT CONSTRUCT OR QUICK FIX FAD?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Employee engagement is a hot new term in management circles. Many organizations now measure their employees' level of engagement and to attempt to increase those levels of engagement because they believe it will improve productivity, profitability, turnover and safety. The current research explores questions concerning how the construct employee engagement is defined and compares and contrasts it with other existing, well-validated constructs. It discusses positives and negatives of employee engagement research and the application of the construct.*





## **AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CULTURAL ADAPTABILITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of the study was to determine if there are relationships among international business students and their cultural adaptability. In the quest for preparing American students for work in the global marketplace, information concerning their international counterparts would be beneficial to understand of the importance various international cultural adaptability. Business students who have an understanding of cultural adaptability will make the workplace more effective, more productive, more open, less hostile and more dynamic.*



## LET'S PARTY: THE REMARKABLE GROWTH IN DIRECT SALES

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### ABSTRACT

*While sales for the total United States' retail industry grew less than 3 percent per year over the decade between 1994-2003, the United States' direct sales industry grew at the rate of 7.1 percent year. Direct sales totaled nearly \$30 billion in 2003, and topped \$85 billion worldwide. This article investigates the cultural factors that are contributing to this trend.*

*Factors which appear to explain this growth in direct sales include: "Cocooning" – the desire to perform the majority of social and cultural interactions from home rather than by going outside, new approaches to marketing, differences in male and female satisfaction to factors of retail selling, and gender biases in corporate earning potential.*

### INTRODUCTION

Direct selling is a distribution method where products are sold by an independent product consultant or representative directly to the end user. Direct selling is also called interpersonal selling or face-to-face selling. While sales for the total United States' retail industry grew less than 3 percent per year over the decade between 1994-2003, the United States' direct sales industry grew at the rate of 7.1 percent year.

Mary Kay and Avon cosmetics, Fuller brushes, Stanley home cleaning products, Pampered Chef cooking products, and Kirby vacuum cleaners have always been sold direct to the customer through door-to-door or in-home party sales. Avon was founded in 1886, and through direct sales has grown to 4.9 million sales representatives selling \$7.7 billion dollars worth of products. Mary Kay started her company in 1963 using direct selling methods she learned from selling Stanley Home Products door-to-door. The company now has 1.3 million sales representatives who sell \$1.8 billion dollars worth of products. The Pampered Chef was started in 1980 and now has 70,000 direct sales representatives. Warren Buffet was so impressed with the company, that in 2002 he bought it as part of the Berkshire Hathaway family of companies.

New start-up companies have also incorporated the direct sales model in their business structure. For example, Tomboy Tools, located in Colorado and Claytime, headquartered in Kansas depend on independent direct sales consultants for their product sales.

What is perhaps more intriguing, however, is the number of companies with well-established retail outlets that have added a direct sales subsidiary.

Lillian Vernon, established in 1951, with 4,500 employees began "Celebrations by Lillian Vernon" in 2004.

Department 56, established in 1976, with 3000 products began "Time to Celebrate" in 2002.

The Body Shop, established in 1976, with 1,900 company stores began "The Body Shop at Home" in 2002.

Binney & Smith—the Crayola company, established in 1903, began "Big Yellow Box by Crayola" in 2002.

Jockey, established in 1876, with 5000 employees, has just begun its "Jockey Person-to-Person" program.

All these direct sales programs use independent consultants who sell established products at home parties. GNO is a new acronym widely understood in the direct sales industry to stand for "Girls' Night Out," "Guys Night Out," or "Group Night Out," depending on the product being sold.

What explains the rapid increase in direct sales? That is the question addressed by this paper.

### COCOONING

In 1992, futurist Faith Popcorn identified a cultural trend she thought could be expected to influence business over the next ten years. She named the trend Cocooning – “the desire to perform the majority of social and cultural interactions from home rather by going outside.” (Popcorn, 1992) In her 1998 book, *Clicking*, she expanded the idea, citing examples of how the Internet and e-commerce were enabling the trend (Popcorn & Marigold, 1998).

The bombing of the World Trade Center in September, 2001, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the election campaigns of 2003 served to add to consumers’ fears about leaving their homes and families, thus adding to the cultural impact of the Cocooning trend. Evidence of the continuing influence of this trend is easy to find. For example, products for home use accounted for 80 percent of the \$4 billion worth of fitness equipment sold in 2004 (Troy, 2005). The Home Theater Installation business increased 10 percent in 2003, and that business is likely to grow even more rapidly with home remodels still on the rise and prices on big-screen televisions falling (Desjardins, 2004). A very strong housing market nationwide has resulted in large gains in all do-it-yourself home improvement categories. Somewhere between one and two million children are now home schooled, and the number is growing 5 – 15 percent per year (Oppenheimer, 2005).

Because direct selling allows consumers to buy from the safety of their homes, any growth in the Cocooning trend benefits direct sales companies. The Direct Selling Association reports that 55 percent of Americans has purchased goods or services through the direct sales channel (DSA, 2004).

### TRYVERTISING

According to Trendwatching.com, an international trend agency headquartered in Amsterdam, a new cultural trend is developing called “Tryvertising” (www.Trendwatching.com, 2005). Rather than mass advertising, Tryvertising companies allow consumers to make up their minds based on their experience with a product, rather than as a result of a marketing message. Consumers become familiar with new products by actually trying them out. Some examples of this trend include samples of White Diamond perfume enclosed in *Vogue* magazine, tastes of Dreyer’s ice cream offered at the end of the frozen food aisle in Safeway, Select Comfort Sleep Number beds available in Radisson resorts, and Colgate-Palmolive soaps supplied to all Carnival Cruise staterooms.

This growing Tryvertising cultural trend blends well with the Party approach to direct sales. Pampered Chef consultants show customers how to use the products to cook a meal that the attendees then eat. Tomboy Tools consultants show customers how to use the tools by demonstrating common household repairs like changing a faucet or patching a wall. Mary Kay consultants show customers how to give themselves a facial and how to apply makeup. By the end of the party, customers have had hands-on experience with the products, and know whether or not the product will work for them.

### GLASS CEILING

According to the U.S. Direct Selling Association, 79.9 percent of direct sellers are female. When asked why they went into direct sales, 31 percent replied “It is the business I am in.” Other reasons were “To earn additional income – 36 percent,” “To receive discount/wholesale prices – 29 percent,” and “Other – 4 percent” (DSA, 2002). Of all direct sales consultants, 99.9 percent are

independent contractors, small business owners who set their own income goals and their own work schedules (DSA, 2004). Over 35 percent have college degrees, and an additional 8 percent have post graduate degrees (DSA, 2002).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005), full-time, year-round female workers earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by male workers in 2004. In each of the 20 industry sectors, men earned more than women, and in the sector "Management of Companies," the wage gap was the worst. In that sector, women earned only 54 cents for every dollar their male cohorts earned.

The direct selling industry offers women an opportunity to create and manage their own businesses, thus avoiding the glass ceiling. Their income is directly related to their own efforts. The larger the sales organization they build and manage, the larger their income.

One example of a woman who has grown her direct sales business into a successful multimillion dollar company is Leslie Caperton, who sells Pampered Chef products in Virginia. She began in 1994, and ten years later manages a group of consultants with sales of \$3.7 million.

### WOMEN AS CONSUMERS

Studies have shown that women consumers have different expectations of the shopping experience than men. For example, wait time and product knowledge were shown to be relevant to women's perception of a positive retail experience, whereas those factors were not relevant to men (McIntyre, Lynch, & Hite, 2003). The direct sales Party presents products in a way which meets these expectations of women. The consultant is selling only one product line, and thus has excellent product knowledge. The product is demonstrated, so the customer also gains excellent product knowledge.

Because the products are sold in a casual in-home atmosphere, the customer does not have to wait to gain the attention of the retail clerk, and thus wait time is not an issue.

Marigold and Popcorn (2000) observe that a powerful way to market to women is to go to them. By taking the product to the customer (work, home, soccer games, etc.), a company builds loyalty. Women appreciate the ability to multitask – to make every minute in a busy day count.

Marigold and Popcorn also found that connecting a company's female customers to each other connects them to the company. Direct selling usually occurs in a customer's home. Her friends are invited to share company, food, and the opportunity to try out a product. Thus the Party approach provides a perfect method for connecting customers to each other.

### CONCLUSION

Multiple cultural trends have combined, with the result that direct sales are growing at over twice the rate of standard retail sales. Cocooning, tryvertising, the glass ceiling, and differences in gender expectations of the shopping experience will most likely result in the continuation of this growth.

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## **SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRIT AT WORK: SPIRITUAL TYPOLOGIES AS THEORY BUILDERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This article is an examination of the concept of spirituality with a focus on the workplace. It examines how the concept has been often confused and intertwined with specific religious ideas over the years. It also looks at the current, newfound emphasis on spirit in the work setting. This article offers a framework for spiritual typologies. Finally, the paper provides a two-fold definition of spirituality, which will assist researchers in a variety of disciplines to further the inquiry into the spiritual dimension of work.*





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