

**Allied Academies
International Conference**

**Reno, NV
October 3-5, 2007**

**Academy of Organizational Culture,
Communications and Conflict**

PROCEEDINGS

Table of Contents

CAREER PORTFOLIO – ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN THE JOB SEARCH RECIPE. 1
Lon Addams, Weber State University
William Neal, Brigham Young University– Hawaii
Denise Woodbury, Southern Utah University

GENDER DISTINCTIONS AND EMPATHY IN NEGOTIATION. 3
Linda L. Barkacs, University of San Diego
Stephen Standifird, University of San Diego

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND JOB SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF JOB-FOCUSED SELF- EFFICACY. 5
Christopher J. Mathis, Jackson State University
Ulysses J. Brown, III, Savannah State University

A COMPARISON OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS PERCEIVED VALUE OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES. 9
Donald E. English, Texas A & M University-Commerce
Edgar Manton, Texas A & M University-Commerce
Janet Walker, Texas A & M University-Commerce

HOW TO CREATE AN EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ORGANIZATION?. 11
Mehmet Ali Gurol, Karamanoglu MehmetBey University, Turkey

WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME WHEN I’M 64? THE BOOMERS AT WORK. 15
Pamela R. Johnson, California State University, Chico
Julie Indvik, California State University, Chico
Claudia Rawlins, California State University, Chico

A COMPARISON OF THE READABILITY OF PRIVACY STATEMENTS OF BANKS, CREDIT COUNSELING COMPANIES, AND CHECK CASHING COMPANIES..... 23
Stephen D. Lewis, Middle Tennessee State University
Robert G. Colvard, Middle Tennessee State University
C. Nathan Adams, Middle Tennessee State University

CONTINGENT TIME OFF: A NONFINANCIAL PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVE PLAN REVISITED..... 29
Diane L. Lockwood, Seattle University

EMOTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL SUPPORT: EXPLORING CONTRASTING INFLUENCES ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INNOVATION. 31
Millicent Nelson, Middle Tennessee State University
Jeff Brice, Jr., Texas Southern University

JOB DESIGN FROM AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE. 33
Paula W. Potter, Western Kentucky University

CAREER PORTFOLIO – ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN THE JOB SEARCH RECIPE

Lon Addams, Weber State University
William Neal, Brigham Young University– Hawaii
Denise Woodbury, Southern Utah University

ABSTRACT

The career portfolio was an emphasis of the late Dr. Kyle Mattson throughout his career. He helped us to understand the potential impact of career portfolios for our students. We appreciate his early input on our article. Hopefully, this article is worthy of his memory.

- February 6, 2007

*As business professors, we teach our students to market goods and services. However, we are less diligent in teaching them to market themselves. We teach them how to write a resume and a cover letter. We help them sharpen their interviewing skills. But our recipe is not complete. Campbell (2002 and 2006), McPherson (1998), and Powell & Jankovich (1998), suggest that students need to be more engaged. Now, we can add another ingredient in the recipe for job search success – the **career portfolio**. Our students will be even better prepared for a successful job search and career.*

GENDER DISTINCTIONS AND EMPATHY IN NEGOTIATION

Linda L. Barkacs, University of San Diego
lbarkacs@sandiego.edu

Stephen Standifird, University of San Diego
stephen2@sandiego.edu

ABSTRACT

Litigation entails extremely high transactions costs and businesses are highly motivated to avoid it. Among the various methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”) designed to obviate litigation, highly developed negotiation skills are critical. Although everyone should seek to cultivate their negotiation skills, research indicates that very real gender distinctions can and do exist in a negotiation setting. While women seem to risk being judged more harshly when asserting themselves in negotiation, they may conversely be the beneficiaries of being seen as more empathetic. This paper will examine gender distinctions in negotiation and will explore the value of empathy in conflict management.

INTRODUCTION

Gender differences are the most researched topic in negotiation (Lewicki, 2007). When we speak of gender in the context of negotiation, we are referring to the “cultural and psychological markers of the sexes,” not biology (Lewicki, 2007). Most research in the area focuses on the role of women in society and its effect on negotiation outcomes. Few researchers would posit that there are purely biological explanations of negotiator behavior (Lewicki, 2007). So are there actually differences in the negotiating behavior of males and females? Or is it simply society’s expectations that lead us to see differences that don’t truly exist?

Research indicates that there are differences in approaches, expectations, and yes, outcomes of negotiation based on gender. This paper will endeavor to do three things. First, we will review past and current research to identify gender differences based on empirical research. Second, we will look at how and why these differences impact the outcomes of negotiations. For example, are males and females treated differently for assertive or aggressive negotiation behavior? And what role, if any, does empathy play in negotiation? Finally, we offer suggestions that we hope will “even the playing field.”

IDENTIFYING GENDER DISTINCTIONS IN NEGOTIATION

Prior to the 1990s, research in the area of gender differences typically neglected the importance of relationships in negotiation (Lewicki, 2007). Moreover, much of the research prior to this time treated gender as “a stable set of characteristics that describe all women (or men) in negotiation situations” (Kolb, D., and G.G. Coolidge, 1991). Assuming that males and females do

differ in their approaches to negotiation, then exactly what are those differences? There are several prevailing theories. We approach these theories keeping in mind the caveat that not all females behave the same way, just as all males do not behave the same way.

REFERENCES

Lewicki, Barry, and Sanders (2007). *Essentials of Negotiation* (Fourth Edition). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Kolb, D., and G.G. Coolidge (1991). *Her place at the table: A consideration of gender issues in negotiation*. In Rubin, J.Z., and J.W. Breslin (Eds.), *Negotiation theory and practice* (pp.261-277). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Program on Negotiation.

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND JOB SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF JOB-FOCUSED SELF-EFFICACY

Christopher J. Mathis, Jackson State University
christopher.j.mathis@jsums.edu

Ulysses J. Brown, III, Savannah State University
brownu@savstate.edu

ABSTRACT

This research examined the mediating effects of job-focused self-efficacy on the relationships between work-family conflict and the facets of job satisfaction (work, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers). Using covariance analysis, we found that job-focused self-efficacy mediated the relationship between work-family conflict and the promotion and supervision facets of job satisfaction. We discussed implications, limitations, and future research suggestions.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The proposed research examined JFSE as a specific personality characteristic mediating the relationship between WFC and the job satisfaction facets. Job-focused self-efficacy has its roots in self-efficacy research. According to Bandura (1982), self-efficacy is classified as an individual's perceptual judgment or belief of "how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 122). Self-efficacy expectations, which refer to beliefs about one's ability to successfully perform a given task or behavior, may be important mediators of behavior and behavior change (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, JFSE is an individual's belief that may influence the impact of WFC on the job satisfaction facets.

Previous research and role strain theory offered the notion that the feelings about a job are apart of life's feelings in general, and thus job satisfaction increases life satisfaction and job dissatisfaction decreases general satisfaction (Payton-Miyazaki & Brayfield, 1976). Given the intensive demand on an individual in the work domain, an individual with higher levels of JFSE could influence the relationship between WFC and the different dimensions of job satisfaction. Therefore, an individual's JFSE may determine whether he/she believes the responsibilities of the job can be handled, which may reduce the impact on the conflict between work and family, making the individual's potential job satisfaction greater. In the view of the previous literature, we offer the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: JFSE will mediate the relationship between WFC and the job satisfaction facets. Specifically, the relationship between WFC and satisfaction with (a) work, (b) pay, (c) promotion, (d) supervision, and (e) co-workers will be mediated by JFSE.

METHODS

We administered the survey electronically to various United States citizens including employees of the Southeastern state agency, alumni of northeastern and southern universities, and current graduate business students who were employed in diverse organizations and across various functional areas. The criteria for inclusion in our study were that the participant be employed in an organization and work at least forty hours per week. Interested individuals who met these criteria were electronically sent an invitational letter with a link to the survey entitled, 'Job Satisfaction Survey.'

Of the 914 questionnaires distributed, 298 responded; however, the convenient sample consisted of 260 completed questionnaires for a 28% response rate. The participants in this study ages ranged between 21 to 65 years. Females constituted 71.9% of the sample. The sample consisted of 77.3 percent African Americans and 16.9 percent Caucasians. The marital status of respondents was as follows: 45% single, 38.5% married, and 11.9% divorced. In our sample, 41.9% had a college degree, 32.3% had a Master's, and 2.7% had a Doctorate. Most respondents (85.4%) had been employed in their present position between one to eight years. Respondents indicated that 42.3% of them had children under the age of 18.

The constructs were measured by using instruments found in the work-family conflict literature with a 7-point Likert scale. Work-family conflict was measured using the Netemeyer et al. (1996) scale. The internal reliability for WFC is .919. This study used the 30-item instrument Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) developed by Gregson (1991) to measure satisfaction. The alphas for the dimensions of job satisfaction are work (.862), pay (.820), promotion (.809), supervision (.881), and coworkers (.791). The Personal Efficacy Belief scale was used to measure JFSE (Riggs, Warka, Babasa, Betancourt, & Hooker, 1994). The reliability for JFSE is .743. We used structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the research hypotheses by using the LISREL computer program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). To examine model fit, we utilized measures of absolute fit and incremental fit to determine how well my data fit the hypothesized model (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2005)

RESULTS

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess dimensionality and fit of the measures used in the model. The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is a measure of absolute fit of the model by comparing the fitted model with the actual data, and ranges from 0-1. Values greater than 0.90 demonstrate that the model fits the data well (Hair et al., 2005).

The measurement model (baseline) had acceptable fit indices. That is, the Chi-square statistic was at its minimum, and the p-value was nonsignificant. The GFI was above its recommended threshold level of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2005), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was less than 0.08, indicative of an acceptable model (Steiger & Lind, 1980). The Chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom coefficient was less than three, which indicates acceptable model fit (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1995). The CFI, NFI, and TLI all indicated an acceptable fit of the model to the data.

MEDIATION MODEL

We modified our baseline model to include paths from WFC to the five facets of job satisfaction (i.e., work, pay, promotion, supervision, and co-workers). The mediation model had acceptable fit indices.

Partial support was established for Hypothesis 1 because JFSE partially mediated the relationship between WFC and some of the job satisfaction facets. That is, the path from WFC to JFSE was statistically significant; in addition, the direct path from WFC to job satisfaction-promotion was also significant, indicating partial mediation. Further support was established for Hypothesis 1 because the path from WFC to job satisfaction-supervision was statistically significant as well. Mediation was not established for the following facets of job satisfaction: work, pay, and coworkers. In sum, support was established for Hypotheses 1c and 1d because the promotion and supervision facets of job satisfaction partially mediated the WFC-job satisfaction relationship in our model.

DISCUSSION

This study emphasizes the importance of mediation testing in the work-family conflict literature. Job satisfaction-supervision, job satisfaction-coworkers, and WFC were significantly correlated with JFSE. However, only one item, the WFC finding, was consistent with a previous literature finding in this area (Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001). In addition, Erdwins et al. (2001) found that overall job satisfaction was significantly correlated to JFSE but Jex and Gudanowski (1992) did not.

Apparently for African Americans (represented 77% of the sample), WFC was negatively related to JFSE in our structural equation model. JFSE was negatively related to job-satisfaction promotion and positively related to job satisfaction-supervision. Thus, JFSE partially mediated the relationship of WFC and job satisfaction-promotion and WFC (H1c) and job satisfaction-supervision (H1d).

CONCLUSION

Using structural equation modeling, the current research investigated the effects of job-focused self-efficacy as a mediator of the relationships between the facets of job satisfaction and work-family conflict. We found that only the promotion and supervision facets mediated the WFC-job satisfaction relationship. This research employed the mediation of JFSE and the five facets of job satisfaction and found that work-family conflict was a significant predictor of both the promotions and supervision facets of job satisfaction. Work-family conflict was not a significant predictor of the work, pay, and coworkers facets of job satisfaction.

This study represents one of the first to examine the mediator effects of JFSE on the relationship between WFC and job satisfaction facets. Our findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge because this study provides additional evidence and importance of examining the mediating effects of JFSE, which provides a more sensitive analysis at the individual level.

A future area of inquiry would be to compare the results of a structural equation model that uses a global measure of job satisfaction directly with another model using the facets. In addition, studies are needed that compare and contrast robust samples of minority group members in this area of research. We also believe that longitudinal designs are needed in this area to examine the behavior of these constructs and whether they wax or wane over time.

REFERENCES

- Arbuckle, J. L., & Wothke, W. (1995). *Amos 4.0 user's guide*. Chicago: Smallwaters Corporation.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist*, *37*, 122-147.
- Erdwins, C. J., Buffardi, L. C., Casper, W. J., & O'Brien, A. S. (2001). The relationship of women's role strain to social support, role satisfaction, and self-efficacy. *Family Relations*, *50*(3), 230-238.
- Gregson, T. (1991). The separate constructs of communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *51*(1), 39-48.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2005). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
- Jex, S. M., & Gudanowski, D. M. (1992). Efficacy beliefs and work stress: An exploratory study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *13*(5), 509-517.
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1996). *Lisrel 8: User's reference guide*. Chicago: Scientific Software International.
- Payton-Miyazaki, M., & Brayfield, A. H. (1976). The good job and the good life: Relation of characteristics of employment to general well-being. In A. D. Biderman & T. F. Drury (Eds.), *Measuring work quality for social reporting* (pp. 105-150). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Riggs, M. L., Warka, J., Babasa, B., Betancourt, R., & Hooker, S. (1994). Development and validation of self-efficacy and outcome expectancy scales for job-related applications. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *54*(3), 793-803.

A COMPARISON OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS PERCEIVED VALUE OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

Donald E. English, Texas A & M University-Commerce
Edgar Manton, Texas A & M University-Commerce
Janet Walker, Texas A & M University-Commerce
donald_english@tamu-commerce.edu

INTRODUCTION

For years, research studies and articles have emphasized the importance of communication skills. Today these communication skills have become more essential in obtaining employment and for advancing in a business career. What business communication skills do university business graduates need? There has been an abundance of literature in recent years concerning needed business communication skills and abilities. What business communication competencies do business communication instructors and human resource managers believe are most important? Are colleges and universities providing graduates with the needed business communication competencies currently required in the business world?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem of this study is to determine which business communication competencies business communication instructors and business communication students perceive to be most essential. The business communication competencies studied include:

1. writing and speaking competencies
2. intrapersonal competencies
3. interpersonal/collaborative competencies and
4. global communication competencies.

METHODOLOGY

Communication skills used for this study were derived from the following sources: various research studies identifying critical management communication skills, a locally developed College of Business and Technology advisory group listing of communication skills and knowledge essential for a business major, and from various journals and business communication textbooks. After the business communication skills were identified, a questionnaire was developed and mailed to business communication instructors in the Southwestern and Southeastern Regions of the

Association for Business Communication. The questionnaire was also distributed to students enrolled in business communication classes at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

HOW TO CREATE AN EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ORGANIZATION?

**Mehmet Ali Gurol, Karamanoglu MehmetBey University, Turkey
magurolus@yahoo.com**

ABSTRACT

Employee involvement programs are created to help the success and sustainability of the organizations. However, the workability/effectiveness of such a program is greatly dependant on certain factors relating to the resources and the culture of an establishment. In other words such programs happen to be a function of those factors unique for the workplace. Having to get the desired results this formulation needs to be done in a realistic manner as to supply optimal outcome both for the organization and the workforce.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS AS A TOOL TO BENEFIT THE ORGANIZATION

In general it is believed that employee involvement programs benefit the workplace in many ways helping the maximization of its output and life time in the market it is operating in. It could be defined as a participative process where full capacity and commitment of the workforce is being used and made available for the success of the organization, including popular ideas [of our time] such as employee participation or participative management, workplace democracy, empowerment, and employee ownership. To be a technique that enables productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction, while it does not mean that it always maintains employee performance, it could be beneficial under right conditions (Robbins, 2003).

The creation of such a program needs special skills and knowledge in this field. However, to work efficient in practice there are a number of ways and means over a certain spectrum starting from reaching intranet links or information to making the earner of a part of the profits by employing a profit sharing system or as an extreme end making each a shareholder of the company they work for. The final tool (employee share ownership) that used to be much popular in the United States in 1980s as a part of the Reganomics was later copied by other countries like England (1987) and many others particularly starting with those changing from a controlled economy to a market one.

The idea in creating such programs is to build a sociable and motivating atmosphere within the organization enabling employees to display their best feat and functioning. One significant issue in their making is the assets, resources and the culture of the workplace. For having a unique character each establishment needs to construct a unique formulation of its own. This should be accomplished in a way as to maximize both worker satisfaction and organizational output.

GETTING THE BEST RESULTS FROM AN EIP IN THE WORKPLACE: OPTIMIZING THE OUTCOME OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

As mentioned above, the making of an EIP depends on the existing possessions of an organization. Those possessions being concrete and/or inconcrete in nature all play some role in the success of an employee involvement program. In other words an EIP happens to be the function of all such possessions acting as factors in the equation. Each such factor should be considered and weighed so to get the best results for the success of the program. Basically, these can be outlined as the tangible and intangible assets, management styles, internal and external environment, labor market conditions, diversity, culture, and indiscriminant policies.

Tangible (concrete) assets prevails as a significant factor affecting the working of an EI program for being the origin of material rewards to be consumed for worker satisfaction and motivation. This is followed by reliability and consistency as the two valuable intangible assets of the organization. Trust and confidence injected to the system work as a tying agent preventing high turnover thus extra costs to be originating from the recruiting and orientation of new employees where as a couple could be more effective than the material rewards.

Management style prevailing in a workplace is correspondingly important in the achievement of such a program. The person in charge of the management should also have leadership qualities in order make the program more sustainable, operative and productive through adding enthusiasm, spirit and compassion forming a new blend. An effective teamwork can be realized in an atmosphere reflected by such leadership permitting the flourishing of new ideas, formulations, ways and means in the system.

Quality of the internal environment and rules governing the external environment are two other components shaping EIPs. The rectitude and virtue of interpersonal relations and interdependence between people within an internal system is a significant factor in this case. Such atmosphere binding people thus support organizational benefits also means an available ground for such programs. Characteristics of the external environment of an organization are similarly a vital issue for its functionability and competitiveness. Organizations should be open to and be in cooperation with off-limits to adapt changes in their constantly altering surroundings. Such negantrophic disposition will additionally affect the quality and durability of an EI program.

Likewise, conditions for demand and supply of labor in the market are an additional substantial factor in the making of an EIP. At times where the demand is high workplaces happen to be more willing to create such a program. In contrary, when the supply is high such tendency, willingness will be fewer. As mentioned by Vitols (1997) regulatory constraints setting "remuneration, use and dismissal of labor" in parallel affect the desires triggering the make of such programs.

Diversity defined as "the concept that organizations are becoming more heterogeneous in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and inclusion of other diverse groups" (Daft, 2003) is one significant factor that needs to be placed in the said equation. It could and could not work for the profit of the system. While in its optimal form is a useful component in creating new and original ideas, a better vision, etc, in contrary, happens to be detrimental when such heterogeneity moves over that favorable level. In the former case the chance of workability of an EIP will become more possible. Diversity is a concept affecting the culture of an organization. As commented by Nonaka %

Takeuchi (1995) the culture so the shared values in a system "orients the mindset and action of each employee" (Nonaka&Takeuchi, 1995). Cultural integrity and steadiness is one significant condition in the creating a healthy employee involvement program. Similarly, a unified, commonly accepted and adopted culture needs to stand on a basis people not discriminated for their natural, social and cultural characteristics. In approaching individuals management should be indiscriminative in the case of qualifications like age, sex, family background, race, seniority, education and, expertise. Such indiscriminative behavior is shielded under law in some countries, equal employment opportunity in employee selection (despite leading tensions between the employer and the government) one good example (Potter, 1986). An indiscriminating workplace will be one ideal place to settle an EIP.

Items above are not restrictive where many others could be added to the equation. Consequently, an EIP necessitates a media that is open, tolerant, accepting and without prejudgment. It also needs to be supported with material resources to be balancing those of immaterial origin.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Accordingly, an employee involvement program shows to be a function of tangible assets and intangible assets, management/leadership styles, internal and environment, labor market conditions, diversity, culture and equal treatment (indiscriminating qualities). A change in any of those factors will affect the quality so the functionality of the program that need to be an optimal combination of all. In order to secure such optimality so the effectiveness of an EIP changes in conditions so requirements must be followed by revisions in certain intervals. Such balance should be set in a way yet to consider both the employee satisfaction and the organizational output thus the profitability and sustainability.

REFERENCES

- E.E. Potter (ed.), *Employee Selection: Legal and Practical Alternatives to Compliance and Litigation*, National Foundation for the Study of Equal Employment Policy, Second Edition, Washington, 1986, s. iii.
- I. Nonaka & H. Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company, How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, (NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1995), s. 167.
- S. Vitols, "German Industrial Policy: An Overview", *Industry and Innovation*, Volume 4, Number 1, June 1997, ss. 15-19.
- M. Coulter, *Organizational Behavior*, International ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), ss. 194, 195.
- S.P. Robbins & M. Coulter, *Management*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), s. 444.

WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME WHEN I'M 64? THE BOOMERS AT WORK

Pamela R. Johnson, California State University, Chico
Julie Indvik, California State University, Chico
Claudia Rawlins, California State University, Chico
pjohnson@csuchico.edu

ABSTRACT

Boomers are about to redefine retirement. Instead of surfing and mountain-biking, Boomers will spend at least part of retirement not in leisure at all, but working, sometimes for pay, out of necessity, and sometimes for free, just because it is so personally rewarding. Not long ago, many employers looked askance at older workers, figuring they lacked the drive and imagination of their youthful cohorts. Times are changing. This paper will describe the stereotypes and myths of older workers, discuss the laws that cover older workers, describe the brain drain that is occurring in American business, detail what some companies have done, and describe what managers can do to retain Boomers while continuing to enhance their company's bottom line.

INTRODUCTION

“Retirement at sixty-five is ridiculous. When I was sixty-five, I still had pimples.”
George Burns

The leading edge of the Boomer generation, those born in 1946, were 18 when the Beatles made their U.S. debut on the Ed Sullivan Show and 23 when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon. In 1974, they watched Nixon's televised resignation speech, and they witnessed the historic fall of the Berlin Wall 15 years later. Boomers' demographic influence cannot be underestimated (Rheault, 2006). Their youthful defiance is forever enshrined in popular culture by their “Make Love, Not War” motto and their song “The Age of Aquarius.”

Wherever the Boomers went, the cultural zeitgeist followed. When they were born, there was a baby boom. When they went off to school, there were overcrowded classrooms and double sessions. When they hit puberty, there was a sexual revolution. When they went off to college, there was unrest on campus. When they entered the job market, there was record employment. When they started buying homes for the first time, home prices soared. When they started buying second homes, real estate prices skyrocketed (Steidtmann, 2006). And with annual spending power now estimated at more than \$2 trillion, they are about to redefine retirement (Rheault, 2006).

The vision of a traditional work-free retirement is yielding to a new notion of a work-filled retirement. We need to change retirement's image, not just to include forever-young Boomers surfing and mountain-biking, rather than playing shuffleboard. The real change is more radical. Growing number of Boomers will spend at least part of retirement not in leisure at all, but working

– sometimes for pay, out of necessity, and sometimes for free, just because it is so personally rewarding. It is a different picture from what we usually see, but it is full, richer, and more complex (Colvin, 2006).

Not long ago, many employers looked askance at older workers, figuring they lacked the drive and imagination of their youthful cohorts. And besides, went the reasoning, younger people would work for less money. Times are changing. Many businesses today are starting to view the mature worker as an essential commodity. This stems less from humanistic concern, and more from changing demographics: workers are getting older and their replacements are getting scarcer (Perry, 2005). In fact, some 74 million Boomers (over 40% of the US labor force) are posed to retire in large numbers by the end of this decade. In industries already facing labor and skills shortages, forward-thinking companies are recruiting, retaining, and developing flexible work-time arrangements and/or phased retirement plans for those workers (55 years of age or older), many of whom have skills that are difficult to replace. Such actions are putting these companies ahead of competitors who view the aging workforce largely as a burden putting strains on pension plans and healthcare costs (America's Aging Workforce, 2005). This paper will describe the stereotypes and myths of older workers, discuss the laws that cover older workers, describe the brain drain that is occurring in American business, detail what some companies have done, and describe what managers can do to retain Boomers while continuing to enhance their company's bottom line.

STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS

“Age-based retirement arbitrarily severs productive persons from their livelihood, squanders their talents, scars their health, strains an already overburdened Social Security System, and drives many elderly people into poverty and despair. Ageism is as odious as racism and sexism.”

Claude Pepper

Stereotyping is judging, reacting to, or treating another person on the basis of one's perception of the group to which that person belongs or in which they have been placed. The terms old or older describe a group of people to which certain characteristics are assigned. They may include positive traits such as experience, good judgment, strong work ethic, and a commitment to quality. In a more negative vein, older workers have been characterized as lacking flexibility, resistant to new technology, unwilling or unable to learn new skills, and unable to change or adapt. Many people attribute high absenteeism, and high job turnover to the older population due to the stereotype of a physically and mentally declining individual (Lord & Farrington, 2006).

Bureau of Labor Statistics show that in 2002, those age 25-54 made up about 76% of the work population and experienced 75% of the recordable work injuries involving days away from work. Those age 55 and older accounted for approximately 13.6% of the working population and contributed to only 10.4% of the recordable injuries involving days away from work. The productivity data show that those people in the 55+ age bracket also appear to be more productive than their younger counterparts. A possible explanation for this seemingly counterintuitive phenomenon may be that work and life experience help free up attention and/or physical capacity through more efficient means of task completion (Haight, 2006).

There are numerous myths and misunderstandings that suggest age and health are bad for business. Health is influenced by many factors, namely lifestyle, activity, and nutrition. The good news is that the general health of older adults is improving. Older workers generally have lower number of absences than their younger colleagues, and older workers have a more positive attitude toward complying with health and safety in the workplace. In addition, we know that as people grow older, both physical and mental capacity does change with age. However, recent evidence demonstrates that any variation in brain function in older adults is not decreased function, but simply different from younger adults. Mental functions can even improve with increased experience. Also, older workers can generally compensate for any decreases in speed by increases in quality and accuracy. So there are positive attributes of increased age, including attention to detail, increased knowledge, experience and understanding (Alker, 2006).

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

“Retirement kills more people than hard work ever did.”

Malcolm S. Forbes

For employers, a graying workforce creates both opportunity and potential liability. Opportunity lies in using older workers’ skills to fill gaps occasioned by the declining birth rate. But liability will arise if your organization improperly excludes, marginalizes or tosses aside older workers. They will fight back, and they will find strong allies. Between 1997 and 2003, age discrimination plaintiffs recovered more money from juries than did any other protected group. Juries’ support for age discrimination plaintiffs is less about empathy and more about narcissism. Aging is universal; we cannot say that about any other protected group.

When enacted in 1967, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protected individuals from age 40 to age 65 only, thus permitting employers to impose mandatory retirement at age 65. The age 65 ceiling was increased to 70 in 1978, and in 1986, Congress finally eliminated the age 70 ceiling, with a few narrow exceptions. Now, even Methuselah could not be forced to retire solely because of his age (Segal, 2006).

Yet, age discrimination is common at work. More than one in five workers over the age of 50 say that they have experienced discrimination either when applying for jobs or in the workplace (Grainge, 2006). Failure to adjust ageist assumptions has proved costly in the United States. For example, Ford Motor Company was forced to pay \$10 million to settle class action claims when it was shown that performance scores for older workers were consistently low. The scores were being used as a basis for redundancy selection (Donkin, 2006).

And, if you think that workers are like fine wine and improve with age, it does not violate the federal ADEA to target older workers for recruitment. The Supreme Court in its decision *General Dynamics Land Systems Inc. v. Cline*, 540 U.S. 581 (2004) concluded that there is no such thing under the ADEA as reverse age discrimination. A group of employees between the ages of 40-50 had challenged their employer’s decision to eliminate its future obligation to pay retiree health benefits to any worker then under 50 years of age while preserving future entitlement to such benefits for older employees. The Court found that there was no evidence that younger workers suffered when their elders were favored (Smith, 2006).

BRAIN DRAIN

“A man is known by the company that keeps him on after retirement age.”

Anonymous

Given that most societies are geared to retirement at around 65, companies have a looming problem of knowledge management, of making sure that the Boomers do not leave before they have handed over their expertise along with the office keys and their e-mail address. A survey of human resource directors by IBM last year concluded that when the Baby Boomer generation retires, many companies will find out too late that a career's worth of experience has walked out the door, leaving insufficient talent to fill the void. Some companies also face a shortage of expertise. In aerospace and defense, for example, as much as 40% of the workforce in some companies will be eligible to retire within the next five years. At the same time, the number of engineering graduates in developed countries is in steep decline (Special Report, 2006).

Employees preparing to fill the shoes of Boomers lack experience with the position and sometimes the company. Networking, corporate culture, and customer communication, both internal and external, are often difficult for generation X and Y employees because they cannot be accomplished through e-mail or memos. Trainees may not understand building business relationships personally (Bernhart, 2006). To alleviate this problem, the most seasoned employees should spend more time, not less, sharing knowledge. If a company took their most valuable experts off the job for two days a week and they spent that time mentoring and coaching less experienced staff, the impact over two years would return their investment 10-fold, because they would be spreading their skills. And, most people are keen to help younger generations (Paine, 2006).

Mentoring is essentially the pairing of two individuals, one of whom needs to acquire the expertise possessed by the other. While the process is similar to coaching, mentoring usually targets more subtle skills requisite to the enhancement of career potential. Examples include: dealing with customers in productive and sensitive ways that encourage loyalty, cultivating a creative mind-set that produces profitable ideas for the organization and applying oneself in ways that go beyond the job description into the area of power performance.

Smart mentoring does more than lock in profitable talent; it also motivates participants. Mentors enjoy ego boosts when they make a difference in other people's lives. After all, everyone appreciates recognition for hard-won talents. Mentees, for their part, enjoy greater control over the reins of their careers. Indeed, mentoring can be a valuable recruitment tool (Perry, 2006).

WHAT SOME COMPANIES HAVE DONE

Some companies that are concerned about a wave of retirements are getting creative, including offering programs that let employees technically retire, yet stay connected to their employers. For instance, Southern Company, an Atlanta-based electric utility company with 25,000 employees, has created a “retiree reservists pool” for its Georgia unit, a data base of several hundred retired workers who can be called on during hurricanes and other emergencies to train new hires, and to staff short-term projects. In addition, Lincoln National Corporation put together a task force to design flexible work arrangement for older employees who want to work part time or take longer

vacations. Also, IBM taps some retirees to work on special projects so they can share their expertise with younger workers. And, Home Depot, in partnership with AARP, has decided to recruit older workers, many of them laid off from other companies (Greene, 2005).

Of course, some companies are not working hard to keep older employees. Some companies believe that hanging on to older workers is not the only way to cope with a falling supply of labor. The participation of developing countries in the world economy has increased the overall supply. In addition, a vast amount of work is being sent offshore to such places as China and India and more will go in the future. Some countries, such as Australia, are relaxing their immigration policies to allow much needed skills to come in from abroad. Others will avoid the need for workers by spending money on machinery and automation. Yet, older workers are an obvious source of labor, partly because a survey found that 39% of Americans over 54 now doubt they will have sufficient money for old age (Special Report, 2006).

WHAT MANAGERS CAN DO

“Eternal rest sounds comforting in the pulpit; well, you try it once, and see how heavy time will hang on your hands.”

Mark Twain

Employers need to begin now to build integrated strategies to encourage employees with valuable skills and experience to stay in the workforce while the organization transfers their expertise or develops/recruits the talent needed to replace them. Like any commodity, older employees are getting more valuable as they get scarcer. A few things managers can do to retain their Boomers include:

- Eliminate stereotypes
- Motivate older workers
- Distribute work fairly
- Encourage postponement of retirement
- Allow flex time
- Invite retired employees back at least once a year for a company luncheon.
- Develop a post-retirement data base noting skills and experience of each retiree.
- Update performance management and reward systems
- Allow working at home

CONCLUSION

“Rest is a good thing, but boredom is its brother.”

Voltaire

The culture and values of the older worker are significant assets for the companies that choose to attract and retain them. These values include commitment and loyalty to the employer, fewer sick days, reduced injuries, and enhanced length of service. As the workforce ages and contracts, skilled workers will increasingly come at a premium. Managers who fail to respond to the threat will put their future growth and profitability at risk, while missing out on the benefits of greater age diversity. To be successful in an increasingly competitive market place, managers need to attract and retain Boomers and, yes, love them when they're 64.

REFERENCES

- Alker, L. (2006, October/November). Managing an ageing UK workforce. *The British Journal of Administrative Management*, 12-12.
- America's aging workforce poses new opportunities and challenges. (2005, November), *Pension Benefits*, 14(11), 10-12.
- Bernhart, M. (2006, November 1). Preparing for a skills shortage, work intensification. *Employee Benefit News*, 1.
- Colvin, G. (2006, June 26). Ready or not here it comes! *Fortune*, 153(12), 28.
- Donkin, R. (2006, September 28). Clash of the generations leaves employers bruised. *Financial Times*, London, 9.
- Grainge, Z. (2006, September 15). Age concerns. *Utility Week*, 26(1), 30.
- Greene, K. (2005, September 20). Bye-bye Boomers? Companies may face exodus as workers hit retiring age; some bosses are afraid to ask. *Wall Street Journal*, B1.
- Haight, J. (2006, July). Designing for an aging workforce. *Professional Safety*, 51(7), 20-33.
- Lord, R., & Farrington, P. (2006, September). Age-related differences in the motivation of knowledge workers. *Engineering Management Journal*, 18(3), 20-26.
- Paine, N. (2006, May). Let us learn more from our elders. *Human Resources*, 45.
- Perry, P. (2006, September/October). Smart mentoring: When skilled employees share their knowledge. *Rural Telecommunications*, 25(5), 46-48.
- Perry, P. (2005, November). Golden oldies. *Industrial Distribution*, 94(11), 47.
- Rheault, M. (2006, Fall). Happy birthday, Boomers. *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Retirement Planning Guide*. 34-36.

Segal, J. (2006, February). Time is on their side. *HRMagazine*, 51(2), 129-133.

Smith, A. (2006, October). EEOC approves targeting of older workers for recruitment. *HRMagazine*, 51(10), 29-30.

Special report: Turning boomers into boomerangs – The ageing workforce. (2006, February 18). *The Economist*, 378(8465), 75.

Steidtmann, C. (2006, April 15). Gray matters. *Progressive Grocer*, 85(6), 109.

A COMPARISON OF THE READABILITY OF PRIVACY STATEMENTS OF BANKS, CREDIT COUNSELING COMPANIES, AND CHECK CASHING COMPANIES

Stephen D. Lewis, Middle Tennessee State University
Robert G. Colvard, Middle Tennessee State University
C. Nathan Adams, Middle Tennessee State University
slewis@mtsu.edu

ABSTRACT

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) of 1999, which repealed the Glass-Steagall Act, did away with many of the restrictions placed on financial institutions. One major focus of the act was the protection of personal information of consumers. The act required a clear disclosure of a company's privacy policy regarding sharing customer information with affiliates and third parties.

Implicit in the act was the idea that privacy policies would be in plain language. This research sought to determine the readability of privacy policies of banks, check cashing companies, and credit counseling companies. Privacy policies of the three business types were obtained from web sites and analyzed using Microsoft Word 2007, which employs the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test.

Findings revealed that most privacy policies were written above grade level 12, which would portend problems for a large segment of the population, particularly those that patronize check cashing companies. Customers of banks and credit counseling companies might experience similar issues, albeit to a lesser degree.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999 the U.S. Congress enacted the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA), also known as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Financial Services Modernization Act. GLBA repealed the Glass-Steagall Act, which greatly restricted the financial services banks or other financial institutions could offer. For example, with the ratification of GLBA, commercial and investment banks were permitted to consolidate (Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, n.d.). Among the businesses included in the act were those involved with lending, brokering or servicing any type of consumer loan, transferring or safeguarding money, preparing individual tax returns, providing financial advice or credit counseling, providing residential real estate settlement services, and collecting consumer debts (Privacy Initiatives, n.d.). Although the GLBA addressed a wide array of topics, central to the act is the protection of personal information of customers and clients ("Fact Sheet 24," 2007). Title V of the act deals specifically with privacy.

Title V of GLBA focuses on requirements of financial institutions with regard to protecting consumer privacy. Among those requirements is a clear disclosure of their privacy policy regarding the sharing of non-public personal information with both affiliates and third parties. Notices of the

privacy policy must be made available to consumers. An opportunity to opt out of sharing non-public personal information with nonaffiliated third parties must be offered to consumers. Title V also requires that financial institutions disclose their privacy policy at the time a customer relationship is established, and it further requires that the policy must be provided not less than annually during the continuation of the relationship (Financial Services Modernization Act, n.d.).

READABILITY ISSUES

Although “readability” per se is not addressed explicitly in the act, it is certainly implicit in the context of the act. Use of terms such as “clear disclosure” and “plain language” make it apparent that the intent was to ensure that privacy statements are easily understandable by the consuming public. Title V provides consumers with minimal privacy rights; however, the burden is on the consumer to assert those rights (“Fact Sheet 24,” 2007). But are privacy policies of financial institutions easily read and comprehended by the typical customer? Would average bank patrons be able to grasp the impact of their bank’s privacy policy on their rights? A report from the Oversight Hearing on Financial Privacy and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Financial Services Modernization Act highlighted the fact that “the first year’s privacy notices were unreadable; this year’s no better” (Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, 2002). And are privacy policies comparable from one bank to another or between and among diverse organizations that offer financial services?

READABILITY DEFINED

Readability refers to the ease with which a document can be read. Several mathematical formulas have been developed to assist writers in measuring the readability of their writing. Most formulas (indexes) include sentence length and some measure of syllabic intensity as major components. Other factors, such as sentence structure, graphic presentation, and font faces may affect readability; however, these are very subjective in nature and extremely difficult to measure. Popular readability indexes include the Flesch Readability Formula, developed by Rudolf Flesch; the Fry Readability Graph, created by Edward Fry; and the Gunning Fog Index, conceived by Robert Gunning (Lewis & Adams, 2001).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to determine the readability of privacy policies for financial institutions and to compare policies of companies offering a variety of financial services. In particular, the research sought to ascertain the readability of privacy policies of businesses whose services are known to be used by individuals who may not be well educated or possess adequate reading skills.

METHODOLOGY

Gramm-Leach-Bliley pertains to numerous business types offering an assortment of financially related services. This research included three specific business types: banks, credit counselors, and check cashing companies. Since printed privacy policies of multiple organizations could not be readily accessed, the decision was made to use policies available on company web sites. The first phase of the research was to conduct a web search to find lists of companies fitting the necessary criteria. Next, companies were randomly selected from the lists. Once a web site was found for the company, the site was searched for a privacy policy. The privacy policy was then copied and pasted into a Microsoft Word document for conducting a readability analysis. Privacy policies were analyzed for 25 banks, 25 credit counseling companies, and 25 check cashing companies.

Microsoft Word 2007 uses the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test, which provides the grade level at which someone must read in order to comprehend the material. The primary factors considered in determining the reading grade level are sentence length and syllable intensity, with long sentences and multi-syllable words resulting in greater reading difficulty. The Flesch-Kincaid formula is:

$(L \times 0.39) + (N \times 11.8) - 15.59$ where L = average sentence length and N = average number of syllables per word (Readability, 2007)

In addition to the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test, Microsoft Word also provides the Flesch Reading Ease scale, which gives a score from 0-100 with higher scores indicating easier comprehension.

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the reading grade level scores, sorted in ascending order, for all three business types. The lowest grade level reading scores for banks, check cashing companies, and credit counseling companies, 10.4, 10.6, and 10.7, respectively, indicate that readers should be able to read minimally at between tenth and eleventh grade level to understand the privacy policies.

Rank No.	Banks	Check Cashing Cos.	Credit Counseling Cos.
1	10.4	10.6	10.7
2	11.2	11.1	11.6
3	11.6	11.5	12.1
4	12.0	11.9	12.1
5	12.3	12.2	12.2
6	12.3	13.1	12.4
7	12.6	13.2	12.6

8	12.7	13.4	12.7
9	13.1	13.5	12.8
10	13.2	13.7	13.0
11	13.6	14.0	13.1
12	13.7	14.2	13.3
13	14.0	14.4	13.5
14	14.1	14.4	13.7
15	14.2	14.5	13.7
16	14.5	14.5	13.8
17	14.7	14.9	13.8
18	14.9	15.0	14.0
19	15.2	15.1	14.1
20	15.7	15.2	14.1
21	16.0	16.0	14.7
22	17.5	16.6	14.9
23	17.5	16.8	14.9
24	18.2	16.9	15.5
25	18.3	19.4	20.0

The data were first tested for normality and equal variances. Acceptance of these attributes indicated an appropriate statistical technique would be one-way analysis of variance. The ANOVA test results yielded a p value of 0.437. Thus, the hypothesis that the population means are all equal could not be rejected. There was no significant difference between these sample means.

Grade level means, standard deviations, and medians were calculated for the privacy policies for each of the three business types. Those data are shown in Table 2.

	Banks	Check Cashing Cos.	Credit Counseling Cos.
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Mean	14.14	14.24	13.57
Standard Deviation	2.16	2.00	1.75
Median	14.00	14.40	13.50

Although not presented in Table 2, of equal interest is the range of scores for each business type. Scores for banks ranged from 10.4 to 18.3; check cashing companies, 10.6 to 19.4; and credit counseling companies, 10.7 to 20.0. One might expect that scores would be more closely aligned within the same business class.

Finishing grade 12 is an important milestone for most individuals. Sadly, not everyone who finishes grade 12 can read at grade level 12. For each sample the hypothesis that the population mean was at most 12 was tested using the t test. In every case the hypothesis was rejected at the .01 level of significance, indicating with 99 percent confidence that the population mean was greater than 12. Therefore, the portion of the population reading at the twelfth grade level or below would

have difficulty understanding the typical privacy policy. Coincidentally, in 2002 the national high school graduation rate for public school students was 71 percent (Greene & Winters, n.d.). Table 3 shows the percent of privacy policies for each company type that have reading grade levels below 12, between 12 and 16, and greater than 16.

	Banks	Check Cashing Cos.	Credit Counseling Cos.
Percent < 12 Grade Level	12.0	16	8
Percent Between Grade Level 12 and 16	72.0	68	88
Percent > 16	16.0	16	4

An interesting fact shown in Table 3 is the high percentage of privacy policies that require reading abilities beyond grade level 12. Fully 88 percent of the banks, 84 percent of the check cashing companies, and 92 percent of the credit counseling companies have privacy policies written at grade levels 12 and beyond.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings clearly indicate that the mean reading grade levels are significantly above 12 for privacy policies of the banks, check cashing companies, and credit counseling companies researched. This does not bode well for many consumers since recent figures show less than 75 percent of U.S. students attending public schools finish grade 12. Only 12 percent of the privacy policies had reading grade levels below grade 12. Conversely, 12 percent of the companies studied had privacy policies that would require reading skills beyond a college degree.

The magnitude of the problem may be smaller, at least on a group basis, for consumers of banking services than it is for those using check cashing and credit counseling services. To illustrate, banks provide services for individuals with little or no education as well as for well-educated professionals. On the other hand, check cashing companies deal primarily with less-educated people who may not grasp the nature or the content of the company's privacy policy. To a lesser extent, those individuals who seek the services of credit counseling companies may not have the educational capacity to understand the specific privacy rights available to them.

REFERENCES

- Fact Sheet 24: Protecting Financial Privacy. (2007). Retrieved September 9, 2007, from <http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Emanhattan%2Dinstitute%2Eorg%2Fhtml%2Ffewp%5F08%2Ehtm>
- Financial Services Modernization Act. (n.d.) Retrieved September 7, 2007, from <http://banking.senate.gov/conf/grmleach.htm>

Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. (n.d.). Retrieved September 9, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gramm-Leach-Bliley_Act

Greene, J. P. & Marcus A. Winters. (n.d.). Public high school graduation and college-readiness rates: 1991-2002. Retrieved September 9, 2007, from <http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Emanhattan%2Dinstitute%2Eorg%2Fhtml%2Fwp%5F08%2Ehtm>

Lewis, Stephen D. & C. Nathan Adams. (2001). Readability of business columns versus other columns in major U.S. newspapers. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 6(1), 29-36.

Privacy Initiatives. (n.d.). The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act: the financial privacy rule. Retrieved September 10, 2007, from http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/privacyinitiatives/financial_rule.html

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. (2002). Oversight hearing on financial privacy and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Financial Services Modernization Act. Retrieved July 25, 2007, from <http://www.privacyrights.org/ar/USPirg-GLB0902.htm>

Readability. (n.d.). Retrieved September 8, 2007, from <http://www.timetabler.com/reading.html>

CONTINGENT TIME OFF: A NONFINANCIAL PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVE PLAN REVISITED

Diane L. Lockwood, Seattle University
dianel@seattleu.edu

ABSTRACT

This field experiment replicates earlier studies on the impact of contingent time off (CTO) plans on employee productivity. A CTO plan is an informal company-employee agreement in which the firm promises its employees that if they perform at an agreed upon level, then they will receive an agreed upon amount of time off. The study took place at two tortilla manufacturing plants owned by the same company. Results indicated significant improvement in daily productivity of the experimental group (plant A), while the performance of the control group (plant B) stayed about the same. Subsequently, employees in the control group (plant B) were offered a similar CTO plan, and daily productivity also rose to the level of the comparison plant. The preponderance of consistent findings in these studies indicates that CTO plans remain a powerful incentive to increase employee productivity, especially for small businesses many of whom lack the financial ability to create monetary incentives.

EMOTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL SUPPORT: EXPLORING CONTRASTING INFLUENCES ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INNOVATION

Millicent Nelson, Middle Tennessee State University
mnelson@mtsu.edu

Jeff Brice, Jr., Texas Southern University
bricejx@tsu.edu

ABSTRACT

Prior research has primarily studied the emotional aspect of social support and limited its role to coping assistance (mental wellness). However, this study utilizes both emotional and informational social support to investigate the interpersonal aspects of organizational innovation, specifically human resource management innovations (creativity and problem-solving acuity). It is hypothesized that the innovator receives informational social support necessary to make decisions on the innovation from sources outside the organization rather than from inside the organization. In addition, emotional social support is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between the receipt of informational social support and the decision to become personally involved in the innovation process.

Primary findings indicate that the innovator does indeed receive informational support both externally and internally. This is significant because it implies that social support may influence problem-solving processes and lead to heightened organizational decision-making. Some support was also found for a moderating effect of emotional support which demonstrates that too much of this type of social support may actually decrease individual productivity. Further findings and implications are discussed.

JOB DESIGN FROM AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Paula W. Potter, Western Kentucky University
paula.potter@wku.edu

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore a theoretical aspect of job design in a way that departs from the dominant paradigm. The functionalist perspective is regarded as the dominant paradigm in the study of organizations (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Scientists working within the functionalist framework, in their effort to predict and control, rely on the scientific method for analysis and explanation of phenomenon. An alternative manner of analysis may help researchers gain a better understanding of job design from the standpoint of the participant. One alternative way to look at job design is from the interpretivist perspective that constitutes the focus of this paper. First, job design is defined from the functionalist perspective. Next we will turn to the interpretivist perspective for suggestions on analysis of job design. The paper then includes theorization about job design from the interpretivist perspective. Following the theorization are excerpts from journal articles that represent suggestions for analysis of job design from the interpretivist perspective.

