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OVERVIEW

Volume 24 of *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* contains seven thought-provoking papers. The first two papers (Gully & Phillips; Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan & Roberson) address motivation and justice issues at multiple levels of analysis. The third paper (Miceli & Near) contains a review of the whistle-blowing literature, bringing us up-to-date on theoretical issues pertaining to the whistle-blowing phenomenon. The fourth and fifth papers (Marler & Dulebohn; DeRouin, Fritzsche & Salas) offer thought-provoking ideas and reviews of the use of human resource information systems and learning in e-environments. The final two papers (Klein & Fein; Wheeler, Buckley, Halbesleben, Brouer & Ferris) further advance our knowledge of person–organizational fit through an integration of alternative fit perspectives, and expand our thinking about employee motivation through the proposal of a construct called goal propensity.

Gully and Phillips extend research and theory on learning and performance orientations to multiple levels of analysis. They begin by introducing a model describing the impact of individual learning and performance orientations on attentional focus, response to failure, experimentation, and motivation, and identify potential sources of these orientations. They then describe how learning and performance orientations are linked to incremental and profound change, and theoretically based propositions are presented to guide future research efforts. Leadership, organizational learning, and strategic human resource management are discussed in relation to the model and implications of the framework for future research and practice are revealed.

Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, and Roberson point out that the use of teams has increased significantly over the past two decades, with recent estimates suggesting that between 50% and 90% of employees work in some kind of team. Their paper examines the implications of this trend for the literature on organizational justice – the study of fairness perceptions and effects in the workplace. In particular, the authors explore three specific research questions: (1) Will the justice effects observed in individual contexts generalize to team contexts and member-directed reactions? (2) Will the justice experienced by specific teammates have direct or interactive effects on members' own reactions? (3) Will the justice experienced by the team as a

whole impact reactions at the team-level of analysis? Their review of almost 30 studies suggests that each question can be answered in the affirmative, illustrating that team contexts can magnify the importance of justice in organizations.

Miceli and Near discuss that research on whistle-blowing has focused on the questions of who blows the whistle, who experiences retaliation, and who is effective in stopping wrongdoing. In this article, the authors review research pertinent to the first of these questions. Since the last known review (Near & Miceli, 1996), there have been important theoretical and, to a lesser extent, empirical developments. In addition, the U.S. law is changing dramatically, which may serve to promote valid whistle-blowing, and international interest in whistle-blowing is widespread and increasing. Unfortunately, evidence strongly suggests that media, popular, and regulatory interest is far outpacing the growth of careful scholarly inquiry into the topic, which is a disturbing trend. Here, the authors argue that the primary causes of the underdevelopment of the empirical literature are methodological, and that workable solutions are needed but are very difficult to implement.

Marler and Dulebohn review the literature on individual acceptance of technology to show how organizations can improve the effective use of human resource web-based technologies. Integrating and expanding several theoretical models of technology acceptance, the authors develop a perceptual model of employee self-service acceptance and usage. Based on this model, they propose several key individual, technological, and organizational factors relevant to individual intentions to use ESS technology. The authors summarize these in several testable propositions and they also discuss implications for organizational researchers and practitioners.

DeRouin, Fritzsche, and Salas review the literature on learner control and discuss the implications that increased control may have for training in e-learning environments. The authors provide a comprehensive review of the learner control literature, focusing on adults and workplace training. They consider the instructional design factors that have been manipulated to provide learners with control and person issues that moderate the relation between learner control and outcomes. Then, the authors summarize developments in training research and in adult learning that relate to learner control in order to provide a theoretical context for understanding learner control in adult workplace e-learning.

Klein and Fein propose the development of a compound personality trait termed *goal propensity*. Motivation is a key determinant of performance in

virtually all contexts and personality has long been viewed as an important influence on motivation. Despite the long history of exploring how personality influences motivation, the authors point out that we do not have a clear understanding of the linkage between individual differences in personality and work motivation or the tools to reliably and accurately predict individual differences in motivation. Advances in our understanding of personality and the convergence of motivation theories around models of self-regulation present the opportunity to achieve that understanding and predictive efficacy. They maintain that goal propensity would be a theoretically derived trait that would explain the role of personality in self-regulation models of motivation as well as allow the prediction of tendencies to engage in self-regulation. This article provides the rationale for the development of this construct, articulates the nature of the proposed goal propensity construct, and explores the value of such a construct for theory, future research, and human resource practice.

Wheeler, Buckley, Halbesleben, Brouer, and Ferris maintain that although "fit" as a human resources decision criterion has emerged as an active body of research in recent years, its "elusiveness" as a scientific construct, noted more than a decade ago by Judge and Ferris (1992), still remains. To address this issue, the authors propose an integrative theory of multidimensional fit that encompasses five relevant (and distinct) streams of current fit research: Person-Organization Fit (Chatman, 1989), Person-Vocation Fit (Holland, 1985), Person-Job Fit (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990), Person-Preferences for Culture Fit (Van Vianen, 2000), and Person-Team Fit (DeRue & Hollenbeck, in press). They propose that these five dimensions of fit relate to an individual's self-concept; moreover, an individual assesses multidimensional fit utilizing a social cognitive decision-making process called prototype matching (Cantor, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982). By assessing fit across multiple dimensions, an individual can both gain a social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and expand the self-concept (Aron & Aron, 1996), which explains the motive to fit. The authors advance testable propositions, and discuss implications for multidimensional fit across the employment life cycle. They conclude their paper with directions for future fit research.

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CONTENTS

A MULTILEVEL APPLICATION OF LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE ORIENTATIONS TO INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

Stanley M. Gully and Jean M. Phillips

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to extend research and theory on learning and performance orientations to multiple levels of analysis. We begin by introducing a model describing the impact of individual learning and performance orientations on attentional focus, response to failure, experimentation, and motivation, and identify potential sources of these orientations. We then describe how learning and performance orientations are linked to incremental and profound change, and theoretically based propositions are presented to guide future research efforts. Leadership, organizational learning, and strategic human resource management are discussed in relation to the model, and implications of the framework for future research and practice are revealed.

INTRODUCTION

As economies globalize and organizational environments become increasingly complex, learning organizations and adaptive workers are becoming more important for organizational performance. Theory and research suggest that in the presence of global competition and rapid technological advancements, modern organizations must be flexible, efficient, and continually adapt to changing environments to sustain a competitive advantage and survive (Barkema, Baum & Mannix, 2002; D'Aveni, 1994). Industries dependent on highly sophisticated technologies and firms engaged in multinational competition face a particularly strong need for continuous and rapid modification of their product features and the ways in which they conduct business (Teece, 1987). In turbulent environments, organizations that are more dynamic and successfully adapt to changing environmental conditions outperform more static, less resilient organizations that focus on performance through maintenance of the status quo and minimal risk taking. The movement toward total quality management in U.S. industry in the early 1990s is indicative of how modern organizations are responding to the demand for constant learning and improvement, as well as consistent quality and low error rates.

The less imitable a strategy, the more durable it is as a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Porter, 1985). Innovation provides particularly useful forms of competitive advantage if the innovation process or the outcomes of innovation are difficult to copy (Lengnick-Hall, 1992). Thus, effective corporate innovation has become an increasingly important ingredient in sustaining competitive advantage. However, innovation and its implementation require varied forms of organizational learning, adaptability, and change.

Change efforts can be incremental, focused on improvements in performance and reductions in errors, or profound, encompassing paradigm shifts. Incremental change can result in increased efficiency, lower costs, fewer errors, and simple improvements that build upon current organizational capabilities. Examples of incremental change include using total quality management techniques to reduce the amount of scrap produced in a currently existing manufacturing process or providing new colors or sizes of Post-It notes to customers. In contrast, profound change can result in new strategic directions, systems and processes, and product innovations. Profound change can be seen in Nokia's transformation from its initial roots as a manufacturer of paper and rubber products to becoming a leading

manufacturer of cell phones and other telecommunication products. Another example of profound change can be found in Kodak's entry into the digital photo business after focusing nearly exclusively on chemically based photo products. Organizational survival in a highly competitive and changing world depends on the simultaneous achievement of both reliable performance and adaptability (Benner & Tushman, 2003; March, 1991). Thus, most organizations need to focus on both profound and incremental change for optimum performance and survival.

We suggest that the notion of learning and performance orientations can help theorists and practitioners to better understand the processes and forces that generate profound and incremental change at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis. A performance orientation focuses on maximizing performance, reducing mistakes, and meeting the achievement expectations of key stakeholders. Change resulting from a performance orientation tends to be incremental in nature. A learning orientation focuses on learning through experimentation and error, and taking risks to create knowledge that will enable adaptability. Change resulting from a learning orientation tends to be profound. A fundamental tension exists between these two orientations. As mistakes are minimized and reliability is increased, as is the case with a performance orientation, opportunities for learning through experimentation or serendipity are reduced. Both orientations are important to organizations, but they tend to create varying emphases on the type of learning and change that occurs.

The concepts of individual learning and performance orientation are rooted in theories of individual differences (Dweck, 1986), but they may be extended and applied across organizational levels to enhance our understanding of adaptability, efficiency, and learning. Individuals and collectives may adopt mastery or performance goals, which will affect the evaluative standards adopted, goal expectancies, perceived control, task choice, task pursuit, outcome attribution, satisfaction, and task interest (Dweck, 1989; VandeWalle, 2001). Although the early goal orientation research of Dweck and others was conducted primarily with children and adolescents in academic settings, there has been a growing interest in the implications of learning and performance orientations for adults working in organizations, and increasing evidence that the effects observed with schoolchildren replicate with adults in organizational settings (Bobko & Colella, 1994; Brown, 2001; Farr, Hofmann & Ringenbach, 1993; Hertenstein, 2001; Martocchio & Hertenstein, 2003; Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002; Sujan, Weitz & Kumar, 1994; VandeWalle, Brown, Cron & Slocum, 1999).

Learning and performance orientations manifest themselves at multiple organizational levels with different antecedents and outcomes. At the individual level, learning and performance orientations can reflect both dispositions and states, with dispositions and contextual effects such as group norms influencing states. At the group level, the two orientations are reflected in group climates and norms. Group leaders and the group's functional purpose can have a strong influence on the development of these norms. At the organizational level, learning and performance orientations are evidenced by shared perceptions driven by the organization's climate and culture. These shared perceptions can be created by key organizational leaders and the strategic direction of the organization (Ostroff, Kinicki & Tamkins, 2003). The interplay of these learning and performance orientations across levels has implications for individual, group, and organizational outcomes.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a framework that addresses the roles of learning and performance orientations at three organizational levels of analysis, beginning with the most micro, the individual level, then moving on to the organizational and group levels of analysis. The basic model is illustrated in Fig. 1. This model will be used to derive testable propositions that can guide future research at and across each level of analysis. Our model is a multilevel model because it specifies patterns of relationships that are partially or completely replicated across levels of analysis (Klein, Dansereau & Hall, 1994; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Rousseau, 1985). As we discuss the model, definitions and roles of learning and performance orientations will be introduced. Also, we will link different organizational
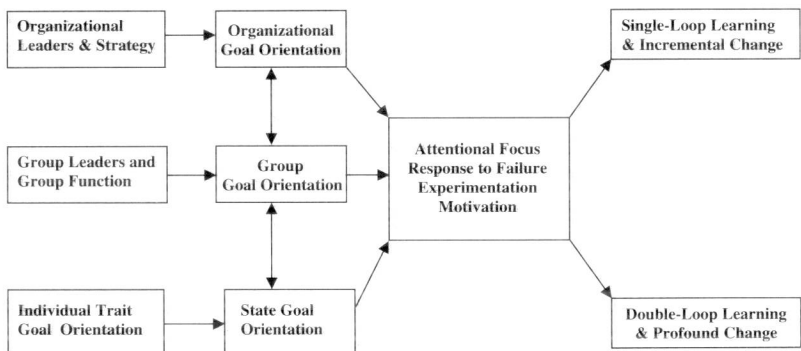

Fig. 1.   Multi-level model of learning and performance orientations.

strategies to learning and performance orientations and outcomes at different levels to provide a basis for generating new directions for applied interventions and for improving human resource management practices in organizations.

The basis of the model revolves around the effects of learning and performance orientations on attentional focus, willingness to experiment and take risks, responses to failure, and maintenance of motivation. Performance orientations lead to a focus on demonstrating high levels of ability. Failure is regarded as a sign of incompetence. Thus, risk-taking and experimentation are avoided and motivation drops in the face of setbacks. Single-loop learning emphasizes learning about routine processes that operate within given parameters (Argyris & Schön, 1978). The desire to demonstrate high levels of performance can create a motivation to improve efficiency and reduce errors, leading to single-loop learning and incremental improvements. In contrast, learning orientations lead to a focus on the development of knowledge and skills through risk-taking and experimentation. Failure is viewed as part of the developmental process and it is regarded as an opportunity for learning. Thus, motivation is formed by the desire for long-term development and is maintained in the face of mistakes and setbacks. This orientation leads to double-loop learning. Double-loop learning emphasizes the questioning of fundamental assumptions, strategies, and purposes, and it includes an ongoing examination of how to define and solve problems. Thus, learning orientations are more likely to lead to profound changes in strategies and procedures. The effects of learning and performance orientations depend on contextual factors like environmental uncertainty, stability, time horizon, and task structure. These factors will be discussed at appropriate points in this chapter.

The extension of learning and performance orientation theory across organizational levels advances current thinking in several ways. First, it is more parsimonious in the sense that it connects a variety of different phenomena in one theoretical model. As a result, it provides an avenue for integration of individual-level learning and performance orientation research with other literatures, expanding our understanding of these constructs. Second, it identifies similarities in seemingly different processes, and identifies outcomes of learning and performance orientations that may influence other levels. Third, it provides suggestions for future research directions, which are not currently considered in the literature, including moderators and cross-level interactions. Finally, it may yield insights into leadership processes, and describe how the implementation of organizational strategy, teams, and human resource management systems can be