

Engaging Employees in Innovation - A Quantitative Study on The Role of Affective Commitment to Change Among Norwegian Employees in Higher Education.

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Abstract : The concept of affective commitment to change has been scarcely explored among employees in the higher education literature. The present study addresses this knowledge gap in the literature by examining how various psychological factors, such as psychological empowerment (PsyEmp), and psychological capital (PsyCap), promotes affective commitment to change. As affective commitment to change has been identified by previous studies as an important aspect to implementation behavior, the study examines the correlation of affective commitment to change on employee innovative behavior (EIB) in higher education. The study proposes mediation relationship between PsyEmp, PsyCap, and affective commitment to change. 250 employees in higher education in Norway were sampled for this study. The study employed online survey for data collection, utilizing Stata software to perform Partial least square equation modeling to test the proposed hypotheses of the study. Through bootstrapping, the study was able to test for mediating effects. Findings of the study shows a strong direct relationship between the leadership factor PsyEmp on the individual factor PsyCap ($\beta = 0.453$). In addition, the findings of the study reveal that both PsyEmp and PsyCap are related to affective commitment to change ($\beta = 0.28$ and $\beta = 0.249$, respectively). In total, PsyEmp and PsyCap explains about 10% of the variance in the concept of affective commitment to change. Further, the direct effect of effective commitment to change and EIB is also supported ($\beta = 0.183$). The three factors, PsyEmp, PsyCap, and affective commitment to change, explains nearly 40% ($R^2 = 0.39$) of the variance found in EIB. The relationship between PsyEmp, PsyCap, and affective commitment to change are mediated through the individual factor PsyCap. In order to effectively promote affective commitment to change among higher education employees, higher education managers should focus on both the leadership factor, PsyEmp, as well as the individual factor, PsyCap, of their employees. In this regard, higher education managers should strengthen employees EIB through providing autonomy, creating a safe environment that encourages innovation thinking and action, and providing employees in higher education opportunities to be involved in changes occurring at work. This contributes to strengthening employees' affective commitment to change, that further improves their EIB in their work roles as higher education employees. As such, the results of this study implicate the ambidextrous nature of the concepts of affective commitment to change and EIB that should be considered in future studies of innovation in higher education research.

Keywords : affective commitment to change, psychological capital, innovative behavior, psychological empowerment, higher education

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