

Psychological Contract and Job Embeddedness Perspectives to Understand Cynicism as a Behavioural Response to Pressures in the Workplace

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Abstract : Organizations are facing competitive pressures constraining them to modify their practices and change initial work conditions of employees, however, these modifications have to sustain initial quality of work and engagements toward the workforce. We focus on the importance of promises in the perspective of psychological contract. According to this perspective, employees perceiving a breach of the expected obligations from the employer may become unsatisfied at work and develop organizational withdrawal behaviors. These are negative counterproductive behaviours aiming to damage the organisation according to the principle of reciprocity and social exchange. We present an integrative model of the determinants and manifestations of organizational withdrawal (OW), a set of behaviors allowing the employee to leave his job or avoid his assigned work. OW contains two main components often studied in silos: work withdrawal (delays, absenteeism and other adverse behaviors) and job withdrawal (turnover). We use the systemic micro, meso and macro sociological approach designing the individual at the heart of a system containing individual, organizational, and environmental determinants. Under the influence of these different factors, the individual assesses the type of behavior to adopt. We provide better lighting for understanding OW using both psychological contract approach through the perception of its respect by the organization and job embeddedness approach which explains why the employee does not leave the organization and then remains in his post while practicing negative and counterproductive behaviors such as OW. We study specifically cynicism as a type of OW as it is a dimension of burnout. We focus on the antecedents of cynicism to try to prevent it in the workplace.

Keywords : burnout, cynicism, job embeddedness, organizational withdrawal, psychological contract

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