



The management of professional employees: linking progressive HRM practices, cognitive orientations and organizational citizenship behavior

Patrick J. Valeau^a and Pascal Paillé^b

^aDepartment of Management, University of Reunion, Réunion, France; ^bDepartment of Management, Laval University, Quebec City, Canada

ABSTRACT

The present research examines the relationships between progressive HRM practices and the organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) of professional employees. Drawing on recent HRM literature, our research model includes a perceived organizational support (POS)-commitment mediation hypothesis. Taking into account previous studies on professional employees, a job satisfaction-commitment pathway is also integrated. We tested both mediational pathways as part of a single structural equation model using a sample of 329 professional employees. Our results show that the relationship between recognition and OCB is mediated by the POS-commitment pathway, while the relationships between fairness of rewards, skills development and OCB are mediated by the job satisfaction-commitment pathway. The specificities of the HRM of professional employees related to their multiple cognitive orientations are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Professional employees; progressive HRM practices; perceived organizational support; job satisfaction; organizational commitment; OCB

Introduction

Professional employees provide their organization with crucial expertise (Blau & Andersson, 2008; Wallace, 1995) constituting a competitive advantage (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Delery, 1998; Huselid, 1995). However, literature has often framed professional employees as potentially difficult to manage due to the complexity of the problems they deal with, their high levels of autonomy and independence, and their attachment to their profession (Aranya & Ferris, 1984; Gouldner, 1957; Landers, Koene and Linssen, 2013; Wallace, 1995). Given the difficulty of directly supervising them, understanding how to trigger their organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), i.e. voluntary behaviors contributing to the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988), is a critically important research issue (Boselie, 2010; Rhee, Park, & Hwang, 2011; Ryan, 2001).

CONTACT Patrick J. Valeau  pvaleau@univ-reunion.fr

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