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“Personal values and innovative behaviour in organisation”

Abstract

The main aim of this dissertation was to investigate the relationships between personal values and innovative behaviour in organisation. It also aimed at examining the mechanism which underlies these relationships, as well as verifying innovative behaviour theoretically postulated structure and measurement. Based on Schwartz’s theory of basic individual values, job characteristics theory and job crafting theory, it was hypothesised that employees’ personal values are related to their innovative behaviour and that these relationships are mediated by job autonomy. What is more, on the grounds of both basic values and upper echelons theories, it was also postulated that small business entrepreneurs’ personal values are related to their employees’ job autonomy and through this mechanism indirectly affect employees’ innovative behaviour. In order to test the postulated hypotheses, three independent quantitative studies were conducted.

The first study (Study 1) aimed at investigating factorial structure and psychometric properties of the Innovative Behavior Questionnaire, as well as developing a Polish adaptation of this measure. A longitudinal study with two measurement waves (with a two-week interval) was conducted. The sample comprised $N_1 = 382$ and $N_2 = 256$ employees. Four alternative models of factorial structure were examined, applying confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis revealed that innovative behaviour is best captured by one dimension, but answers for items 1, 2 and 3 are affected by a similar response tendency. Scalar measurement invariance was also found across samples of men and women and across time. Moreover, it was confirmed that the measure is a reliable and valid tool and can be used to measure innovative behaviour of Polish employees.

The aim of the second study (Study 2) was to test the relationships between employees’ personal values and their innovative behaviour. It was hypothesised that these relationships are mediated by job autonomy. The sample comprised 263 Polish employees from different branches, working for companies employing up to 250 people. Mediation analysis with a bias-corrected bootstrapping method was applied and the results showed that employees’ personal values are related to their innovative behaviour directly and indirectly – through job autonomy. Openness to change and self-enhancement values are positively,

whereas conservation and self-transcendence values are negatively related to job autonomy. Besides, employees' self-enhancement values promote their innovative behaviour, while conservation and self-transcendence values showed negative relationships. What is more, job autonomy is a significant mediator of relationships between employees' personal values (except for openness to change) and innovative behaviour.

The third study (Study 3) aimed at investigating multilevel relationships between small business entrepreneurs' personal values, their employees' autonomy and innovative behaviour. A multilevel and multi-country study design was applied. The sample comprised 82 small business entrepreneurs (employing from 10 to 50 employees) and their employees (685 in total) from three European countries: Spain (26 entrepreneurs and 193 employees), Poland (34 entrepreneurs and 344 employees) and the Netherlands (22 entrepreneurs and 174 employees). To analyse hierarchically organised data (with employees on Level 1 and entrepreneurs on Level 2), multilevel modelling was applied. The results showed that entrepreneurs' openness to change values positively predict their employees' job autonomy, whereas if the entrepreneur attributes high importance to conservation and self-enhancement values, his/her employees experience a lower level of job autonomy. Employees' job autonomy was found to be a significant predictor of their innovative behaviour, and a mediator of the relationships between entrepreneurs' personal values and employees' innovative behaviour as well. Moreover, entrepreneurs' conservation values revealed a direct, negative relationship with their employees' innovative behaviour. It was also found that some country effects occur in these relationships. Being from Spain was shown to lower employees' innovative behaviour.

The results obtained in this dissertation bring new insight into innovation theories and research, testing complex relationships between personal values, job autonomy and innovative behaviour in organisation. Thus, the findings contribute to Schwartz's values theory, job characteristics theory, job crafting theory and upper echelons theory. Using subjective measure of innovative behaviour constitutes one of the limitations of the studies. However, the research project aims at filling an existing gap in the literature and explaining how innovative behaviour in organisations is being shaped, with some practical implications as well. Firstly, researchers and practitioners can use the Polish adaptation of the Innovative Behavior Questionnaire, which was developed in this dissertation. What is more, knowledge about the role of organisation members' personal values and job autonomy in fostering innovative behaviour is vital for organisational human resource development, and can be used in the recruitment and selection process as well. Managers and business owners can also

benefit from such knowledge due to being more aware of how they can affect their employees and foster their job autonomy and innovative behaviour.

Keywords: personal values, innovative behaviour, job autonomy, employees, entrepreneurs, multilevel analysis.