Abstract

Psychological Contract Fulfillment and Intention to Remain in Organizations: A Meta-Analytic Investigation of their Intercorrelations

The contribution of psychological contract conceptualizations and their influence on employee attitudes and behaviours has become a concern for many organizations today. Numerous articles, books, chapters, and dissertations have been written on psychological contract fulfillment, and several conceptual reviews and empirical investigations have contributed substantially to our understanding of how these perceptions influence employee intention to remain. Research in these areas has increased our knowledge and helped to guide general management practice in improving employee exchange relationships.

Although narrative reviews may further our understanding of the processes linking psychological contract fulfillment and intention to remain, a quantitative review would augment our existing understanding, by improving our estimations of their relationship to each other. Such a review had not previously been conducted. As such, the first goal of this study was to use meta-analytic techniques to evaluate whether psychological contract fulfillment, as perceived by employees, is strongly and positively related to employee intention to remain. In addition, the paper assesses whether the type of instrument used to measure psychological contract fulfillment moderates the relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and intention to remain, such that the single-item measure is predicted to yield a much less positive relationship than the four-item measure.

A total of 22 studies were identified, collected and reviewed. Twelve of these studies (comprising 14 samples) contained data related to this meta-analysis. From the selected group of studies, the effect size between psychological contract fulfillment and intention to remain was 0.31. This positive, medium-sized meta-analytic effect size provided support for the positive relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and intention to remain. Meta-analytic results also provided strong evidence of the presence of moderator variables. Because of the small number of studies in this meta-analytic study, further subdivision of the studies is not feasible. Future analysis, however, can investigate age, gender, and tenure as possible moderator variables to help explain the heterogeneity in the effect sizes of prior studies.