

Chapter 12

The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership on the Relationship Between Careerism and Social Loafing Behaviors: A Propositional Review

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ABSTRACT

The researches have mainly examined some negative consequences of careerism. Despite the importance of negative behaviors that will be harmful for organizations' wellbeing, studies regarding these behaviors' predictors are interestingly limited. This chapter proposes that careerism, as one of negative employee orientations, may play a predictor role in assessing social loafing behaviors in light of social cognitive theory. Grounded in social exchange theory, the authors also propose that transformational leadership may have a reducing effect on the careerism-social loafing behaviors. While the positive effects of transformational leadership have been worked extensively in the extant literature, its effects in diminishing the negative organizational orientations and behaviors remain relatively rare. Hence, the proposed model would create new possible avenues for future research.

INTRODUCTION

While uncertainty is mounting through all sectors, it is getting harder for organizations to sustain their competitive positions. Fierce competition, unpredictable work environment, dynamic changes in industrial structures; these external forces necessitate organizations to build strong human resources structure

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and strategies (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). One way to sustain competitive advantage is to retain employees who, not only fit the job and work effectively, but also fit the organization and work with the organization's culture harmoniously. Because all facilities and processes are based on knowledge, expertise that cannot be gained easily and quickly. Thus, workforce has long been taken into account as one of the main sources of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). On the other hand, to retain key professionals in the organization, executives and decision makers should promise an environment where their careers can flourish. In this way, many studies examining employee behaviors, responses and attitudes have emerged as a way to develop better understanding how to retain employees who fit both to job and to organization. It has been debated more than fifty years that not only talent, hard work and loyalty matter in employees' career steps, but also social influence and impression management have some substantial consequences on the path to career advancement (Bluhm, 2009; Goffman, 1955; Riesman, 1959). Thus, employees need to involve their career development plans to achieve success by considering not only task performance but also allowing for contextual performance.

Although organizations can make reachable career plans for their employees, there can be a contradiction between the needs, wants, and intentions of employees and employers. When the trust between employees and employers is distorted, employees tend to develop some deviancy like careerist-oriented behaviors (Atkinson, 2007; Crawshaw, Van Dick, & Brodbeck, 2012; Feldman & Weitz, 1991; Robinson, 1996). Careerism is a tendency to build career goals on non-performance-based actions like forming social relations with some key people who might be helpful in tasks or career advancements. Giving the impression of "team player" or something that would benefiting the person alone, careerists think that they can achieve their goals by non-performance acts (Feldman & Weitz, 1991). In general, environmental uncertainties such as the need for organizational downsizing, restructuring, segregation of duties, may lead employees to develop careerist orientations (Adams, Srivastava, Herriot, & Patterson, 2013). When the strategies adopted in various levels of organization subject to change often, this may lead to undermine the trust between employees and employers. Because when the trust between employees and employers is distorted, employees tend to pursue their career plans by their own. These causes may result in the emergence of careerist-oriented employees (Crawshaw et al., 2012).

Organizational strategies defining tasks and the relation between strategies and the behaviors of the members may become somehow problematic since contextual side of organizations consists of complex interconnections among employees, executives, tasks and social ties (Scott & Davis, 2007). Accordingly, so many studies have been held in not only strategic management but also in organizational behavior literature, in order to sustain organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, in terms of reaching effectiveness and efficiency, the behaviors, attitudes, values, intentions and motivations of the members matter substantially (Koys, 2001). While the teamwork has attracted grave interest both by scholars and practitioners, research has been giving inconclusive evidence in terms of teamwork role in increasing organizational effectiveness (Erez & Somech, 1996). Right at this point, social loafing as a "social disease" comes to the forefront (Ilgin, 2013). Social loafing is the inclination of putting less effort while working in a team than working alone (Latané, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). The analyses regarding social loafing behaviors revealed that the more tasks are performed by the workers, the less task performance is created by devoting individual effort (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Kerr & Bruun, 1981; Latané et al., 1979). Thus, although there are so many challenging external conditions that organizations have to cope with, there are also internal conditions resulting from employee behaviors may challenge organizational effectiveness. When conflicts, such as failing to meet employee expectations, are mounted between employees and their organizations, employee deviant behaviors, and intentions like careerism

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