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CURRENT EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Organizational and Societal Factors: Their Impact on Individual Attitudes

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In this issue, we present two empirical articles that examine aspects of our dynamic work environment. Each article illustrates the ways in which attitudes both drive and are driven by organizational and societal factors. In “A Model and Test of Individual and Organization Factors Influencing Individual Adaptation to Change,” Jane D. Parent, Cheryl C. Sullivan, Christina Hardway, and D. Anthony Butterfield analyze the antecedents and outcomes of adaptation to organizational change. The authors propose a model that integrates individual and organizational factors affecting employee response to change. Tests of their model show that participation in the change process, role clarity, and individual optimism are positively related to adaptability to change. Further, they found that individuals who were strong adaptors also had higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived job performance and lower levels of intention to quit.

The work presented by Parent and colleagues reinforces our understanding of the importance of employee involvement in the organizational change effort. It also speaks to the importance of a positive attitude in developing the adaptability necessary to survive a constantly changing workplace. The authors discuss the managerial implications of their findings, highlighting the

need for managers to model optimistic attitudes while working closely with employees affected by organizational change.

In “Societal Institutions and Work and Family Gender-Role Attitudes,” Lisa T. Stickney and Alison M. Konrad look at relationships between societal-level policies and gender-role attitudes in 14 different countries. Stickney and Konrad put together evidence to support their hypotheses that national practices and policies like tax supports for dual-earner families, child-care leave policies, and public spending on child care are associated with individual gender-role attitudes. According to Stickney and Konrad, these policies legitimize and create incentives for particular attitudes and behaviors. They found that tax supports for dual-earner families were associated with more egalitarian gender-role attitudes. Further, they found a nonlinear relationship between parental leave time and gender-role attitudes.

Stickney and Konrad’s work reveals some surprising results. For example, they show that the provision of longer child-care leaves may be related to less egalitarian views of women’s participation in the workforce. The authors discuss the implication of their results and make recommendations for further research in this area.

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