

Formal-informal and cognitive-affect dimensions of employee expectations - A qualitative case-study on psychological contract in the IT sector

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Abstract : This paper presents a conceptual framework to understand employee expectations in the psychological contract, in the IT sector. The conclusions are based on a case study of a small scale IT organization. From the preliminary phase of exploration with focus group discussions with a group of employees, 28 areas of employee expectations were identified. These were subject to quantitative measurement on a nine-point rating scale. Qualitative data on reasons were also collected. Data were gathered from 78 entry cadre employees in the organization. Education, work experience, age and gender were balanced in the sample. The 't' tests have been conducted to test for differences between the proposed 2X2 dimensional categories of expectations based on the formal-informal organizational and the cognitive-affective individual element. The reasons given by the respondents for their level of expectation in each area have been captured and presented reflecting specific nuances of various contexts at work. The managerial implications of the findings have been discussed and conclusions drawn stressing the importance of the role of an organizational psychologist.

Key words: Expectations, Psychological contract, Knowledge worker, IT

OBJECTIVE

To provide a conceptual framework to categorize employee expectations in the psychological contract in the IT sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees form expectations through interaction with the organization through observing others and through human resource practices (Rousseau & Greller, 1994). Acknowledging that expectations are a key feature of the psychological contract has a number of implications on how we view developments in the psychological contract in HRM (Grant, 1999). Rousseau (1990) defined psychological contract as an individual's belief regarding reciprocal obligations, which arise in the context of the relationship between the organization and the employee and which shape their relationship. The fulfillment of the psychological contract reflects the extent to which expectations on both sides, especially the employees' side, is met regarding what they ought to give to the organization and what they get in return from the organization (Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). The challenges in working out an effective psychological contract arise due to the fact that many expectations are not explicitly communicated from both sides and therefore, never met. This could result in resentment or decelerate employee performance.

Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) listed the categories of employer and employee obligations. Employer obligations are about providing opportunities for advancement, high pay, merit pay, training and development, job security and support, while employee obligations have been regarding overtime, loyalty, extra role behavior, notice transfers, abstention from competitor support, proprietary protection, and minimum stay. They provide a framework to differentiate relational obligations from transactional obligations of the employee. Herriot, Manning & Kidd (1997) through their study identified seven categories of employee

obligations towards the organization and twelve of organizational obligations towards the employee. The organizational obligations include training (providing adequate induction and training), fairness (ensuring fairness of selection, appraisal, promotion and redundancy procedures), needs (allowing time off for personal and family needs), consult (consulting and communicating with employees on matters which affect them), discretion (minimal interference with employees in terms of how they do their job), humanity (acting in a personally and socially responsible and supportive way towards employees), recognition (recognition of or reward for special contribution or long service), environment (provision of a safe and congenial work environment), justice (fairness and consistency in the application of rules and disciplinary procedures), pay (equitable with respect to market values and consistently awarded across the organization), benefits (fairness and consistency in the administration of the benefit systems) and security (organizations trying hard to provide what job security they can). The set of employee obligations include hours (contracted work hours), work (to do a good job in terms of quality and quantity), honesty (to deal honestly with clients and with the organization), loyalty (staying with the organization, guarding its reputation and putting its interests first), property (treating the organization's property in a careful way), self-presentation (dressing and behaving correctly with customers and colleagues) and flexibility (being willing to go beyond one's own job description, especially in an emergency).

In a study to understand expectations of knowledge workers, Flood (2001) identified attributes such as pay and benefits, training and skill development, interesting work among others. They proposed one important determinant of satisfaction and retention, which is 'met' expectations. This is particularly important in the case of knowledge workers where knowledge is more private and tacit. The implications are that, one cannot extract such knowledge unless the employee is willing to part with it on a voluntary basis. Unless they feel satisfied in the work and organizational context, they may not do so. Through their study to understand employee expectations of the 21st century, Lester et al (2002) identified thirty two areas. They are opportunities for promotion and advancement, trust and respect, open and honest communication, fair treatment, challenges and interesting work, competitive salary, health care benefits, competent management, support from management, meaningful work, pay and bonuses tied to performance, opportunities for personal growth, opportunity for developing new skills, constructive feedback on performance, competent co-workers, consideration of employee's needs, clear goals and direction, enough resources to do the job, vacation benefits, adequate equipment to perform the job, continual professional training, increasing responsibilities, equal opportunities for all employees, participation in decision making, job security, cooperation and support from co-workers, tuition reimbursement, safe work environment, freedom to be creative and flexible work schedule.

Based on the literature, we can infer that there are various categorization frameworks on psychological contract. One is about mapping the employers' and employees' expectations. Another refers to set and met expectations. From a time and intensity perspective, expectations/obligations are categorized as transactional (short-term 'here and now') as against relational (long-term). With reference to enlisted expectations, the expectations could be classified as either related to work content, work process or work outcomes. Another perspective of understanding employer and employee expectations is whether they are tangible or intangible. One should however understand that obligations on one side tend to form expectations of the other. Whether they are made explicit, commonly understood and expressed is the key challenge for both the organization and the employee.

The information technology work context

Kaminski et al. (2004) observed that the complexity and variety of skill sets required within IT contributes to career issues that are unique to employees in this industry. IT employees require extensive knowledge of the theories and principles within their field, as well as hands-on training in hardware and software applications. Therefore, the employees have a high need to

keep pace with technology changes and upgrade one's skills in order to be effective. Gaylard et al. (2005) have found five significant factors in retention of the IT work force. They are equity and enablement for high performance, liberated and empowered culture, effective and interactive communication channel, environment rich in personal growth opportunities, standard employment contract and benefits, and social interaction. These factors signify strong expectations on the part of employees and their fulfillment has been associated with retention. In India, the IT software and services industry has grown rapidly over the last decade. In 2005, it encompassed about 650,000 employees and the prediction for the next five years, was that this number is expected to triple, to over 2 million persons, so as to meet the target of \$75 billion in revenues, including exports of over \$50 billion (Karnik, 2005a). Some of the challenges faced by the Indian IT Sector are attracting and retaining talent especially in an explosive growth phase are working conditions, pressure, stress, obsolescence and career growth issues of workers (Karnik, 2005b). It is speculated that positive market indicators as well as a strong track record of the industry, will help it to achieve its aspired target of USD 60 billion in software and services exports and USD 73-75 billion in overall software and services revenues, by FY2010. However, there are global macro-economic challenges and talent, manpower and infrastructure issues that will need to be addressed and resolved, collectively (Mittal, 2008).

If the organization does not identify and cater to the employee's expectations on their take-away through working for the organization, it can have serious implications. As early as 1993, Tampoe observed that the key motivators of knowledge workers are the need for personal growth, operational autonomy and task achievement. A number of challenges have been observed in the context of managing the knowledge workers by Robertson (2000). Some of them have been the issues of competitors constantly trying to entice the employees for their expertise and skills and consequently the need to take care of retention in the organization. He observed that a unique work environment for knowledge workers with a high level of autonomy, trust and an egalitarian culture in inter-disciplinary projects of their choice enhances their professional development as well as the intellectual capital.

Theoretical Perspectives on the formality-informality and cognition-affect dimensions

There are references in literature on the formal and informal organization. The first reference to the informal organization and its importance in determining employee productivity and performance was based on the Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). The formal organization consists of hierarchical divisions and work flows (Whyte, 1949). Alvesson (1995) differentiated the formal and the informal organization. The formal organization refers to ways of organizing work, facilities, job descriptions, formal job requirements, the use of new technology and hierarchy. The elements can always be documented as written rules, job titles, etc. On the other hand, the informal organization comprises of interaction, symbols and attitudes. The informal organization is not easy to document. When this is attempted, it falls into the sphere of the formal organization. As a construct, the 'formal-informal' organization has been studied from different perspectives. They include those that studied their impact on levels of control (Martinez & Jarillo, 1991), interpersonal power (Peiro & Melia, 2003) and employee socialization (Mutaba & Randy, 2006) among others.

Research supports the relative importance of cognition based satisfaction over affect based job satisfaction (Moorman, 1993). With reference to cognition and affect, studies in psychology have had varied views. Research in social psychology has demonstrated that global categorization of internal and external motivation is composed of cognitive and affective dimensions that have distinct, and even opposite, consequences (Amabile et al. 1994). Researchers have also argued that affective processing is fundamentally different from cognitive processing (LeDoux, 2000). Lately, it is established that affect and cognition are fundamentally interactive, and the interactions are closely dependent upon the content of information being processed throughout the mental architecture and its behavioral significance or meaning. (Barnard, Duke & Byrne, 2007). Guerrero & Herrbach (2008) established the link

between psychological contract fulfillment and affective states at work. They concluded that perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and workplace affect.

In this study, the researchers conceptualize formality as anything associated with the organization where managerial decisions are involved. Formality denotes reliance on formal mechanisms, standardization, processes, etc., which are organizationally initiated. These may have a defined process and budget. Informality as an organizational element, is anything associated with an employee initiative which is independent of managerial decisions. It consists of the softer elements within the organization. The researchers conceptualize cognition as the individual element that involves mental effort, problem solving, learning and growth as perceived by the employee. The affective element refers to emotions associated with an expectation. There is a feel 'good' or feel 'bad' factor associated with, attraction or repulsion with reference to a specific entity/experience at work.

METHODOLOGY

The research design is case research (Yin, 1989). The focus was qualitative and it is an exploratory study. A focus group discussion was conducted during initial exploration. A quantitative survey was conducted to gather data. Qualitative responses were also collected in this process.

The Sample

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the expectations of entry level employees to understand the expectations which have been formed before or in the initial stages after entry into work. The assumption is that these would not have been influenced by any significant organizational experience. Mid level as well as senior level employees were not considered for the study. The employees were in the first three levels of the organizational hierarchy as a trainee software engineer, software engineer, senior software engineer or a project lead. The experiences ranged from 1 to 6 yrs. The age ranged from 21 to 26 yrs. There were 51 males and 27 females among the respondents. The inclusion criterion for the selection of the sample was that they were at the lower level in the organizational hierarchy, considered as juniors. The mean of work experience for males and females is between 29 and 30 months and the mean age for males and females is around 25 years. In the study sample, the number of unmarried males and females is fairly large. The ratio of distribution is the same for the male and female samples. The average work experience in months is about 30 for males and 28 for females. This variable is also balanced in the study sample. First a focus group discussion involving six junior level employees was conducted. For the survey, all the available junior employees who were in the entry cadre were respondents of the study.

The Focus Group Discussion with employees

Based on the focus group discussion, the following employee expectations were identified – on-site opportunities, job security, market value, good work culture, extra-curricular activities, informal atmosphere, freedom at work, flexi-time and flexibility at work, recognition at work, participation not just delegation by managers, meaningful work and self development in technical and soft skills. Based on an indicative list of identified factors enlisted after exploration and consultation with the HR Head, a schedule was developed to assess the level of expectations.

The Tool

The schedule used the interval scaling procedure to measure the level to which these factors were preferred /desired by them. 'How much would you like to'....format was used to introduce each item in the schedule. A nine-point scale was adopted for the study. Heriot, Manning & Kidd (1997) suggested that the use of rating scales was more appropriate for investigating 'implied' contracts where there is a high degree of social consensus about obligations, and where these are routinely met. The rating scale was designed for a quantitative response, while the box with 'because' below every item was assumed to trigger reasons and qualitative responses. The data collected was subject to quantitative as well as qualitative analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha for the tool was found to be 0.886. The following section focuses on the analysis and inference.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Scheme of analysis

In order to understand the strength of each of the expectations on a nine point scale, the means and Standard Deviations were calculated for each of the 28 expectations. The expectations were conceptually categorized into four sets based on the organizational and individual elements of formality-informality and cognition-affect respectively.

The rationale for this categorization of the 28 different expectations studied has been the principle of predominance as assessed from the qualitative responses. For example, with reference to on-site opportunity, though it is related to project experience and learning, there are employee references on how it will help them improve their confidence and multi-cultural skills which the employees are eager about.

There is emotion associated with these related to self and family. Therefore, these have been classified under affect and not cognition. The categorization is based on employee's key 'thrusts' of their qualitative responses which have been provided as reasons for their rating responses. The 't' tests have been conducted to understand the significant differences between the four sets of expectations. The 't' tests have further been conducted to compare each expectation with every other expectation within a particular set to understand the strength and differences within a category.

Results

Table I presents the conceptual categorization of expectations along two dimensions -- the organization and the individual -- with their mean and Standard deviation scores. Table II presents the results of the 't' test comparing the four sets of expectations. Table III, IV, V and VI present the results of the 't' test comparing the expectations within the cognitive-formal, cognitive-informal, affective-formal and affective-informal expectations respectively.

Table I : Categorization of the expectations on the organizational-individual dimension.

Organizational →	Formal			Informal		
	Areas	Mean	SD	Areas	Mean	SD
Cognitive ↓	Training while on bench	7.91	1.28	Regular feedback on strengths and improvement	7.84	1.31
	Development ¹ projects	7.70	1.35	Learning through team discussions	7.60	1.38
	Career guidance by manager	7.70	1.33	Offer technical help	7.43	1.46
	Sponsored soft skills training	7.55	1.51	Manager's openness to suggested project ideas	7.38	1.43
	Large client projects	7.55	1.77	Open sharing of work problems	6.97	1.75
	Interactions with project manager	7.52	1.37	Participate and present technical seminars	6.81	1.91
	Competent manager	7.38	1.61	Offer solutions to team members mistakes	6.74	1.70
	Product development ² projects	7.00	1.86	Stretching to learn	6.67	1.77
	Moving across technologies	5.21	2.43			
Affective	Job security	8.03	1.22	Appreciation from client	7.96	1.32
	Flexible timings	7.60	1.61	Appreciation from manager / Lead	7.88	1.39
	Fun & Social environment	7.32	1.76	Manager's interest in employee's personal growth	6.57	2.06
	Onsite ³ opportunity	7.00	2.20	Value add from team members' criticisms	6.56	1.95
	Short breaks during work	6.58	2.01	Close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns	4.60	2.37
	Maintenance ⁴ projects	3.78	2.11			

- 1 Development projects consist of development of software to cater to the business requirements of the client
- 2 Product development projects focus on products with varied applications. These do not cater to individual business logic of organisations; they serve a generic business need. A sales force automation package is a product.
- 3 The opportunity to work in the home country of the client (foreign client)
- 4 Maintenance projects are of two types – application maintenance, and infrastructure maintenance (Beuler et al,2005).Application maintenance refers to fixing of bugs, and attending to change

The employee expectations classified under the cognitive-formal dimension are those that the employees believe, have to do with problem solving, mental effort, learning and growth. They also require managerial decisions and initiatives. Those expectations classified under this dimension are training while on bench, development projects, career guidance from the manager, sponsored soft skills training, large client projects, and interactions with the project manager, expectation on a competent manager, product development projects and moving across technologies. Based on the nine point scale, the strength of these expectations can be classified as above average. The range of the mean scores is from 5.21 to 7.91, which indicates a leaning from the moderate to the higher end. The overall mean of means representative of the cognitive formal dimension was found to be 7.25.

The cognitive-informal expectations are not associated with a formal agreement or decision nor is it dictated by any policy. They are employee-initiated and also involve a cognitive element of learning/growth for self. The expectations that fall under this category are regular feedback on strengths and improvement, learning through team discussions, offering technical help to others, manager's openness to suggested project ideas, open sharing of work problems, participating and presenting technical seminars, offering solutions to team member's mistakes and stretching to learn. These have a strong individual level initiative, not initiated by the organization, and the expected outcome is learning and better understanding at work. Based on the range of the means, 6.73 to 7.84, we can infer that the strength of the expectations is either moderately high or quite high based on the nine point scale for interpretation. The overall representative score, the mean of means, for the cognitive-informal dimension is 7.26.

The affective-formal set of expectations identified are those which have a formal organizational element, but which have predominantly to do with individual preferences, likings and the feel good or bad factor for oneself. There is a predominant emotional element with a 'feel' factor in each of these expectations. The formal element has to do with policies and managerial decisions associated with the same. The expectations that are classified under this category are job security, flexible timings, fun and social environment, onsite opportunities, short breaks during work and maintenance projects. The range of the means is from 3.78 to 8.03. There is a considerable amount of variability among the strength of the expectations in this dimension based on the nine point scale. Employees maintain a low level of expectations for a few a can be seen for the table II, for example, maintenance projects. The mean of means representing a mean score for the formal-affective dimension is 6.84.

The important affective-informal set of expectations are those which have a feeling factor associated and which evolve through employee behaviors. Enlisted under this set are those expectations related to appreciation from client, appreciation from manager / team lead, manager's interest in employee's personal growth, value add from team members' criticisms, and close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns. These expectations have no formal organizational decisions or policies associated with them. They are initiated by the employee. The emotional element is strong which consists of one's preferences, feel good or bad factor for the individual employee. The range of the mean scores is from 4.60 to 7.96. The overall mean score representative of this affective-informal set of expectations is 6.71.

Table II presents the results of the ‘t’ test to test differences between the four dimensions - cognitive-formal, cognitive-informal, affective-formal and affective-informal.

Dimensions	Mean	SD	SE
Cognitive -formal	7.2500	.89868	.10176
Cognitive-informal	7.2692	1.01329	.11473
Affective-formal	6.8425	.90368	.10232
Affective-informal	6.7115	1.02165	.11568
Compared dimensions	t		df
Cognitive-formal Cognitive-informal	-.254		77
Cognitive-formal Affective-formal	4.633**		77
Cognitive-formal Affective-informal	5.392**		77
Cognitive-informal Affective-formal	4.116**		77
Affective-formal Affective-informal	1.200		77
*p<.05 **p<.01	***p<.001		

From Table II we find that there are no significant differences between the formal and informal dimensions in both categories of cognitive and affective expectations. The ‘t’ value of -.254 is not significant for the cognitive-formal and cognitive-informal set of expectations. The ‘t’ value of 1.200 on comparing affective-formal and affective-informal is also not found to be significantly different.

However, there is a very significant difference between the cognitive and affective dimensions. The ‘t’ values of 4.633 , 5.392 and 4.116 convey a significant difference between the cognitive-formal and affective-formal, cognitive-formal and affective-informal and cognitive-informal and affective formal set of expectations respectively. From a conceptual as well as a pragmatic perspective, the categories of formal and informal organizational elements appear to be distinct elements. However, we do not find any difference in the strength of these two types of expectations falling either under the formal or informal category among the employees.

Table III shows the significance of difference between the expectations classified under the cognitive-formal dimension based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels.

	Training while on bench	Development projects	Career guidance by manager	Sponsored soft skills training	Large client project	Interactions with project manager	Competent manager	Product development projects	Moving across technologies
Training while on bench		-1.196	-1.331	-2.085*	-1.639	-2.353*	-2.975***	-3.858***	-8.600***
Development projects			.000	0.728	-0.793	1.088	1.482	-3.154***	8.642
Career guidance by manager			*	.847	-0.773	-1.186	-1.857*	-3.175***	-8.625***
Sponsored soft skills training			*		0.000	-.120	-.806	-2.072*	-7.302***
Large client projects			*			0.132	0.690	2.429**	6.838***
Interactions with project manager			*		*		.715	-2.354*	-7.622***
Competent manager			*		*			-1.430	-6.203***
Product development projects			*						5.412***
Moving across technologies			*		*				

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p<.001

From Table III, based on the 't' values and significance levels, we do not find any expectation significantly higher than all other expectations within the cognitive-formal set of expectations. Expectations on training on bench is significantly higher than soft skills training, interactions with the project manager, career guidance from the manager, working on product development projects and moving across technologies. There is a significant difference between development projects and product development projects. Development projects are preferred more than product development projects. The expectations on career guidance from the manager is significantly higher compared to expectations on competence in the manager, work on product development projects and moving across technologies. Expectations on sponsored soft skills training is significantly higher than work on product development projects and moving across technologies. Large client projects are preferred significantly over product development projects and moving across technologies. An interaction with the project manager is preferred significantly over product development projects and moving across technologies. Expectations on a competent manager are higher than moving across technologies. Lastly, there is a higher expectation to work on product development projects compared to moving across technologies.

Table IV shows the significance of difference between the expectations classified under the cognitive-informal dimension based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels.

Table IV

	Regular feedback on strengths and improvement	Learning through team discussions	Offer technical help	Manager's openness to suggested project ideas	Open sharing of work problems	Participate and present technical seminars	Offer solutions to team members mistakes	Stretching to learn
Regular feedback on strengths and improvement		-1.327	-2.139*	-2.701**	-4.267**	-4.275***	-5.189***	-5.162***
Learning through team discussions			1.121	1.185	2.810***	3.208***	3.982***	4.248***
Offer technical help			*	.245	1.903*	2.233*	3.349**	-3.187**
Manager's openness to suggested project ideas			*		-1.976*	-2.482**	-4.030**	-2.954**
Open sharing of work problems			*			-.292	-0.897	-1.089
Participate and present technical seminars			*				0.715	-0.870
Offer solutions to team members mistakes			*					-0.281
Stretching to learn			*					
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001								

From Table IV, based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels, we find that the expectation on regular feedback on strengths and improvement is significantly higher than all other expectations in this set except learning through team discussions. The expectations on learning through team discussions, offering technical help and the need for the manager to be open to one’s ideas are significantly higher than expectations on open sharing of work problems, involvement in technical seminars, offering solutions to other’s mistakes and stretching to learn.

There is no significant difference observed between the four expectations with the lowest mean scores in this category, which are those concerned with open sharing of work problems, involvement in technical seminars, offering solutions to member’s mistakes and stretching to learn.

Table V shows the significance of difference between the expectations classified under the affective-formal dimension based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels.

Table V

	Job security	Flexible timings	Fun & Social environment	Onsite opportunity	Short breaks during work	Maintenance projects
Job security		-2.029*	-3.479***	-3.932***	5.509**	-16.156***
Flexible timings			-1.093	-1.887*	4.086**	-12.195***
Fun & Social environment				-1.147	2.560*	-12.296***
Onsite opportunity					1.286	9.299***
Short breaks during work						-8.838***
Maintenance projects						

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p<.001

Based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels in Table V, with reference to the affective-formal set of expectations, we find that job security emerges as significantly different from the rest of expectations in this set. It is the strongest. Expectations on flexible timings are significantly different from short breaks at work. Expectations on fun and social environment are significantly different from the need for short breaks at work. Based on the significance levels, we find that the expectation to work on maintenance projects is significantly lower than others.

Table VI shows the significance of difference between the expectations classified under the affective-informal dimension based on the ‘t’ values and significance levels.

Table VI

	Appreciation from client	Appreciation from manager / Lead	Manager's interest in employee's personal growth	Value add from team members' criticisms	Close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns
Appreciation from client		-0.652	5.487***	-5.833***	11.907***
Appreciation from manager / Lead			5.279***	-5.299***	11.564***
Manager's interest in employee's personal growth				-0.046	-5.825***
Value add from team members' criticisms					5.834***
Close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns					

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p<.001

Based on the 't' values and significance levels in Table VI depicting data on expectations in the affective-informal set, we find that there are no significant differences between appreciation from the client and appreciation from the manager/team lead. There is a significant difference between these two expectations and the rest of the expectations which comprises those related to the manager's interest in the employee's personal growth, value add from team member's criticisms and close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns. Expectations on manager's interest in employee's personal growth and perceived value add from team member's criticisms are significantly different from close knit culture to share concerns. The expectations on close-knit culture are significantly lower than other expectations.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we shall discuss the understanding from the qualitative responses for each of the twenty eight expectations classified into one of the four conceptual categories in the framework and a comparison of expectations within each. Then we shall discuss the differences between the formal-informal and cognitive-affective set of expectations. This will be followed by a discussion on the implications of the findings of the study.

Among the Cognitive-formal set of expectations, training while on bench is the strongest. The reasons given by employees are preparation for future projects, better utilization and constructive use of time and as an opportunity to use technical skills. This expectation has a formal organizational element because it is something on which the organization has to make decisions based on policies. It could involve budgets. The keenness on learning to upgrade oneself with reference to work content reflects the cognitive element in this expectation.

The next stronger expectation in this set is to learn through the development projects. The reasons for this expectation stated by employees are that it is an opportunity to experiment and use innovative ideas, exposure to the complete cycle of software development and gives them an opportunity to learn new technologies and developing more knowledge in programming different applications. With regard to this expectation, there is a formal organizational element as the company has to make decisions to allocate manpower to these projects. The individual cognitive element consists of learning of work content.

The level of expectation on getting career guidance from the manager is quite high. The work experience of the manager, opportunity to build a relationship with the managers, periodic reviews by the manager, moral support for personal growth etc are some reasons cited. This expectation has a formal organizational element as systems can be in place for managers to actively guide the career plans of juniors, which is related to succession planning and grooming leadership. It has a strong cognitive component in that it is a strong scheme in life-related growth decisions for the employee.

Expectations on sponsored soft skills training are also high. The reasons cited are improvement on professional and communication skills while interacting with the client and team members - a requirement when one gets into a higher position. There is a formal organizational element in terms of sponsoring and allocation of training budgets. The individual element is cognitive in which the employee foresees better confidence and capability at work.

Regarding large client projects, the reasons cited by employees for their preference are gaining a global perspective, good exposure to technology, improvement in career prospects, understanding of global client's ideas and views, improvement in communication among others. This expectation to work under a large client has a formal organizational element due to manpower allocation policies which could be client-driven. The cognitive element in the employee is predominant consisting of perceived benefits of exposure, development and growth for oneself.

The employees' keenness on interaction with the project manager is due to reasons like gaining a common understanding on the requirement in the project, seeking clarifications, guidance, easier handling of tasks, understand expectations of PM, gaining a broader perspective on role requirements etc. We can understand that there is a formal organizational element in that the organization could consciously promote this in the project design. The cognitive element in this expectation relates to expected improvements and learning content of work.

Competence in the manager is something the employees are very keen about. The employees feel that the amount of benefit that they get is directly proportional to the experience and expertise of the manager. They expect it to contribute to better assessment, inspiration and guidance, improve quality, and improve creativity and innovation, more opportunities and a source of good inspiration. There is a formal organizational element in the recruitment of managers and expectations on their profile and competence. It has a cognitive element as the prime motivation expressed by the employees is learning at work with this support.

The expectation pattern is slightly lower for product development projects compared to development projects. Product development projects are perceived to improve domain expertise and as a good learning experience to improve on technical knowledge and offering challenges and opportunities for experimentation. Those with only moderate expectations to work on these have cited reasons that work could be monotonous without client interactions. This expectation revolves about the nature of work content and therefore consists of a cognitive element. It has a formal organizational element because of the organizational decisions and policies in allocating man power to the projects.

There are different view points on moving across technologies. Those who are highly keen to move between different technologies see it as an advantage in terms of breadth of exposure ensuring professional growth and preparation for future. Those who are not keen to move across technologies cite reasons that they can build expertise only with experience and exposure to one technology. This expectation revolves around the nature of work and has a cognitive element as well as a formal organizational element because of the organizational decisions and policies regarding the manpower allocation to such projects.

When we compare the expectations within the cognitive-formal set, we find that that there is no expectation which emerges as the strongest. There is also an issue of orthogonality when we have to interpret findings based on significant differences. All the expectations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, large client projects could consist of a development project, a product development project or a maintenance project. When the organization has to take a decision, it needs to check whether the employee would prefer a product development project with a large client as compared to a development project with a smaller client. This could be checked on a case-to-case basis when decisions need to be made. Based on the findings, we do find that there are one or two expectations that have a significantly lower preference compared to many other expectations. This finding could lead the organization to devise some strategy of balance by offering two things, one of a low expectation and one of a high expectation together to maintain a sense of equity. For example, expectations on moving across technologies is significantly lower compared to many other expectations in the category. Therefore, if the employee is forced to do so, then as an incentive, soft skills training could also be provided to maintain a sense of equity.

Among the cognitive-informal set of expectations, the strongest one is regular feedback on strengths and improvements. The benefits from this according to the employees are improvement of styles, professional grooming, correction of mistakes and improvement of technical knowledge, upgradation to become a highly skilled resource, boost confidence, improve strengths and help identify weakness in one's work. There is a strong informal organizational element as this depends on the volition of the manager involved. It has a strong cognitive element in how it is perceived to improve one's work and capability.

Learning through discussions with their team members is also something employees are keen about. They feel that this will help them gain new ideas and perspectives, faster learning, opportunity to seek clarifications, understanding of the bigger picture etc among others. Regarding this expectation, we can understand this is an informal activity and is not necessarily dictated by organizational decisions and there is a strong individual cognitive element in this expectation consisting of expectation of improvement in the content of work for better performance.

The expectation that one should offer technical help to others is high. The employees feel that this practice helps on a mutual basis to meet the project deadlines as well as keep in touch with new trends. This opportunity is perceived to be challenging and helpful to keep abreast and update and increase one's skills. The reason for low expectation on this is that such initiatives could hinder one's own work. We can understand that this expectation has an informal organizational element because the prime initiator is the employee. The cognitive element is reflected as understanding of work content.

There is a moderately high expectation in the employees on the manager being open to the ideas and suggestions given by the project members. They perceive it to be an opportunity to test the quality of their ideas, as a good platform to contribute good ideas, provide a training ground, develop an area of expertise and facilitate a good understanding between the manager and the workers. There is an informal organizational element which is determined by the styles of the manager. The individual element has a cognitive dimension as it relates to learning and enhancement of job content.

The expectation on open sharing of work problems is also high. The benefits they perceive out of this exercise are quick redressal of issues, better solutions, clarity on problems, elimination of politics and a free communication channel to promote a good working environment among others. Those who have only a low expectation have a different view. Their reasons are that there will be difficulty in opening up before others and that there is need to be selective in discussing problems only with the team leader or the project manager. This expectation has an informal organizational element because the organization cannot formally impose this as a decision. The individual cognitive element is reflected in the perceived improvement of work content for employees.

Regarding participation in and presentation of technical seminars, the expectations are moderately high. The employees feel that participating and presenting technical seminars is important as it enables them to understand new technologies, update oneself with trends in the IT industry and hone their technical as well as participation skills. They are more ready to participate than to present, as they feel that the latter needs experience and effort. It is perceived to help in career and personal development. Those with a moderate or low expectation have expressed that they expect the project manager to also support such initiatives. Those with a low expectation on this feel that it is difficult to accommodate this within the present work requirements and work pressure. This expectation is informal as it begins with an employee's initiative. As it helps improve work content, it has also a cognitive element in it for the employee.

The initiative to offer solutions to team member's mistakes is of moderately high order of expectation. According to the employees, this practice will be helpful especially during performance appraisals, as evidence of good practice behaviors. This will enhance quality of work as well as team work. People will feel supported through such an environment. It is an indicator of effectiveness. It helps team members prevent unnecessary wastage of time and it contributes towards the success of the entire team. Those with a moderate expectation have raised the point that it requires a condition where the provider should be clear on the criticism and the seeker open to receive it. Others have expressed that they would like to correct their mistake only if the suggestion/ advice is relevant. Others have expressed that this depends on an individual's preference. This expectation has an informal organizational element because it is primarily employee-driven and a cognitive element in how it can help improve work content. Regarding stretching to learn, the employees have a moderately high expectation. Those with a high expectation have expressed the need to update oneself in order to survive in this industry. The advantages they foresee are about updating one's skills and technological competence which can be beneficial in the future. Some of the constraints they have mentioned are about the present load in the project and the pressure to meet present deadlines. Others have expressed

that they want to be focused on what they are working on and not overstretch. From these varied responses, we can understand that this expectation reflects individual initiative to achieve and grow in future. It can be concluded that there is only an informal organizational element as it rests on the initiative of the employee and it has a cognitive element as it relates to employee needs for learning, achievement and growth.

Among the cognitive-informal set of expectations, we find that regular feedback emerges as the stronger expectation compared to most of the other expectations within this set. Expectations on learning through team discussions, the need to offer technical help and the need for the manager to be open to their suggestions are significantly higher than those related to a culture of open sharing of work problems, involvement in technical seminars, offering solutions to others' mistakes and stretching to learn. Expectations are comparatively lower on open sharing of work problems, involvement in technical seminars, offering solutions to member's mistakes and stretching to learn.

Among the affective-formal set of expectations, job security within the project context is most important to them. The young employees feel that it gives them a sense of stability and security that helps them be more focused and show better productivity. "Job security is life security is family security is organizational security" is an interesting quote from one of the respondents. Job security has a formal element because the whole dynamic is controlled by the organization's policy level decisions. Through the responses, one can discern that there is also a strong affective element to this expectation in how it impacts the psyche of the employee.

The view on flexible timings is that the end or outcome is what matters in terms of quality of work and adherence to deadlines. Flexible timings can enable better fulfillment of personal commitments and better work-life balance. Those with a low expectation on flexible timings have expressed that it can affect team work because all team members will not be present in the office at the same time and that it may not be conducive for discipline. The important factors include the individual employee's preference and project requirements. An employee response reads "It depends upon the kind of project handled whether it is a development project in which case flexible timings can be adopted, but not for client based maintenance projects wherein a resource needs to be constantly present and there should be predictability". This expectation has a formal organizational element in terms of organizational policies and an affective element because it relates to likes and dislikes of employees.

Expectations on fun and social events are moderately high. They are perceived to help develop bondages between team members and also between the employee and the organization. Low inclination towards these is more due to the personality preference of not wanting to socialize. However, the reasons stated for high preference on this are that these will be refreshing to the mind and enable better productivity. "Such activities are required to maintain work life balance" and "It is a kind of stress buster, an opportunity to interact with the team members, gives a break from the routine and gives mental relaxation" are two employee responses. These events are also perceived to strengthen the relationship between the employees, and provide an opportunity to know many more colleagues in the organization and to interact with each other and build a friendly environment. This has a formal organizational element in terms of organizational policies on the same as well as a strong affective element that focuses on perceptions on relationship building.

Regarding onsite opportunity, there are moderate expectations and varying views. The employees feel that they can get international exposure as well as understand global communities; it helps earn good money and enables good cultural exposure. However, the responses given by the few who are not so keen is that they would not prefer to be away from their families and that there are other preference criteria for choosing projects, not only because it is onsite. To some, the important criteria in an onsite opportunity are duration, project/client, stipend or salary, onsite place of posting and the role. Since this is an opportunity that is given based on an organization's requirements, it has a formal element in it. It also has a strong affective element as the prime motivation factors are a 'high' about money, confidence etc and on the other side, family reasons.

Regarding short breaks, there are two views. People who do not prefer breaks feel that it can affect the flow and momentum of work, while those who are keen about breaks, feel that this time will help them to relate to other employees, refresh and reduce physical discomfort if any with a little rest. There are grounds to believe that there are some factors in well-being at work that include task characteristics such as attention demands and level of physical activity and the working environment and ergonomic design and equipment usage (Sparrow & Cooper 1998). Breaks can help manage monotony at work too. This expectation has a formal organizational element in terms of the policies on the same. The affective element relates to how employees like or dislike this as a practice.

Maintenance projects are an area for which the employees have predominantly very low preference. Very few have expressed keenness to work on such projects. Those who have a preference to work on these projects perceive that these projects enable learning and equipping oneself in strong domain knowledge and learning of problems in implementation of the project. Those with least preference for this type of project feel that it will not give any scope to learn, as the requirements are already conceived and developed and there is no role of thinking anew. They feel uncomfortable modifying the existing codes created by others. Some employees perceive that there is less learning and hardly any thinking. We can understand from the resistance of the employees due to the perceived nature of work that, there is a strong affective element in this related to work in the formal organizational context, where employees have to take up work in such projects due to organizational demands.

Among the affective-formal expectations, the need for job security emerges strongest, while the need to work on maintenance projects is lowest. Maintenance project is not compared and discussed with the others in this set because there are no common parameters to compare and contrast the others with this one. The understanding is that this is something for which most of the employees show least preference.

Among the affective-informal set of expectations, client appreciation is one with the highest mean score. Employees maintain at least a moderate expectation regarding client appreciation and view it as feedback on their strengths. The benefits they see are boost of confidence, an apt reward for the hard work and a good source of encouragement. The employees feel that it will help to know one's strengths and what one is good at. This expectation has an informal organizational element in that it is determined by the employees' efforts and the client and not by the organization's dictates. From their responses, it is clear that there is an affective element where there is a sense of achievement, recognition and a 'high' feeling associated with this expectation.

Appreciation from the manager and the team lead is very much desired by the employees. Only 1 % of the sample has a low expectation on this area. It can be inferred based on their responses that the employees are extremely keen about appreciation and recognition, which can help build up a good self image and provides a good input to enhancing employee responsibility and efficiency at work. Perceptually, a good appraisal on completion of the work makes a very positive difference. This behavior is perceived to help maintain the momentum and encourage responsibility and efficiency. This expectation has an informal organizational element as it depends more on the style of manager and does not have much to do with formal organizational decisions. It has a strong affective element in the employee reflecting the need for recognition.

Akin to mentoring, the expectation on the manager to take interest in one's personal growth is only moderately high. It can be inferred based on their responses that the employees have two views. One view is that it will help them personally and professionally. They feel that this will be a source of great moral support and that it helps the employee in personal development and growth and will help to build a bright career. The other view that is representative of a moderate expectation is that it may not be possible given a business environment that is professional. One

should be given adequate personal space and that it is unnecessary to mix personal and professional life. Taking a pragmatic view, some feel that it is not possible to implement this practice always and that it depends upon the manager. There is a strong informal organizational element as this behavior depends on the managers' inclination. On the other hand, there is a strong affect element as it relates to values, moral support and such others in the way the employees perceive it as an organizational necessity.

The expectation on value add from team member's criticisms is moderately high among employees. The high expectation reasons are that this will help identify one's own areas of improvement, improvement in the quality of work, reduction in repetition of mistakes and better performance if the criticisms are taken positively. This expectation has an informal organizational element as well as an affect element. The organization has nothing to do with this at the formal level. It concerns affect because it involves sensitivity of the receiver about the other side who gives the feedback as well as a compelling need within oneself to improve oneself. The provider of criticism also needs to have an affable feeling coupled with an intention to help others to improve.

The employees have different view points on the need for a close-knit culture to share personal and family concerns. One view is that a close knit culture will be a good relationship building input. Deep bonding between the employer and employee, knowledge sharing and work sharing and accommodation between each other are perceived benefits. 'I can adjust to my colleague's absence if I know the genuine reasons' and 'You will feel happier to be at office' are observations from two employees. Those who do not have high expectations on a close-knit culture express that one should differentiate between professional and personal needs. It is felt that in reality, the chances of this close-knitting may never happen and that the work place is a formal environment and a professional environment needs to be maintained at the workplace. Some others feel that everyone will not be open to share their personal concerns. There is a strong informal organizational and affective element to this expectation. Bocchino et al. (2003) found through a study on employee retention that an organizational culture that emphasizes interpersonal relationship values is uniformly more attractive to employees than a culture emphasizing work task values. However, the findings based on this study seem to convey that the employees, except for a few, do not have a great need for bonding at the workplace and view work as formal and/or impersonal. This expectation also has an informal organizational and individual affective element.

In the affective-informal set of expectations, there is an equally high expectation on appreciation from the client as well as from the manager and lead. Expectations on a close knit culture to share concerns are the lowest among this set of expectations. Employee recognition is something the organization could attend to consistently to motivate them as this need appears to be high.

Managerial Implications of the Findings

Combining the nuances of learning as well as project expectations, there are many opportunities within projects for employees to upgrade themselves. If the organization takes interest to provide the employees opportunities like training on bench and others including soft skills training, they will perceive an advantage of equipping themselves with additional and upgraded skills. Consequently, the employees will be willing to give back their contribution as enhanced commitment to the work entrusted, in order to maintain a sense of equity in their psyche. From the qualitative responses, we can gather that the employees are more interested in product development and development projects which are perceived as more challenging, interesting and value-adding to them compared to maintenance projects for which there is predominantly resistance indicated from their very low preference for the same. The implications are that if the company does not compensate higher or at least compensate better for work in maintenance projects, there will be a perception of inequity, when the employees find

at times, that their peers are being assigned to development and product development projects as against them. This could lead to dissatisfaction and lower performance or attrition. Clear and fair policies on project allocation need to be conveyed explicitly to tackle this. With reference to knowledge workers, those organizations concerned about improving the levels of organizational commitment and retention among knowledge employees must ensure first that merit and fairness govern the organization's rewards and should ensure that the jobs they do are interesting and challenging (Flood et al., 2001). Balanced psychological contracts (Rousseau, 2004) ensure commitment on the part of the employer to develop workers, while anticipating that workers will be flexible and willing to adjust if economic conditions change. This needs to be worked on.

Mentoring has important implications because socialization events, particularly initial assignments with the boss(es) and coworkers can have pervasive effects over time on beliefs that a worker holds about the employment relationship (Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Managers report actively using the notion of the psychological contract in the way they

reward, motivate, and otherwise signal to employees about what to expect from the firm in the future (Guest & Conway, 2002). The most important aspect of the 'employer's' side is the role that managers play. Managers, both immediate supervisors and higher-ups play a central role in shaping an employee's psychological contract. The presence of a supportive immediate manager can serve to amplify or downplay messages sent by the firm's HR practices regarding the nature of the employment relationship. (Tackleab & Taylor, 2005). Since we find through this study that managerial involvement is highly appreciated, be it interaction with the project manager, or appreciation, feedback, career guidance or a closer involvement and interest in the employee's personal growth, a mentoring system could be put in place to serve this purpose. This will definitely mean additional role appendages for the managers and sometimes for team leads too. The company needs to decide whether this investment is worthwhile in the long run. Research seems to indicate so.

Based on the conceptual framework evolved, we find no statistical difference between the organizational elements, formal and informal. The formal elements can involve budgets and /or putting systems and processes in place. Informal level expectations need to be understood as they may be evident only in grapevine communications within immediate equivalent peer circles and may not be communicated explicitly by the employees, unless an effort is put up in this regard. At the same time, they are very strong because employees own them up. It is self-driven from their side. The organization is informed of issues with reference to the formal aspects. But the informal level elements have to be detected. Special efforts need to be made in this direction.

Regarding the individual element, the cognitive expectations emerge very strong. The cognitive set of expectations is higher compared to the affective set. Adequate opportunities should be provided by the organization for the employee to learn, grow and rejuvenate themselves. The affective set of expectations could also emerge very impactful on work, whether positive or negative. Negative emotional elements could lead to impulsive moves by employees leading to attrition or lower performance. Their prime characteristic is that they are not bound by the formal organization and could develop without a rational basis. The company needs to attend to these as these could be strong demotivating factors in employee productivity. From an intersectional perspective, the cognitive-formal expectations like training on bench, sponsored soft skills training etc increases the spend on employee development, while the cognitive-informal expectations showcase the employees' readiness for initiatives for self-development and learning. With reference to the cognitive expectations, the employees want an equally strong initiative from the organization to attend to their learning and development needs as much as their willingness to take initiative on their own. Accordingly, cognitive-informal expectations need to be identified and the organization needs to streamline processes

to encourage those, so that the employees' expressed learning needs are attended to. This implies a movement from an informal space to a formal level of consideration. Expectations within the affective-formal dimension set will involve a considerable amount of process cost in terms of additional responsibilities /role enlargement for the managers, if the company thinks of formalizing them, while the affective-informal set is related to the experience of organizational culture. Regarding the affective-formal expectations, the employees want the organization to provide them many opportunities which make them feel good and be recognized, while affective-informal expectations like expectations on regular feedback and the manager's style and relationship also seem to be equally important. The management needs to think on whether it needs to attend to the affective expectations, which have predominantly to do with emotions and which have no direct relationship with work efficacy.

With the routine pressures of the business and work delivery will the organization take care to identify the informal set of expectations which are implicit? It is a reality that they exist and are critical. What type of efforts can the organization put in to understand these? Can managers take over a conscious supportive role? Would that be possible always? Herein, we need to recognize the importance of the role of the organizational psychologist who could act as an external agent in monitoring the employees' psyche and well-being and be in constant touch with them and educate the managers on the rudimentary unsaid expectations which could have a strong influence on how the employees feel about work. Monitoring this people data is very crucial. The management needs to recognize the implicit worth of this effort. With their knowledge of both organizational and employee issues, consulting psychologists are in a unique position to use this framework to identify costs and benefits in order to assure that the terms of the psychological contract provide reciprocity between the employee and the organization. Organizational psychologists can guide supervisors and HR managers while defining and executing employee psychological contracts. They can provide valuable input during the selection process to increase the chance of hiring people who can easily adjust and succeed according to the organization's culture. Executive coaching to increase self-awareness and understanding of problems and issues in the career growth path is another possible contribution of psychologists. They can help provide a meaningful link to design an effective psychological contract.

LIMITATIONS

This framework has a theoretical basis, but more work needs to be done to validate the proposition. The findings are based on one case site only.

Suggestions for future research

Replication of the study in other case sites can help test the hypotheses that have been formed on the formal-informal and cognitive-affective set of expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the data from this study, we have been able to conceptually categorize employee expectations along the formal-informal organizational dimension and cognitive-affective individual dimension. We do not find any difference between the formal and informal category of expectations statistically. But, we do find a difference between the cognitive and affective set of expectations. Cognitive expectations are stronger than affective expectations. The categorization of expectations on the cognitive-formal, cognitive-informal, affective-formal, and affective-informal is important, to understand the nature of expectations and to prioritize the action steps to fulfill these expectations. Attending to the four sets of expectations have necessary implications of associated costs and benefits for the organization. The organization can source the services of organizational psychologists in devising methods to bring out the unsaid and implicit expectations of employees and feed it back to the management.

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