

1. Research project objectives

The proposed project includes an explanation of the cause and effect relationships together with a specification of the conditions in which the tested influence of prognostic factors (high-investment HRM system) on the tested variable (proactivity) will occur. The proposed model assumes that the stage of fulfilling a psychological contract (the mediating variable) intermediates in the relationship between high-investment HRM systems and employee proactivity. Various attitudes (involvement, motivation and satisfaction) were suggested in the role of moderator in order to verify whether this variable has a conditioning effect on the existence of relationships between high-investment HRM systems and proactivity when a psychological contract is performed. The model is based on the assumption that a wide range of factors located in the indicated areas affects employees' proactive behaviours. The following theoretical concepts are used in the model; proactivity, high-investment HRM systems and a psychological contract. It is not only employees' efficient use of acquired knowledge and abilities that constitutes the basis of proactive behaviours, but also the function of the real and perceived access to resources in the workplace, the use of knowledge anchored in relationships, the support received from superiors in relation to the employees' obligations that they carry out, as well as having so-called positive motivational attitudes. Therefore, the theoretical approach, which constitutes the frames of the description of proactive behaviours presented here, should be increased by the new prospects, which include factors connected with the creation and support of working conditions while satisfying mutual promises within a contract. In connection with this, the project will refer not only to issues connected with ways of creating proactivity but mainly to the motives for taking or not taking such actions on the basis of meeting the assumptions of the psychological contract. This is also consistent with the approach to human resources management.

2. Research project methodology

The proposed concept of the research is based on an analysis of the key issues connected with the proactivity of employees who are the suppliers of special and unique knowledge in companies which specialise in creating innovative services for external contractors. Accepting the initial research assumptions and research aim requires that the research cover companies in which intense knowledge is used, i.e., organisations from the modern BSS which function in Poland. The research covers two perspectives: an organisational one and a working one. The following will be used in the research: desk research and web research, two qualitative methods (individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and an Expert Panel) as well as a quantitative method (with the use of the CATI technique – computer assisted telephone interview). The teleconferences (Skype) with specialists in the field of HRM, psychological contract and organizational behaviour will be organized at each of the project phases. This will ensure the proper start of the project, and more and greater expertise in getting the results published. The IDIs (20 interviews with representatives of large and medium-sized companies from the BSS) will be performed in order to get a deeper understanding of the topic, tapping into non-identified issues in the theory. The quantitative research will be conducted in knowledge-intensive companies (targeted and random choice) on a testing sample: $n = 1000$ representatives from the BSS (including: $n = 500$ key representatives of the organization [HR managers, owners or directors, or senior managers] from the BSS and $n = 500$ knowledge workers). The quantitative research will constitute the basic stage of the procedure. The applicant will use the structural equation modelling SEM method included in the STATA/SE package or AMOS to verify the hypotheses and to specify the relationships between the variables. The last stage of the research procedure will be the Expert Panel, with the participation of HRM and organisational behaviour specialists. The purpose of the last stage will be to discuss the results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative research on the basis of which the empirical model was tested.

3. Present reasons for choosing the research topic

The reasons why the applicant decided to carry out the research include the desire to continue and develop her scientific interests in the scope of the psychological aspects of employees' and employers' functioning in organisations; a significant deficit of research concerning the determinants of knowledge workers' contracts and a complete lack of research concerning the mediating role of the psychological contract in shaping relationships between high-investment HRM systems and the proactivity of knowledge workers. Apart from the research conducted by the applicant, no research concerning the role of the psychological contract in human resources management from the perspective of employers has been noticed. Conducting research on the creation of employee proactivity in the workplace is justified, with the cognitive gap connected with the lack of analyses of organisational variables other than the work features which lead to the performance of tasks (Parker and Bindl, 2017), the complete lack of test results on the role of the psychological contract in shaping proactive behaviours, and the lack of research considering the unique work characteristics of employees from companies in the BSS working in the conditions of the Polish economy.