

Information Practice of Human Resource Managers and Recruiters

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Abstract

In the information age, technological, social and cultural changes directly affect organizations and often lead to instability in a competitive environment. Information skills are one of the means by which organizations cope with these issues. The lack of information skills has been widely recognized as having a major impact on employee performance in the workplace. Information Science research has demonstrated the contribution of Information Literacy to academic success and research, but its contribution to the performance of the workers has not yet been fully proven. Information Literacy in the workplace is not only an emergent topic for research but also for professional practice.

The main motivation for this research was to find a way to implement Information Literacy as a practice in the workplace by showing its contribution to task performance, thereby convincing managers that Information Practice may increase the value of their enterprise. Information Literacy and Information Behavior are the layers of Information Practice, which includes tools and skills aiming to fulfill the Information needs of the workforce.

The proposed model in this research attempts to examine the contribution of Information Practice and Professional Practice, and their common impact on task performance in the workplace. Furthermore, the study maps Information Practice views and attitudes of professionals about Information Literacy concepts and proposes a method for investigating the relationship between Information Literacy and Human Resources or recruitment tasks in the workplace. The main working hypothesis is that Information Practice and Professional Practice contributes to task performance and may offer a way to implement Information Literacy in the workplace.

Methodology and Analysis

The present study concentrates on Human Resources (HR) managers and recruiters for three reasons: 1) their impact on almost all employees as they administrate their careers, from recruitment to retirement through job definition, training, and ongoing assessments; 2) the major cultural and technological changes occurring in the HR field over the last few decades, and 3) because the analysis of common HR tasks reveal that HR workers are actually “knowledge workers”.

The methodology spans three phases: 1) text analysis of 140 job advertisements, through theme

recognition of the information skills and task requirements; 2) text analysis of skills presented in 300 LinkedIn profiles; and 3) mixed methods research analysis through a web-based questionnaire distributed to 163 HR managers and recruiters, specifically recruited on the LinkedIn professional network.

The main hypothesis is that Information Practice and Professional Practice contributes to task performance. We hypothesize that Information Practice increases the number of tasks performed by HR managers and recruiters. We also hypothesize that information skills learned and acquired in academic studies will contribute to task performance.

Findings

Ten main findings emerged from the study:

1. Information practice contributes to the performance of tasks and affects the output of HR managers and recruiters;
2. The contribution of information practice differs as a function of the examined field, namely HR management and recruitment;
3. Information skills acquired in higher education do not contribute to the performance of tasks in the workplace;
4. A higher level of education improves only academic information skills, but not information skills required in the workplace;
5. Information skills training given at the workplace is ineffective, and its contribution to task performance is marginal;
6. However, this training provides the sense that the information needs of the workers are fulfilled;
7. About half of HR managers and recruiters understand the significance of information literacy and its importance to their role;
8. There was no correlation between the level of information sharing and performance of tasks in the workplace;
9. Most HR managers and recruiters are members of a professional community, but the contribution of these communities to task performance is marginal;
10. HR managers and recruiters do not believe that Human Resources studies are adapted to the employer's requirements.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the results, Figure 1 presents the proposed model of Professional and Information Practice for HR managers and recruiters.

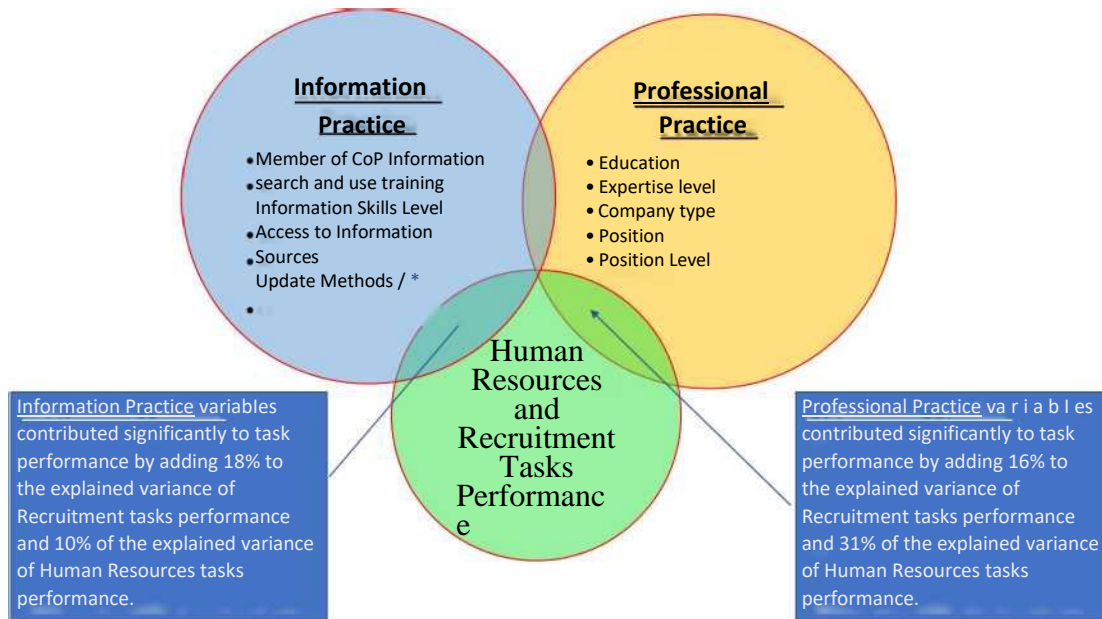


Fig. 1. Professional and Information Practice Model

Figure 1 describes the impact of Information Practice variables and Professional Practice variables on task performance. Professional Practice contributed significantly to task performance by adding 16% to the explained variance of recruitment task performance and 31% of the explained variance of HR task performance. Information Practice contributed significantly to task performance by adding 18% to the explained variance of recruitment task performance and 10% of the explained variance of HR task performance.

The results reveal a statistically significant contribution of Information Practice and Professional Practice on the performance of HR and recruitment tasks. Surprisingly, information skills acquired in higher education did not contribute to task performance, which raises the issue of Information Skills transfer from higher education to the workplace; this further highlights the need for advocacy of workplace Information Literacy among business leaders.

The Professional and Information Practice (PIP) model is proposed in order to convince higher education institutions to deploy Information Skills focusing on the workplace, along with a special “Train the Trainers” course that is outlined later in this research. The study also highlights missing topics in the HR

and recruitment literature, which is a major issue in employees' preparation for the workplace. Finally, the innovative methodology used in this research—along with the proposed typology of Information sources, update methods, and Information Skills—offers new perspectives in the Human Resources and Recruitment research by pinpointing factors that effectively contribute to task performance.

Contribution

By linking Information Practice to Task Performance in the workplace, this research sheds light on the emerging fields of Workplace Information Literacy and Professional Information Practice:

- At the business level, this research contributes to the Digital Transformation of the workplace by highlighting the benefits of Information Literacy;
- At the professional level, the study contributes to the development of training of HR managers and recruiters with a thorough analysis of their information needs;
- At the research level, the proposed framework offers an accurate evaluation of information sources, skills, needs and use in a workplace setting;
- The findings of this research and its implications may lead to the practical development of Workplace Information Literacy promotion in the business community.

Limitations and future research

Despite its findings and implications, this study has several limitations. First, the lack of contribution of higher education information skills on task performance should be studied to get a broader understanding of the Information Skills Transfer process from the university to the workplace. Second, the contribution of Information Practice was studied through the lens of the workplace, and further studies should analyze this contribution to the employability of employees. Third, this research focused on Human Resources managers and recruiters, and this framework should be extended to other professions. Fourth, a future study should also use interview and experimental methods to enrich the information needs analysis in the workplace.

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