

The Impact of  
**Individual Employee Differences on  
Information Seeking**  
in Today's  
Information Rich Work Environment

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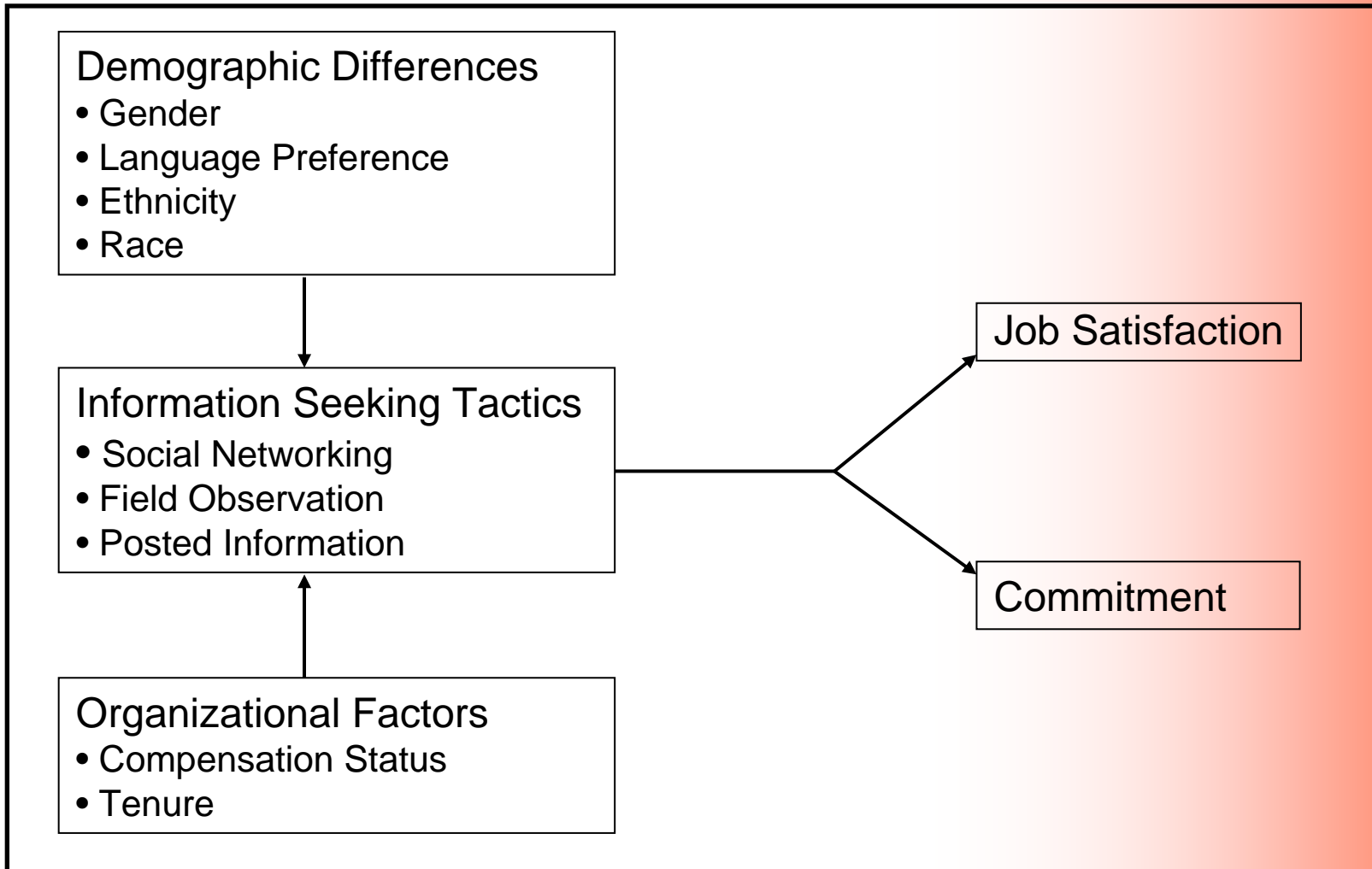
# Content

- Information seeking behaviour model
- Method of the study
- Results
- Managerial implications
- Conclusion

# Information seeking behaviour

- Information sources:
  - Personal sources; e.g. peers, supervisor, experienced co-workers, individuals external to the organization
  - Downward-flowing communication; e.g. from managers
  - Non-personal sources; e.g. manuals, policies, job descriptions, performance evaluations...
- Technological change from hard copies to electronic information and communication
- Importance of information richness and social presence

# Information seeking behaviour model



# Hypotheses

- H1: Individuals will exhibit **three types of information seeking behavior**: social networking, field observation, published or broadcast materials.
- H2: There will be **significant differences between males and females** in information seeking behaviors.
- H3: There will be **significant differences between blacks and non-blacks** in information seeking behaviors.
- H4: There will be **significant differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics** in information seeking behaviors.
- H5: There will be **significant differences between English speakers and Spanish speakers** in information seeking behaviors.
- H6: There will be **no significant differences** in the information seeking behavior **of salary and wage employees**.
- H7: Individuals will exhibit **different types** of information seeking behavior **depending on their newcomer status**.
- H8: Information seeking strategies will be **related to satisfaction**.
- H9: Information seeking strategies will be **related to commitment**.

# Method - survey

- **Corporation of importing cut flowers into the USA**
- 216 employees; 183 answered; 3 discarded
- **Gender:** 85 females; 95 males
- **Language used:** 81 Spanish; 94 English
- **Race:** 123 Hispanics; 44 whites, 8 blacks
- **Compensation:** 127 hourly waged; 53 salaried
- **Tenure:** 20 newcomers; 157 tenured

# Hypotheses – support or resist

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# Results of the survey

Information Seeking Tactics	Preferred by Groups
Social Networking: Seek advice from senior management	Non-Hispanic group
Social Networking: Consult with peers	Waged group Hispanic group
Observation	Non-Hispanic group Black group English preferred group Newcomers
Posted information	Black group English preferred group

# Characterization of Information Seeking Tactics

Information Seeking Tactics	Characterized by
Social Networking: Seek advice from senior management	high richness high interactiveness high specificity
Social Networking: Consult with peers	high richness high interactiveness low specificity
Observation	high richness low interactiveness low specificity
Posted information	low richness low interactiveness high specificity

# Managerial implications

## 1. Posterred information

- encourage to use more posterred materials
- the **structure** of various information and documents on the intranet for facilitate their search and sharing
- suitable form and language

## 2. Observation

- give individuals an opportunity to observe others
- make **training video** available on the intranet

## 3. Differences between the groups

- provide to the different groups of employees the appropriate collaboration and communication **technologies to support their preferred mode** of information seeking

# Conclusion and limitations

- Different groups prefer different information seeking method:
  - Based on this study (studied one organization, just eight blacks) the general characteristics of the ethnic groups cannot be specified.
  - In social networking (peer consultant) employees prefer to ask help from the members of the same group.
- Information cathering for research:
  - In this study information seeking behaviours were self-reported.
  - Ethnographical studies are needed.