

# **THE UNCERTAINTY OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH THE LENSE ON THE THEORY OF MOTIVATED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Information Management (IM) for the Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) process distinguish between two main levels of IM which are referred to as personal information management (PIM) and organizational information management (OIM). The concept boundary-spanning is also discussed as it impacts on the relationship between the triad partnerships on the IM function related to WIL. To strengthen this boundary-spanning between the triad partners of WIL the Theory of Motivated Information Management (TMIM) provides the foundation on which uncertainty that develops in the triad relationship of WIL can be used to facilitate solutions. The triad partnership for WIL is based on relationships. These relationships are critical to manage information for WIL as it requires specific links between the triad partners to facilitate an effective and efficient IM approach for WIL. This article highlighted how the TMIM can help to strengthen the boundary-spanning between the triad partners and how it can minimize the uncertainty between the triad partners.

**Keywords:** Work-integrated learning, Theory of Motivated Information Management, personal information management, organizational information management, boundary-spanning

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) is based on Information Management (IM) principles where each of the parties involved have a unique and critical role to play effectively and applicable to the specific circumstance (Abeysekera, 2006). The information flow between the triad partners namely Higher Education Institution (HEI) lecturer, industry mentors and students involved with WIL, should be meaningful information exchange or feedback (Chisholm, Harris, Northwood & Johrendt, 2009). The IM for WIL process distinguishes between two main levels of IM which are referred to as personal information management (PIM) and organizational information management (OIM).

PIM is the management of information in the every-day lives of individuals, how information is accessed that is needed to address business and personal needs. For example on a personal level the student, in order to prepare a CV or prepare for an interview, has a need for information and will search for such information using a variety of information sources. In the WIL programme this process is typical of PIM. On the other hand organizational information management (OIM) is considered as a separate core area of IM for WIL. Hicks, Culley and McMahon (2006) define IM from an organizational perspective, saying that it includes activities that support the information lifecycle from creation, representation and maintenance, to communication and reuse, as part of the management process of information. HEIs are typically organizations that are hugely reliant on the management of information sources. The system should be robust and can be changed when new areas need to be added to system functionality. Students are reliant on the information contained in the system, as all facets of study are affected by this information which include student throughput or graduation which is reliant on OIM. The WIL process can only be successful if it is guided by the IM technique boundary-spanning.

Boundary-spanning monitors the roles and communication which need to be well coordinated and recorded. Beechler, Sondergaard, Miller and Bird (2009:124) stated their thinking of boundary-spanning as a fluid, evolving way, as the piping system and the information that flows through them. All information which may change pertaining to any of the triad partners need to be updated and be available, for perusal in order to make the correct decision. Therefore, it is crucial that all parties engaged in IM for WIL are committed; understand their functions, roles and contributions in order to address the challenges faced by the HEIs in terms of environmental uncertainties.

To have an effective IM for WIL model, the exchange of information between the triad partners must be done through effective boundary-spanning. The feelings of uncertainty and emotions which are partly addressed by boundary-spanning are addressed in parallel with the theory of motivated information management (TMIM).

## **2. THEORY OF MOTIVATED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

The theory of motivated information management (TMIM) is a theoretical framework developed to account for individuals' decisions to seek out or avoid information regarding particular issues (Fowler & Afifi, 2011:510). Fowler and Afifi (2011:510) stated that TMIM expanded on the foundation of several theoretical frameworks, namely uncertainty management theory, problematic integration theory, the heuristic systematic model, social cognitive theory and emotional appraisal theory. The objective of this theory is to provide insight into decisions made during interpersonal encounters.

The focus of this theory was to address specifically interpersonal encounters by the information seeker or in this article the information exchanges between the triad partners of WIL. Afifi

(2010:96) argue that the TMIM bring together the diverse findings related to uncertainty management in interpersonal encounters, explicate the role of efficacy in the process and offer a framework that explicitly recognises both the information seeker and information provider in the information exchange. To visualise the TMIM process Figure 1 presents the information seeker and information provider roles to offer insight into the flow of information and a discussion specific to the IM for WIL follows to highlight the information in this example.

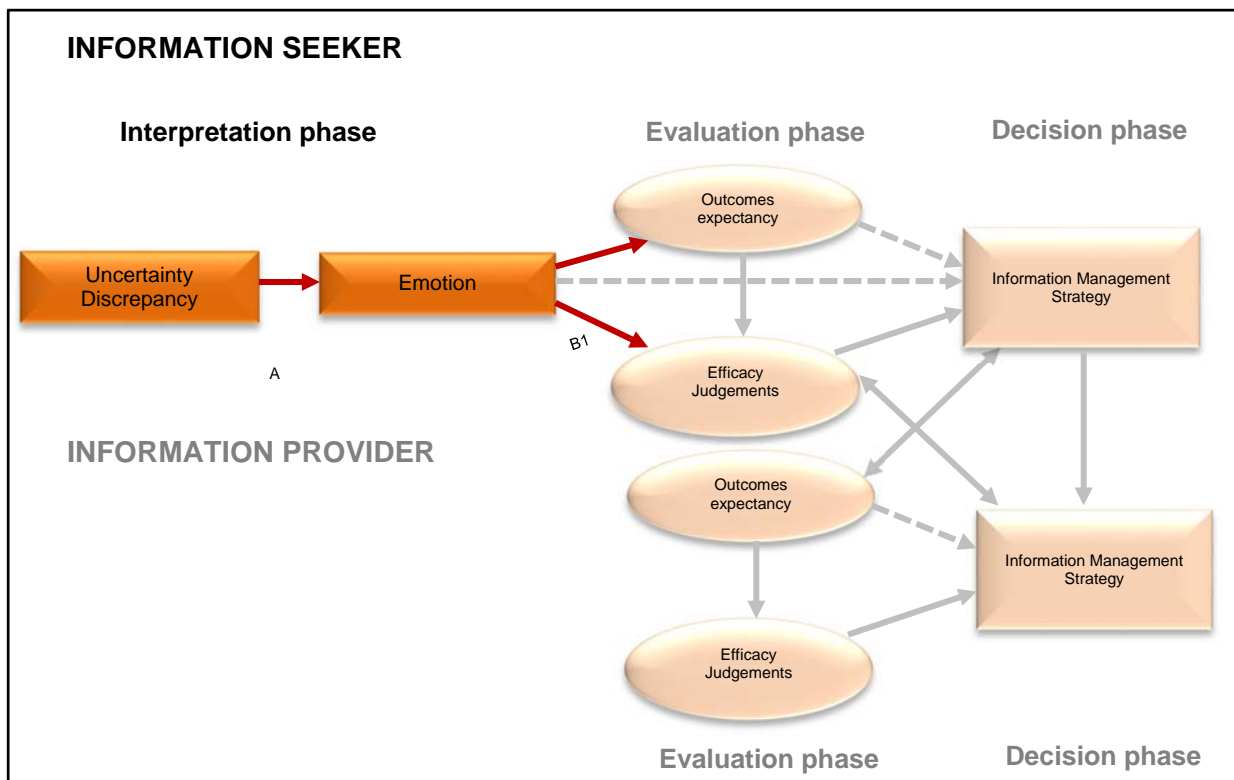


Figure 1 Model of theory of motivated information management (adapted from Fowler & Afifi, 2011:512)

The rationale of TMIM provides a framework to interpret and predict information seeking decisions of a user. In terms of the WIL process the triad partners are all engaged in information seeking in some way or another. The TMIM model guides the process as graphically displayed on the phases in which the triad partners engage to seek and provide information. The model in Figure 1 distinguishes between the different information that forms part of the TMIM phases and indicates the different processes which are part of this theory.

When the information seeker is required to obtain information the seeker of this information needs to determine which sources of information may provide the required information. The information seeker has to make a decision whether or not to request information from identified sources with the purpose of obtaining information that is needed to make decisions. The unique roles and functions of the information seeker are discussed as part of all three phases in the TMIM model. The unique roles and functions of the information provider are discussed as part of the evaluation and decision phases. TMIM is represented by the three phases, which moves from interpretation phase, to the evaluation phase reaching finally the decision phase. These three phases are discussed to explain the IM for WIL process as engaged by the triad partners in this article. The first phase of the TMIM is the Interpretation phase.

### **2.1. Phase One: Interpretation**

According to Afifi and Weiner (2006:36) this phase involves individual assessments of the discrepancy between the information available and the information that the partners in this relationship desire. Awareness needs to be improved in addressing uncertainties which develops due to discrepancies between people, issues and level of uncertainty as experienced by partners involved in this relationship (Afifi & Morse, 2009:88; Afifi, 2010:97). In this article the awareness needs to be improved to address uncertainties between the triad partners namely the HEI lecturers, HEI administrators, students, student administrators, industry mentors and industry administrators. Fowler and Afifi (2011:511) further argued in order to recognise the realisation of the uncertainty factor of the decision is to continue with the search for information or to avoid the search for information, which may result in not anticipated negative outcome thereof. Even if information is relevant the user can decide to avoid the information for the sake of uncertainty.

The HEI lecturer needs to prepare the students for the WIL programme. These HEI lecturers need to liaise with industry mentors which are responsible for the WIL programme during the student placement. The HEI administrator needs to find a placement for the students by liaising and communicating with the industry administrators within the specific identified industry. Due to the number of HEI lecturers, HEI administrators, students, students' administrators, industry mentors and industry mentors the process of coordination becomes highly complex. The number of people in the mentioned groups and the complexity of these relationships where multiple role players are involved. Due to the complexity of multiple role players involved in the IM for WIL triad relationship the chances for uncertainty and discrepancies will increase.

Each bit of information that is acquired decreases the levels of uncertainty (Afifi & Afifi, 2009:1). One method by which people reduces, manage, or increase their uncertainty involves regulating their communication with others through revealing and concealing information. These uncertainty discrepancies need to be addressed through the concept of boundary-spanning. The HEI lecturer and HEI administrator can reduce the uncertainty discrepancy gap by involving all other role players of the triad partnership in the information exchange. Regulating uncertainty also involves managing, seeking, or filtering the information that is likely to affect the degree of uncertainty that is felt. Individuals sometimes also avoid seeking information because they are afraid of the outcome (Afifi & Afifi, 2009:2). To complete the discussion on the interpretation phase, uncertainty will be discussed using Figure 2. Thereafter the emotional impact will be discussed. The rational uncertainty is supported by the six propositions pertaining to relational uncertainty which correspond with features of interpersonal communication (Knoblock & Satterlee, 2009:111) as graphically displayed in Figure 2.

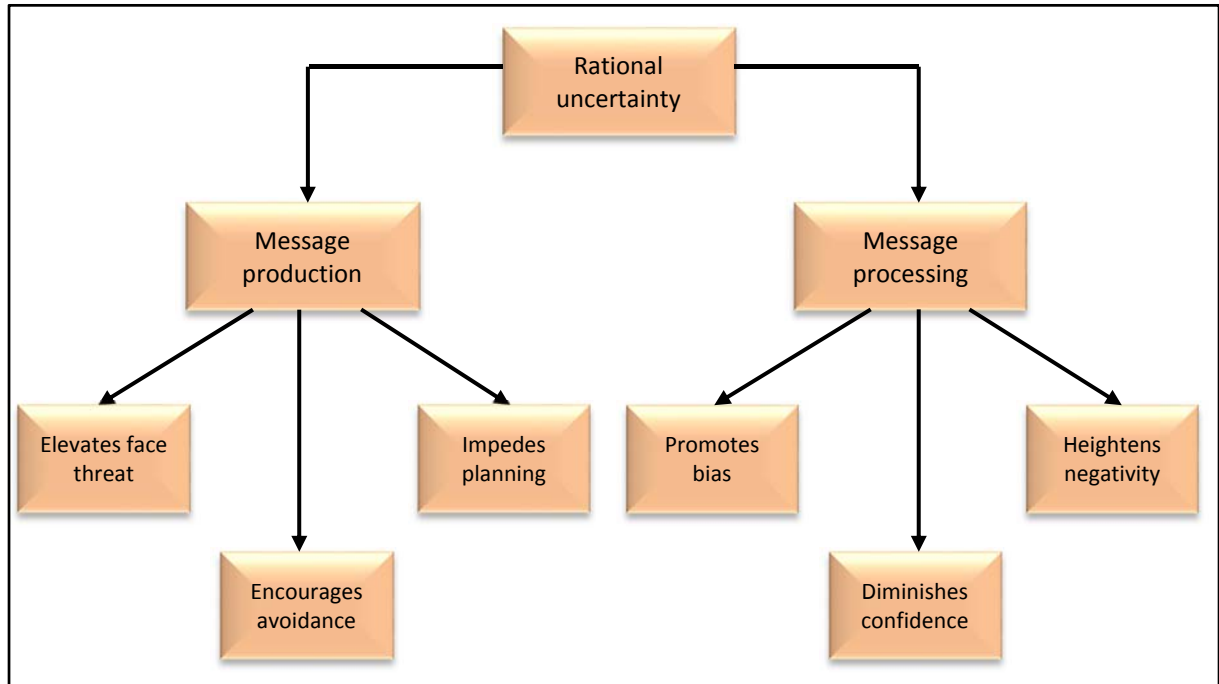


Figure 2 Propositions about relational uncertainty and communication (Knoblock & Satterlee, 2009:111)

Relational uncertainty analyses the way searchers of information produce messages and thereafter process these messages. Message production is affected by three phases, namely elevates face threat, encourages avoidance and impedes planning.

### **Elevates face threat**

When the image of certainty is threatened or discredited in terms of what the person wishes to project, a face threat develops. People when uncertain do not want to communicate this image, as it may reflect negatively on what they perceive it to be. People also have a preferred image of themselves. In the triad relationships of WIL the partners involved have a preferred image of themselves. If the HEI lecturer or HEI administrator is uncertain of the industry needs, this uncertainty may reflect negatively on the capacity of the HEI lecturer or HEI administrator to provide professional guidance to the industry mentor and student.

### **Encourages avoidance**

When people avoid incidence which may threaten the image which will have an embarrassing impact on their competency and professionalism. An individual would rather avoid being exposing by not becoming involved in incidents which could harm the individuals' image. A HEI lecturer or HEI administrator have to represent the institution in a professional and competent manner. Similarly will this representative if experiencing a threat of being exposed to an incident which could harm their image, these incidents would be avoided.

### **Impeded planning**

As relational uncertainty increases message planning is affected in a negative way. People construct messages based on their knowledge, strategies and the impact of the message. As relational uncertainty increases such as a HEI lecturer or HEI administrator which is new to the WIL process and need to communicate messages when unsure of what needs to be shared. This HEI lecturer or HEI administrator may not know what is expected in terms of services to triad partners and may be influenced by feelings of uncertainty. The HEI lecturer or HEI administrator is also influenced by the threat of not generating the appropriate message, resulting in feelings of uncertainty. Changes in the WIL process will have significant impact on the information exchange value chain as it affects all the different levels of the triad partnership. The second phase of Figure 1 in terms of the relational uncertainty pertains to message processing, that is divided into promotes bias, diminishes confidence and heightens negativity.

### **Promotes Biases**

Relational uncertainty affects people's capacity to interpret messages based on insufficient background required to interpret a well prepared message. People who are under pressure may not take note of the full impact of the message and just simplify the information contained therein, to simplify the task and manage message volumes. HEI lecturers and HEI



administrators are most of the time the same person within the organisation who needs to manage all processes related to this responsibility. The responsible individual who communicates information flow to the triad partners, needs to be aware and have the capacity to communicate effectively resulting in the receivers of information understanding the full impact thereof.

### **Diminishes confidence**

Relational uncertainty affects the self-value people have when communicating with others. People under relational uncertainty conditions may distrust their own skill level and knowledge base and thereby affecting their overall capacity to communicate effectively. A HEI lecturer undertakes an interview with an industry mentor on good practice models is required to identify the most effective way for students to experience client communications within the industry environment. During formulation of this process the HEI lecturer may become uncertain of his/her ability, to secure the required information which may impact on relational uncertainty. This uncertainty may result in a feeling of being unsure even though the HEI lecturer has the required expertise to develop the model formulation for student assessments for the WIL process.

### **Heightens negativity**

Relational uncertainty results in negative perceptions on capacity of individuals to handle interpersonal relationships. Relational uncertainty relates to negative feelings such as anger, frustration and poor self-confidence. HEI lecturers are people and do have emotions and also have individual experiences of feeling angry and frustrated at times. As representatives of HEI institution there is immense pressure on this representative to liaise and communicate professionally with industry mentors and students. During these interactions instances may develop which can generate emotions such as anger or frustration. These emotions impact on

the mental state of the HEI lecturers. These HEI lecturers have a unique and important role to play in the IM for WIL process which is reliant on interpersonal relationship communication. Although the proportions about relational uncertainty (in Figure 2) was illustrated from the perspective of the HEI lecturer and HEI administrator it should be kept in mind that the student and industry partners could experience similar relational uncertainties when in the role of information seeker.

In the explanation of the message production and message processing of relational uncertainty above, the uncertainty of the HEI lecturer or HEI administrator increases. This increase in uncertainty is the result of for example the HEI lecturer being unsure of what is expected of him/her or if he/she has the capacity to place the students for the WIL phase in an industry placement. This placement has an impact on the throughput rate of the students. The impact in terms of the capacity of the HEI lecturer to influence placement is critical as students will not be able to graduate, unless they have completed the WIL module. In the interpretation phase the HEI lecturer and HEI administrator considers information from students and industry. The HEI lecturer and HEI administrator could develop feelings of uncertainty which result in a feeling of emotion or anxiety.

The feeling of anxiety relates to the emotions. The HEI lecturer and HEI administrator at times when confronted with the decision to request information as the information seeker may experience feelings of anxiety which is an emotional state. This feeling of uncertainty which result in an emotional state such as anxiety is the first flow of information process as depicted by the arrow marked A in Figure 1. This uncertainty discrepancy causes anxiety or emotions in the triad relationship, which impact on the value of information exchange. The HEI lecturers

involved in WIL need to sensitise the students and industry mentors to be aware of possible emotional issues, such as anxiety which may have an impact on the information exchange.

The HEI lecturer is often expected to visit the student during the students WIL placement term. For example the Electrical Engineering department at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) consists of the following triad partners on an academic and administration level. Two HEI lecturers, who are also responsible to act as HEI administrators, 250 students from the same department is part of the sample group and also act as 250 students' administrators, as students are responsible for administering their own studies. An average of four industry mentors (per company) and 150 industry administrators (companies) make up the industry component of the triad partnership. The total members in the relationship consist of 1,254 members. According to Hargie (2011:452) to determine the potential two-way relationship, the formula to chart the number of dyadic relationships (R) in a group, as a factor of number of members (n) is as follows:  $R = \frac{n(n-1)}{2}$ . The dyadic relationship calculation would then consist of  $[1,254 \times 1,253] \div 2 = 785,631$  separate potential two-way relationships between members. This number reflects the massive increase in dyadic relationships when minimal numbers of individuals are added to the triad relationship. According to this example the HEI lecturers and administrators are the same two individuals. High levels of anxiety have been reported by the HEI lecturers due to the obligation placed on HEI lecturers to visit students at industry level on site visits. Due to the geographically location of the different industry partners, the sheer number of sites and student placement locations result in too many to be visited by the limited number of HEI lecturers. The inability of the HEI lecturers to visit students at industry level creates feelings of anxiety which the HEI lecturer has no control over. Another example reported that causes a feeling of anxiety by the HEI lecturer, is to ensure the students' logbooks with the required assignments are available to be marked by a specific due date. The marking of these industry assignments are critical to corroborate practical deployment success in terms of competency which is the requirement for the WIL module. These emotional levels have a direct impact on the evaluation and decision phases of the information seeker.

The triad partners will not move to the evaluation phase in the TMIM model in Figure 1 if they do not feel comfortable because of levels of uncertainty. According to Johnson (2009:188) the

uncertainty of information sources affects people's perceptions which can impact on the employees' job satisfaction, productivity and overall performance and attitude, affecting stress levels and feelings of discomfort resulting in uncertainty.

When experiencing an emotion of uncertainty, the HEI lecturer or HEI administrator will enter the evaluation phase. The HEI lecturer or HEI administrator develops a perception of how effective a specific information management strategy would be to assess the capacity of the HEI lecturer or HEI administrator in an effective information exchange. The HEI lecturer is anxious because of his/her perceived incapacity to place all students in terms of the WIL process based on the availability of industry jobs. The negative outcome expectancy or negative efficacy judgements of the evaluation phase as depicted by arrows marked, B1 and B2 respectively in Figure 1, leads to the evaluation phase. Before the second phase is discussed it is important to understand that the seeking of information takes place during all three phases of this theory.

During each phase the triad partners of the WIL process seek information to address levels of uncertainty. The model of TMIM distinguishes between the information seeker and information provider. The information provider only forms part of the evaluation phase and decision phase and will be discussed as part of these phases. These unique and specific role players within the domain of TMIM have individual characteristics which distinguish their roles and functions. Any one of the triad role players plays the role of information seeker or provider. However due to the illustrative nature of the discussion the process is discussed in a simplistic way, from one perspective only. The evaluation phase as shown in Figure 3 of the TMIM theory will be discussed below.

## 2.2. Phase Two: Evaluation

This phase consists of two sets of perceptions namely the outcomes expectancy and the efficacy judgements as shown in Figure 3. Outcomes expectancy refers to the information which will be yielded when information exchange takes place (Afifi & Weiner, 2004:175). According to Afifi and Weiner (2004:175) engaging in search for information by an individual in order to reduce anxiety individuals' self-image is addressed when engaging in the information exchange.

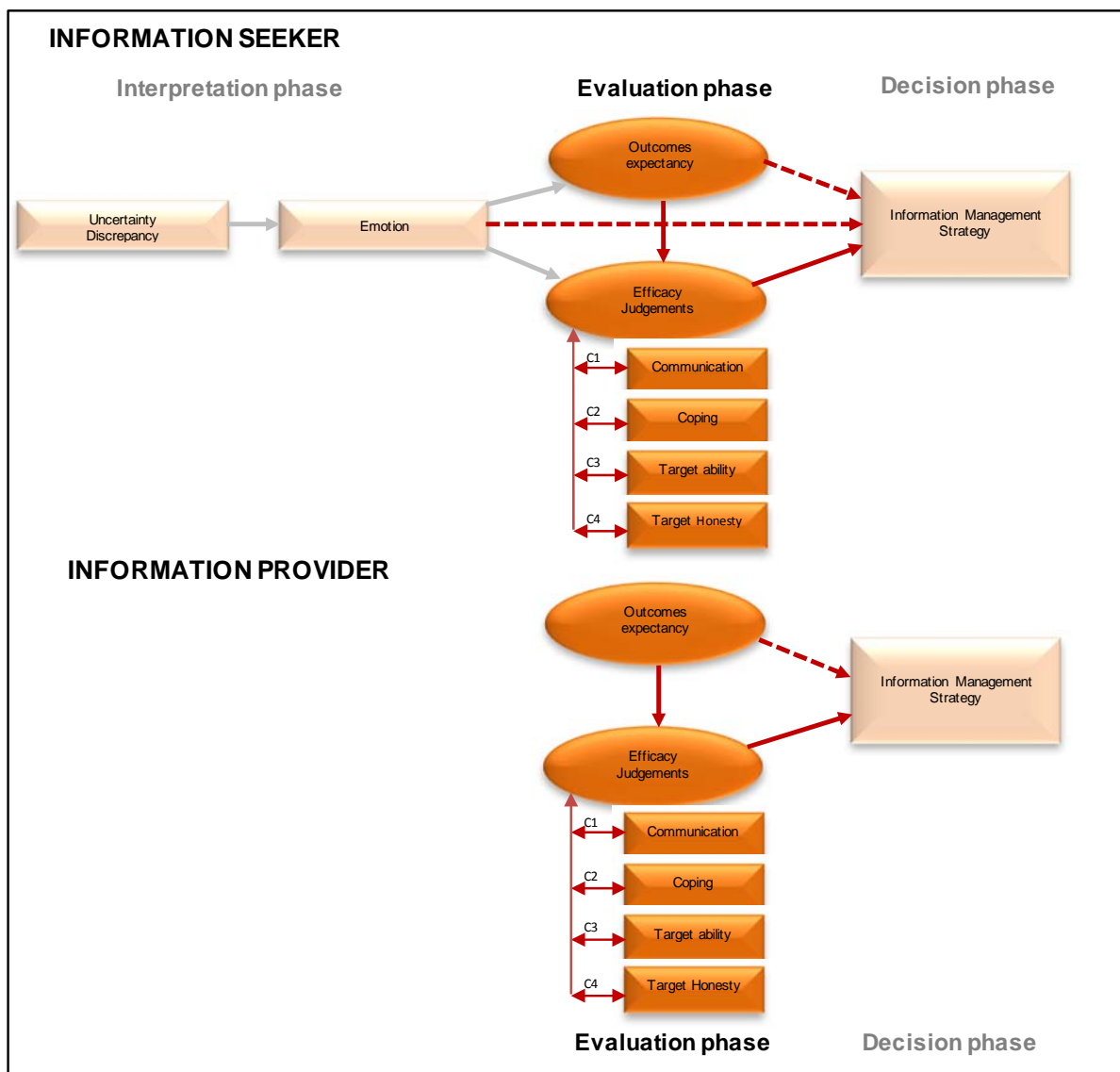


Figure 3 Model of theory of motivated information management (adapted from Fowler & Afifi, 2011:512)

Outcome expectancies and efficacy judgments beliefs are central to human behaviour (Afifi & Morse, 2009:88; Fowler & Afifi, 2011:511). In the triad relationship when engaging on personal level individuals differ in terms of the value and return they expect to achieve during an IM sharing experience. The result of the sharing will assist in shaping the efficacy judgements. Some HEI administrators would consider finding placement for students with an industry liaison as an important part of the WIL process. Although other HEI administrators would not consider finding placements for students as they only facilitate process where students source their own individual placements. Therefore the difference in the expectations of the HEI administrator will be determined by the responsibility and duty of the HEI administrator within the institution. The difference in the expectations of the seeker of information will be based on the anticipated value of shared information.

According to Guerrero, Andersen and Afifi (2011:84) people who feel a discrepancy between the actual and desired uncertainty, will rely on this phase. TMIM propositional framework applies only where individuals are actively interested in managing information and can see the value impact of the information to them. These individuals will intentionally engage cognitive and other resources (Afifi, 2010:96). According to Afifi and Weiner (2004:172) the IM process must begin with clarification and addressing levels of uncertainty. If the triad relationships between the partners in the WIL programme are uncertain about anything, emotions will appear that will have an influence on the evaluation phase.

Afifi and Morse, (2009:89) and Afifi and Weiner (2006:37) argue that this phase assesses their efficacy judgements in IM the potential outcomes. As shown in Figure 3 above the evaluation phase has two assessment factors based on the principle of an individual assessment of the benefits and costs to implement a specific IM strategy. This is done to first determine the

outcome expectancy and the different efficacy judgements (Afifi, 2010:97). The decisions of the individuals depend on outcome expectancy and efficacy judgements.

### **2.2.1. Outcome expectancy**

The outcomes part of this phase reflects on the expected outcome. It is important for all triad partners to know what are expected from them and what the outcomes must be. There is a shift to reduce discrepancies detected and focus on outcomes expected. This outcome may be positive or negative, based on the experience of the triad partners. The information seeker may have feelings of success in gathering correct information and identify positively with the result. The success of this relationship experience can affect one's willingness to turn intention into action (Guerrero, Andersen & Afifi, 2011:84).

Chang (2009:9) further argued that there is a higher likelihood for an individual to make information seeking decisions, if more information is expected, which will add more to gain and have more rewards than risks. If the information seeker is under the impression that the information which will be secured, will not add value to the information already secured, the information seeker will refrain from searching this information to address the need of the uncertainty. The expected outcomes relate back to the securing of information. The HEI lecturer queries the industry mentor on student progress and levels of performance within positions as facilitated by WIL placement. The HEI lecturer realises requesting for information will have an impact on the efficacy judgements in terms of the benefits and cost associated with information exchange. This benefit and cost factor refers to the information gained process which is also called the efficacy factor (Afifi, 2010:97).

The arrow marked C in Figure 3 reflect the positive outcome expectancy that is associated with the efficacy judgements which act as a mediation phase. If the outcome expectancy is positive then the efficacy judgements will then be depicted by arrow marked D, which moves the process into the decision phase, discussed after the efficacy judgements are explained in detail. The efficacy judgements are influenced by the different efficacy components as depicted by arrows marked C1, C2, C3 and C4 (Figure 3).

### **2.2.2. Efficacy judgement**

Outcome expectancy focuses on results of conduct where efficacy focuses on the capacity of the information seeker to provide certain information. This process of information seeking has consequences which the information seeker has to contend with. For example the student requests the results of an industry mentor report as provided to HEI lecturer. This request for information can have detrimental consequences as the student may have failed practical tasks which have to be completed at industry level. The student continues with the request for information whatever the outcome.

The TMIM as a theory distinguishes between four unique types of efficacy judgements namely communication efficacy, coping efficacy, and two dimensions of target efficacy namely target ability and target honesty. These efficacy judgements are discussed below.

#### **i) Communication efficacy**

Communication efficacy speaks of process C1 in Figure 3. Communication efficacy relate to the capacity of the searcher for information being competent in searching targeted information sources (Afifi & Morse, 2009:89). Afifi and Weiner, (2004:178) stated that communication efficacy takes place when information seekers feel that “they possess the skills to complete



successfully the communication tasks involved in the IM process". The HEI administrators need to believe in his/her capacity or ability to fulfill the task presented, such as placement of students in terms of the WIL process. Communication efficacy has a detrimental impact as some of the HEI administrators are not familiar with or uncertain of the consequences of questioning information sources. These HEI administrators are also unsure if there might be a failure in communication efficacy processes. The information seekers namely the HEI administrators need to believe he/she has a competency to search for information of which he/she might feel ignorant of and how to share these feelings with the student or industry liaison.

## **ii) Coping efficacy**

Coping efficacy speaks of process C2 in Figure 3. Coping efficacy provides insight into the capacity of the searcher of information having the required resources, be it emotional or otherwise to cope with information secured (Afifi & Morse, 2009:89). Afifi and Weiner, (2004:178) argue that the coping efficacy provides levels of belief that the individuals have in coping with emotional, instrumental and other resources, to secure the required information based on the IM levels to be achieved. The belief system of the triad partners in searching for information anticipating the results of the information exchange, which was unexpected and could result in a feeling of discomfort or awkwardness.

An example is that the HEI administrator need to clarify placement of students in terms of the WIL process, might experience uncertainties if they are responsible for finding placement for students. This uncertainty is experienced by the HEI administrators because of the expected outcome of this enquiry pertaining to the successful placements in terms of the students for the WIL process. This uncertainty results in feelings of anxiety associated with the request for placement and refrains from process as not being able to "handle" the outcome.

### **iii) Target efficacy**

Target efficacy speaks of process C3 as well as C4 in Figure 3. Target efficacy relate to the reliability of the source of information being searched to provide the required information. Target efficacy is based on whether the searcher of information has accessed the needed information and will be honest in providing such information (Afifi & Morse, 2009:89). The efficacy targets the value of the source of information provided to secure the required information. The honesty of the search partner provides a truthful response to the result of the search (Fowler & Afifi, 2011:511). Fowler and Afifi (2011:511) further argue that efficacy beliefs impact on individuals IM choices based on the ability of information provider and the trustworthiness of the provider. Target efficacy is when the triad partners are confident in each other's ability to exchange information on request.

The dashed paths B3 and E in Figure 3 above represent paths that are partly mediated by other variables, with which the relevant variables have associations (Afifi, 2010:96). The size of the paths for example, the effect of emotion regarding the uncertainty discrepancy on the IM decision, will become reduced due to the effects of the direct (solid) paths. In other words, the uncertainty discrepancy related to emotions is still expected to play some direct role in the IM decision, but a small part of it<sup>1</sup>.

The TMIM theory as shown in Figure 3 above clearly illustrate the presence of an information provider which is affected by the same processes of information management as the information seeker. According to Guerrero, Andersen and Afifi (2011:84) the information provider is challenged by similar factors in order to present the correct information to the

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with Afifi (2013)

correct information seeker. The main information providers in the triad relationship are HEI lecturers, HEI administrator, industry liaison, the industry mentors, student and student administer.

The uncertainties which develop in this relationship have two unique features. The relationship firstly focuses on the value of information gained with this interpersonal communication. The second feature focus on the value of the information provider. This unique feature of the TMIM is the direct acknowledgment of the role played by the information providers in the IM process (Afifi & Weiner, 2004:183; Guerrero, Andersen & Afifi, 2011:84).

The information provider as contained in Figure 3 share the TMIM structure with the information seeker. From previous discussions these processes are interdependent and part of the same process. The information provider role is clarified with specific roles which are interlinked with the information seeker. The TMIM theory discusses specific stages pertaining to the role of the information provider and information seeker. According to Sprecher, Wenzel and Harvey (2008) TMIM has four stages which specifically look at unique applications to analyse relationships pertaining to information seeking and provider provisioning. The four stages are discussed as follows from the perspective of IM for WIL process.

**Stage one** in this article focus on experience of the individuals involved in the triad relationship seeking information. The triad partners involved in the IM for WIL are seeking for information. Students for example are seeking information about CV writing from their HEI lecturer. The HEI lecturer seeks information from students and industry about students' performance and working experience. The industry mentors or industry liaisons request information from the HEI lecturer, on the students' confirmation letter of proof of students' registration for WIL.

**Stage two** impacts on the expected result of the search of information. The value of the information in the triad partnership is determined by the relationship between the information seeker and the information provider. The student on completion of CV writing session provides the HEI lecturer and HEI administrator with the information which was requested. This information exchange impacts on the expectations of the information provider who is the student and the information seeker namely the HEI lecturer and HEI administrator. The expectations differ from the perspective of the information provider namely the student expecting a WIL placement based on the CV. The HEI lecturer and HEI administrator as information seeker expecting a well worded and complete CV as trained student in compiling the required document.

**Stage three** relate to the search for information be it directly or indirectly. The information seeker can search passively or actively. The basis of the search is founded on the uncertainty level experienced by anyone of the triad partners. Information may even be ignored or not taken into consideration based on the uncertainty level of the triad relationship communications. The student is uncertain about the quality of other CVs provided to HEI lecturer and HEI administrator. This uncertainty can indirectly in a passive or active way influences the student on the value of information exchange. There might be no grounds for this uncertainty but the mere possibility of uncertainty in the information exchange can have an impact on the information seeker.

The **fourth stage** relate to the provider of information. Information have value to both seeker and provider and the relationship of these two parties affects the value of the information shared, based on communication in the triad relationship. The student and industry mentor

provide the HEI lecture with a feedback form based on performance and experience in the working environment. This information exchange affects all the triad partners as the students' career pathing is affected, the industry evaluation process has an impact and the HEI lecturer receives information on the standard of education shared with the student.

Multiple information exchanges corroborated the view that information seeker and information provider have an intertwined relationship and share functions and responsibilities. The complex nature of this relationship can be managed more effectively if an IM framework for WIL, strengthened by boundary-spanning is put in place to manage the triad relationship for WIL process. This IM framework for WIL process will support the mutual beneficial relationship for all the parties involved in this triad relationship.

The complexity of IM for WIL process between the triad partners, the associated information flows and relevant sources in this study find parallels with the TMIM. Afifi and Weiner (2006:36) commented on IM actions are accounted for and recorded with the TMIM capacity. IM for WIL is an information based process which is guided by strategies and processes which influence the success of the management of information that leads to the third phase of the TMIM theory.

### **2.3. Phase Three: Decision phase (information management strategy)**

The third phase of TMIM theory is the decision phase as shown in Figure 4. In this phase the information seeker is confronted with the decision to search the source of information. In this process of decision making the TMIM identified three phases which are unique to the decision making phase (Figure 4).

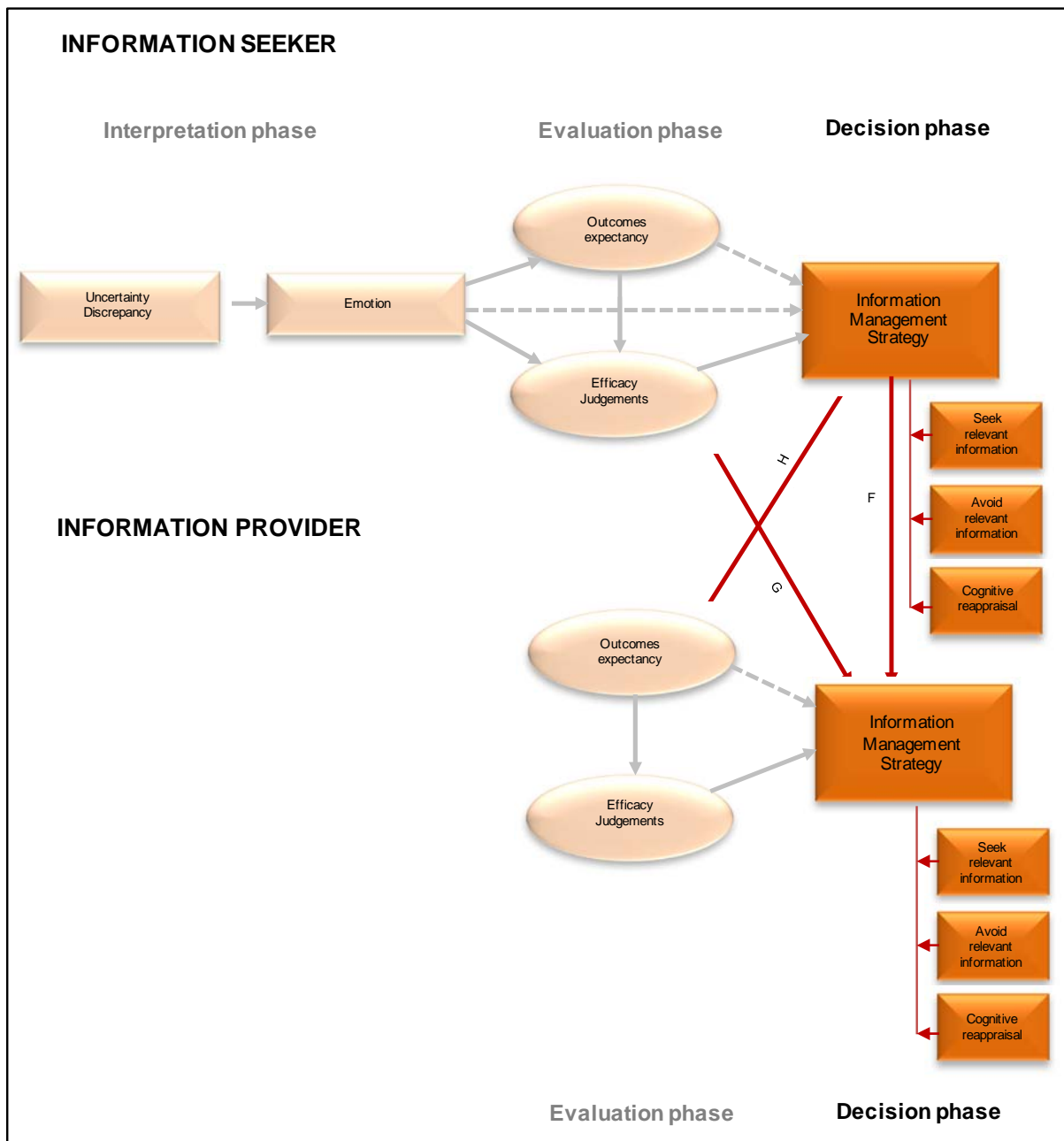


Figure 4 Model of theory of motivated information management (adapted from Fowler & Afifi, 2011:512)

During the decision on the information management strategy the information seeker have to decide to seek the information, avoid the information or engage in cognitive reassessments (Afifi & Morse, 2009:89; Fowler & Afifi, 2011:512). The three information management strategies will be defined as per their unique description.

### **2.3.1. Seek relevant information**

Individuals engage in searches for information. The search for information results in levels of uncertainty with the seeker of information. The information seeker being uncertain of the results of the search will be affected by feelings of anxiety which impacts on the search being instituted. To address the threat of uncertainty the HEI administrator may adopt an approach, which would allow the information seeker the opportunity to change the information exchange criteria. The HEI lecturer and HEI administrator invites student to training session where information exchange takes place which allow the student as seeker of information, to be informed of what is required and thereby addressing levels of uncertainty. During the information exchange process the value of information presented may impact on the anxiety of the information seeker, which may implement measures to value the information exchange. If the information exchange is not relevant the second strategy namely avoid relevant information will apply.

### **2.3.2. Avoid relevant information**

Individuals searching for information may at times make a decision to avoid information which may be irrelevant to the information exchange objective. The information seeker's decision is based on the evaluation of the information exchange which values the relevancy of the information being exchanged. The information seeker would rather avoid the result of the search, which may provide relevant information but terminates the search for information rather than face the result of the information exchange. The student needs to engage the HEI lecturer to secure a placement opportunity based on CV requirement. The student as information seeker would refrain from requesting the result of placement rather than requesting information of placement appointments. The uncertainty of placement experience by the information seeker may result in the student withdrawing from the process due to anxiety.

impact. The information seeker if not successful during this information exchange strategy evolves into the third strategy namely cognitive reappraisal.

### **2.3.3. Cognitive reappraisal**

In this strategy the information seeker makes a cognitive decision to change his/her mind set to address feelings which impacts negatively on the information exchange. By addressing levels of anxiety and emotion the individual reappraise the request for information in order to secure the required information. This process is not influenced by superficial emotional stress to withdraw the information exchange but remove feelings of anxiety cognitively a boards the information exchange (Afifi & Weiner, 2004:183). The HEI lecturer when experiencing levels of uncertainty during information seeking exchanges have different ways in which to address uncertainty levels. The HEI lecturers are under extreme pressure to balance the placement of students at industry level and expectations of industry liaisons receiving well-prepared CVs. The feelings of emotional stress experienced by HEI lecturer is manage by way of reappraising the levels of anxiety and focusing on provisioning of the required candidates and industry partners based on the information exchange.

The principle of information exchange is associated with sharing of information between the triad partners. This sharing of information has certain consequences for the triad partners such as emotion when engaged in an information exchange. It is clearly displayed in the role of the information seeker and information provider roles within the TMIM theory. The process of requesting information and the activities related thereto has the consequence that the information seeker experience emotions, based on a personal perspective. The information seeker is unsure of the consequence of seeking information thereby displaying his/her inadequacy of competency by requesting the information.



The information seekers feeling of anxiety is compounded by the feelings of not having the required knowledge, needed to engage in information exchange. This feeling of being uncertain is amplified by resulting emotions which develop into feelings of anxiety. This feeling of anxiety is then filtered in terms of the TMIM model to determine, whether the decision to engage in information exchange will be proceeded with or refrained from. The resulting outcomes are associated with feelings of anxiety which is then filtered to the outcomes expectancy and efficacy judgments phase. This process in turn results in positive outcomes being sorted by the various efficacy judgments cycles, in a positive process.

Should the process however become negative the anxiety factor results in refraining from the information exchange no sharing of information takes place. By addressing this emotional inadequacies of the information seeker, be it the student, industry mentor or HEI lecturer the same principle applies. Anxiety will be part of information exchange which is part and parcel of the process of addressing emotions associated with information exchange and a proper IM process which are being facilitated.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

In this article it was found how important the triad relationships are for an effective IM for WIL process. The importance of the relationship is founded on the interaction of the triad partners on an academic as well as on an administrative level, between the triad partners. Through boundary-spanning the information exchange between the triad partners become well-managed and is critical to the IM for WIL process to address the uncertainty of the triad partners. The actions of flow of information and changes are monitored by boundary-spanning, resulting in an improved IM process. This process of sharing of information is also referred to as

information exchange. Information exchange in the IM for WIL domain can take place on organizational and personal level. These different phases are referred to as organizational information management (OIM) and personal information management (PIM), which take place at different levels in the organization, be it the HEI or the industry, which are engaged in the WIL process.

Due to the complexity of multiple role players involved in the IM for WIL triad relationship the chances for uncertainty and discrepancies will increase. Therefore when information exchange takes place during the triad relationship it is critical to record these transactions, which is part of the boundary-spanning milieu and have to be monitored to ensure the IM for WIL process works well. When using boundary-spanning to facilitate the IM for WIL process it was found there were parallels with the theory of motivated information management (TMIM). The parallels being shared in using this TMIM theory as well as the concept of boundary-spanning provided insight into the need to better manage the IM for WIL process and how to address the uncertainty levels of the triad partners.

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