

Innovative Human Capital and Workaholism as a New HR Strategy?

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Abstract

This study investigates the correlation between Innovative Human Capital (IHC) and workaholic behavior levels of employees in a higher education institution. A case study has been developed to analyze the dimensions arising from both IHC and its relationship with workaholism. Respondents in the study reported high levels of workaholism yet there is no negative relationship between workaholism and IHC regarding education, job training, job satisfaction and being open to innovations. The research is an attempt to understand the negative and positive sides of organizational policies. It should be tested on different sectors. Organizations may use the positive effects of controlled work engagement and workaholism results for effective performance results. Although workaholism has many negative effects on people, it may well serve to the work engagement in terms of developing innovative human capital skills. Innovative human capital should be developed and nurtured in organizations. As long as workaholism is held at bay, it can be a catalyst for productivity.

Key Words: HR Strategy, Innovative Human Capital, Workaholism.

Özet

Bu çalıřma, bir yükseköğretim kurumundaki çalıřanların Yenilikçi İnsan Sermayesi (YİS) ile işkolik davranıř düzeyleri arasındaki iliřkiyi arařtırmaktadır. Yenilikçi İnsan Sermayesini daha iyi anlayabilmek, hem de işkoliklikle iliřkisinden kaynaklanan boyutları analiz etmek için bir vaka çalıřması geliřtirilmiřtir. Arařtırmaya katılanlar yüksek düzeyde işkoliklik göstermelerine rağmen işkoliklik ve YİS arasında eğitim, iş eğitimi, iş tatmini ve yeniliklere açık olmak yönlerinden olumsuz bir iliřki görünmemektedir. Arařtırma, örgütsel politikaların olumsuz ve olumlu yönlerini anlamaya yönelik bir giriřimdir. Farklı sektörlerde de test edilmelidir. Örgütler, etkin performans sonuçları için kontrollü işe adanmışlık ve işkoliklik sonuçlarının olumlu etkilerini kullanabilir. Her ne kadar işkolikliğin insanlar üzerinde birçok olumsuz etkisi olsa da, yenilikçi insan sermayesi becerileri geliřtirme açısından işe adanmışlığa hizmet edebilir. Yenilikçi insan sermayesi örgütlerde desteklenmeli ve geliřtirilmelidir. İşkoliklik dengede tutulduđu sürece verimlilik için hızlandırıcı etkisi yapabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İK Stratejisi, Yenilikçi İnsan Sermayesi, İşkoliklik.

Introduction

Research has shown that human capital constitutes the driving force behind innovation (Dakhli & De Clercq, 2004; Popescu & Diaconu, 2008) and that human capital positively impacts economic growth (Schultz, 1961; Asteriou & Agiomirgianakis, 2001; Becker, 2009). Successful development and sufficient stock of human capital augmented and sustained economic growth over the last century (Becker, 2009). As Romer (1990) puts it, "The stock of human capital determines growth". Similarly,

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growth of a business depends on investments made by the enterprise to their human capital as an essential tool for realizing innovations.

Engaging in creative work that leads to innovation can be highly satisfactory for employees. It may increase commitment to work engagement beyond working hours. 'Work-engagement' (a minimum 50-hour work week) is considered productive and prosocial behaviour that often leads to job success, feelings of personal satisfaction, empowerment and overall happiness (Chang and Cheng, 2014; Burke, Richardsen & Mortinussen, 2004).

However, when this commitment is uncontrolled whether it be to competition or to compulsive personality traits, it may result in what Oates (1971) coined as a 'workaholic'. Workaholism, likened to other addictions, entails a compulsive, constant drive to work independent of the outcome, and a feeling of guilt if not 'worked enough'. It may result in the disruption of health, family life and overall social wellbeing (Oates, 1971; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Seybold & Salomone, 1994). Nevertheless, it may also lead to high creative output.

What is Innovative Human Capital (IHC) and how is it Measured?

While traditionally human capital is defined in tangible terms such as third level education, the IHC concept is expanded to entail tangible features such as education and training, as well as intangible features such as willingness to change in the workplace and job satisfaction (McGuirk et al., 2015). These competencies, attitudes, abilities, know-how, implicit knowledge and personal social environment features are essential for IHC. The stock of innovative human capital provides businesses competitive advantage. This research aims to use IHC on an individual level. IHC dimensions are composed of individual indicators pertaining to level of education, training, health capital, job satisfaction and being open to innovations (willingness to change).

While there is no universally accepted human capital measurement method, duration of training (and earned diplomas), as well as the training period of the work are commonly accepted measures. Intangible human capital may be assessed in terms of level of clarity of change and innovation. When managers are called innovators, they are understood to be willing to change and encourage new approaches (innovations) (Wang and Ahmed, 2004).

Workaholism: Good or Bad?

Oates (1971) coined the term 'workaholic' as a compulsive uncontrollable commitment to work. Some delineate the concept with weekly 50 work hours (Andreassen, 2014; Burke, 2000), others focus on the compulsion to work and feeling of guilt and restlessness in its absence. While there is little agreement on one definition, there are two basic, opposing views. One strand of thought considers it an uncontrollable addiction or an escape mechanism for personal problems. Others focus on the constructive side and describe it part of a competitive personality or sense of gratification from productivity and creativity. For these people work is almost enjoyable like leisure (Machlowitz, 1980). This strand of thought believes that workaholics are energetic, highly stimulated and healthy individuals, who work hard because it makes them happy. These employees display high job satisfaction and have strong commitment to their organizations and careers, resulting in lower turnover rates.

A Case Study of the relationship between innovative human capital (IHC) and workaholism

This study investigates the correlation between IHC and workaholic behavior levels of employees in a higher education institution. A model has been constructed to investigate research questions in terms of dimensions arising from both IHC and its relationship with workaholism.

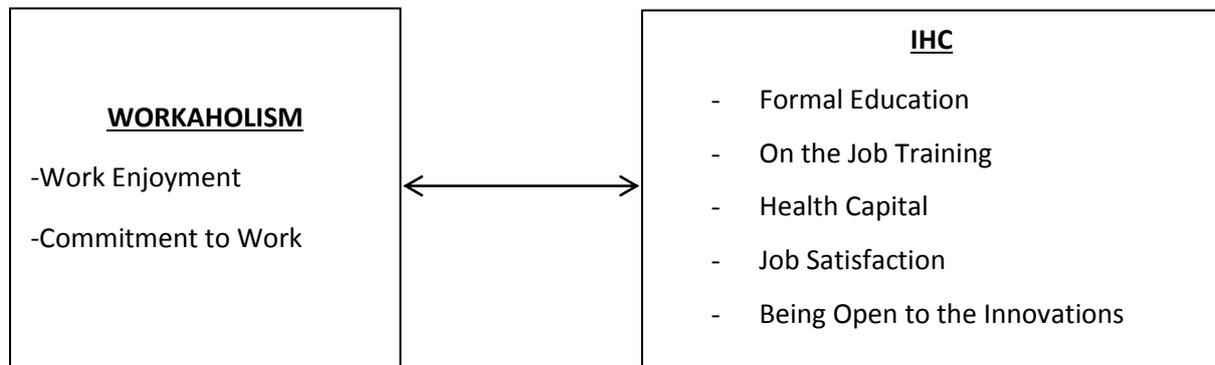


Figure 1: Research Model

Studies have shown that workaholism can lead to a myriad of health and social problems, resulting in fatigue, lower output, work family conflict and social friction. Therefore, workaholism should lower human capital. In this study however high levels of workaholism was positively correlated to human capital, as the level of self-reported workaholism increased in proportion to the title, age and tenure in the profession.

In summary, respondents in the study reported high levels of workaholism yet there is no negative relationship between workaholism and IHC regarding education, job training, and job satisfaction and being open to innovations. More so, a positive correlation exists between workaholism sub-dimensions, work enjoyment dimension, work involvement dimension, and IHC. However, workaholic employees did not find enough time to maintain a healthy life, reporting adverse health conditions. In addition, employment level does not determine levels of workaholism, innovativeness and IHC. Contrary to expectations, the result is indicative that a relationship between the levels of workaholism and IHC levels positively supporting employees exists.

Concluding Remarks

This study concludes that if individuals pursue a line of work they can be passionate about long working hours or intensive work still produce positive outcomes. None of the respondents in the study regretted their job choice. They emphasized that no profession can be performed without passion. Participants, who like their job, even if they are burdened with work intensity and demands, have expressed their happiness and satisfaction.

Finally, innovative human capital should be developed and nurtured. Employees who are considered enthusiastic work addicts are ambitious, and success oriented striving to climb the career ladder. As long as workaholism is held at bay, it can be a catalyst for productivity. However, adverse effects of workaholism may present in the long run a risk for any organization.

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