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Article

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Approaches and Perspectives on Heavy Work Investment

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In their pursuit of market shares and turnover increase, contemporary society organizations have put higher pressure on employees, determining them to take on countless responsibilities, to increase their efforts to achieve corporate goals, to be more engaged in their work and to work harder. Probably driven by their desire to earn more or to promote quickly in their careers, without even noticing it, employees are often willing to work overtime, not taking into account the negative outcomes of such an approach: increased dissatisfaction with their work and increased addiction to their work. This negative work phenomenon is called workaholism. Workaholism (bad or negative component), along with work engagement (good or positive component) represent the two forms of heavy work investment. This relatively recent concept has been more intensely approached in the international literature, which tries to capture this complex phenomenon in various industries sectors on saturated and emerging markets, as well as in relation to different work-specific facets: employee motivation; employee satisfaction; employee performance; intention to quit the job; type of held position; organization size; organizational culture; intensity of employee's additional effort, etc.

Via its published papers, this special issue of the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal debates on the different facets and implications of the phenomenon of heavy work investment. The papers contain original approaches, implemented in several activity sectors among employees or organization representatives. The obtained results highlight important contributions to the progress of specialised theory, as well as managerial ones, being the ground for defining human resource strategies, in order to improve work conditions, in compliance with employees' expectations.

This number's opening paper contains a ***Transversal analysis of predictors, mediators and related effects of heavy work investment*** via a multidimensional model of heavy work investment, based on potential predictors (gender, age, education, marital status, work seniority, organization size, activity sector, organization seniority, type of held position, motivation), work results (employee satisfaction, intention to quit the job, employee performance) and mediator factors (organizational culture and management support) between massive work investment and work results. The authors have empirically tested the model on 298 Romanian employees, explaining the studied phenomenon through correlations, linear modeling and artificial neural networks.

The paper *The influence of heavy work investment on job satisfaction and turnover intention in Romania* explains the investigated phenomenon based on the attribution theory by resorting to its own model, empirically tested by using structural equations. The results obtained by the authors highlight the fact that job satisfaction is determined by work engagement and overwork (workaholism): the intention to quit the organization decreases as an individual is more engaged in the performed work. The paper extends studies that address work engagement and workaholism through overwork in connection to work results, the authors highlighting methods of improving human resource management in organizations from emerging markets, such as Romania.

A very interesting perspective on *The Impact of national culture concerning employees' attitude towards heavy work investment is comparatively approached in Romania versus Japan*. The paper examines the method in which heavy work investment can be associated with different forms of personal and professional motivation in two very different cultures: Romania and Japan. The authors have collected empirical data from employees in the two states, concluding via means of econometric analysis that intrinsic motivation can determine Romanian and Japanese employees to increase their time and effort investment in work. Intensive work seems to generate professional satisfaction and performance and it reduces the conflict between professional activity and family life. The paper offers innumerable managerial implications for the organizations operating in the two societies.

The phenomenon of *heavy work investment* is approached from an interdisciplinary perspective and in connection with *mentorship*, whose *importance* is analysed in terms of *diminishing workaholism in the context of the United States of America*. In comparison with other research that strictly targets the phenomenon of heavy work investment through its forms (work engagement and workaholism), the work of the three authors highlights the extent in which mentorship is used to diminish workaholism trends and encourage heavy work investment. The complex connections between mentorship functions, mentorship quality and its impact on employees have been analysed on a number of 271 full-time employees in the USA. Results reveal that career support affects the quality of mentorship, having an indirect impact on stress at work.

Heavy work investment has been carefully analysed in the context of the *COVID-19 pandemic in Romania* through various specific aspects: overwork time, workload, work engagement, work addiction and work performance. The authors conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the components of heavy work investment (time and effort): in fact, the pandemic months in Romania have generated a decrease in work investment, especially affecting employees' performance. The authors provide pertinent recommendations to the business environment in order to stimulate employees and to increase their work engagement, to improve their performance and to reduce overwork.

The impact of heavy work investments is modeled in connection with employees' satisfaction degree via Smart-PLS. Based on a questionnaire applied among employees with higher education and at least one-year experience in multinational companies offering consulting and auditing services in Romania, the authors investigate the determinant factors

of heavy work investment: personal needs, workload, work-allotted time, work attitude, employees' physical and mental condition. Delimiting these determining vectors that generate the increase of organizational performances is extremely useful in managing human resources, reconsidering organizational policies and increasing employee satisfaction. Organizational management must discover gratification methods, as well as measures to be adopted in the prevention of overstress risks.

Another group of researchers address *The impact of heavy work investment on the economy and the individual*, a relatively recent phenomenon in the context of contemporary society and specialised literature. The authors debate on the correlations between heavy work investment and work productivity, quality of life, quality of work conditions, the relation between work - living standard - personal life; work and technology addiction; retirement decision, etc. They perform a careful and relevant bibliometric and econometric analysis through linear regression with cross-sectional data, but they also rely on data taken from Eurostat and the World Bank. The research results highlight the fact that work investments by increasing workload (worked hours, increased responsibilities) are not justified and the effects of these measures are not reflected by socio-economic progress. The authors conclude that it is very important for the employee to enjoy his well-being and satisfaction with the performed work.

The connection between *work investment and performance* is analysed via an online questionnaire which has pursued data collection from 313 employees, but also entrepreneurs, concerning work effort, performance perceived by respondents, burnout and work satisfaction. The results show that performance mediates the relationship between effort and satisfaction from work itself, while burnout has a moderating effect on the connection between effort and performance perception, but also in the connection between performance perception and satisfaction obtained from work itself. Results show that burnout is lower for people in management positions, an evidence that additional responsibility in decision-making means a higher capacity to detach oneself from problems. The study is particularly important for organizational management, which can thus develop appropriate strategies for human resource management.

The role and importance of *heavy work investment* are approached from *the perspective of the accounting profession in Romania at time of the coronavirus pandemic*, highlighting the socio-economic implications of the accounting profession as generated by the COVID 19 pandemic and the activities of the financial-accounting department within organizations. Based on an online questionnaire, the authors conclude that the accountants' work has generated a lot of stress and fatigue, but it has had a positive influence on the work-family relationship and labor productivity. Accountants' perception of work is determined by their age, work place, professional work method (employee or freelancer), but also by the size of the company they work for. Obtained results are useful for designing the future strategy of accounting employees.

Two authors have analysed *the impact of workaholism on consumer food waste*, using an extended version of the theory of planned behavior and the scale of workaholism. Based on

data collected via a survey on 194 Romanian employees, the authors show that the influence of overwork on food waste is multidimensional: workaholism has no influence on predictors of intention to reduce food waste, it has a small one on behaviors associated with food waste (reuse of food, food storage, etc.) and a significant one on the estimated amount of wasted food. The authors demonstrate that the most important facets of workaholism are conflicts and issues to which employees are subjected: while problematic workaholics are confronted with numerous problems and tend to waste more food, functional workaholics, who, even if they are prone to conflict too, have fewer problems and reduce food waste.

Heavy work investment is also analysed *from the perspective of cultural factors and its positive and negative outcomes on different types of investors*. Starting from international regulations which consider that intensive work occurs when a person works over 48 hours a week, the authors model the considered phenomenon by using multiple regression and structural equations, using data collected from over 18,000 respondents in 37 states, available via the International Social Survey Programme on employment status, effectively worked hours, job characteristics. The obtained results confirm the major impact of intercultural differences on heavy work investment and its outcomes, depending on the investor type (dispositional / situational).

Heavy work investment is also analysed among students, who are sometimes confronted with different *situational antecedents causing them heavy burnout*. The authors base their research on data collected from 1640 students of the University of Belgrade and the considered dimensions are work engagement, work intensity and work burnout (personal burnout; study burnout; burnout towards teaching staff; burnout towards student colleagues). At the same time, researchers also consider some predictive antecedents, namely: students' work engagement; perceived course load; payment source of tuition fee; family pressure related to achievements; students' socio-demographic characteristics (gender). These elements are included in an econometric modeling which highlights important results on how to reduce student burnout. Moreover, the authors' results allow the development of academic programmes with appropriate investments in the performed work, reducing the chances of student burnout by calibrating their work intensity and engagement.

A multicultural team from Peru, Colombia and Spain examines *the mediation role of heavy work investment in generating job demand and recovery experience* in the health service sector. Through modeling with structural equations in PLS, the authors explore the effect of job demand on the recovery experience from the performed work. As compared to other activity sectors, health professionals seem to need a longer time of physical, mental and intellectual recovery, because they are often strongly engaged in the work performed, namely, depending on the situation, they overwork. Generating satisfaction and providing adequate time for mental and physical recovery are extremely important goals for this sector's employees.

A very interesting comparative approach to *work addiction* is described from the perspective of *the new generation of employees in Romania and Hungary*. According to

the authors, the labour market is undergoing a strong process of transformation due to societal and generational changes, with young people being much more flexible in terms of working hours and employment conditions. Based on a survey among Generations Y and Z members in Hungary and Romania, the authors point out differences in perceptions of work addiction, with respondents often preferring to have a partially or completely flexible schedule, often resorting to teleworking, thus achieving the best balance between professional and personal life.

Among the sectoral approaches to *the influence of heavy work investment on work outcomes in the hospitality industry in Serbia* is this paper, which proposes and analyses a model that takes into account the background and outcomes of this phenomenon. In fact, based on data collected from employees in the hospitality industry, the authors include, in the investigated model, work engagement, compulsive work and overwork, job satisfaction, intention to leave the organization, but also work results. At the same time, a mediation analysis is performed, which tests the hypotheses of the connections between the considered constructs. The obtained results are useful to organizations in the field in order to properly understand the outcomes of heavy work investment and to identify the most appropriate strategies to reduce the negative outcomes of overwork, and to increase employees' satisfaction with their performed work.

Another particularly interesting analysis is dedicated to *job demand and recovery experience in relation to heavy work investment and its mediation role*. In this context, the Polish authors analyse employees' behavioral work addiction, in relation to managerial supervision and damage caused to colleagues. Results show that work-addicted managers can cause significant and irretrievable damage to themselves, but also to other employees, organizations and subordinates. From a managerial perspective, the paper offers possible measures that can be implemented at organizational level, in order to create an environment conducive to reducing work addiction and its consequences among employees.

A modern organizational approach has been achieved through *the correlation of trust and work engagement*. The paper explains both the causes and the consequences of heavy work investment in different organizations, by considering work engagement and trust, the representative vectors are those which contribute to the success of the organization. Based on a survey implemented among 787 respondents from 16 organizations, the relationship between these constructs is being analysed, by combining them with integrity, competence and predictability of investigated phenomena. Results reveal that work engagement is strongly correlated with all these factors, generating the success of the organization.

Finally, we highlight another approach to *heavy work investment in relation to psychopathology: internalizing and externalizing disorders as antecedents and outcomes* of heavy work investment. Italian authors analyse the phenomenon of heavy work investment and its forms (overwork and work engagement) from a psychological perspective. Through econometric modelling, the authors address employees with high versus low levels of work engagement, namely who overwork, highlighting that on the sample of Italian workers, there is higher predisposition to psychopathological conditions in

case of those more engaged in work or overwork, as compared to the slower ones or the ones less involved in the carried out activities. At the same time, the results indicate that overwork causes more serious psychopathological disorders than work engagement, being associated with psychological symptoms which have a lower intensity.

All these papers highlight the complexity, depth and multidimensional nature of heavy work investment. Romanian and foreign authors have exemplarily managed to explain and model the phenomenon of heavy work investment in different contexts, contributing both to the extension of specialised theories and literature, but also providing, to the management of relevant companies, recommendations on resizing human resource management strategies and, especially, on reconsidering employees' effort and time in fulfilling their responsibilities and duties.

**Associate Editor,
Dan-Cristian Dabija**