A MODEL OF GOAL ORIENTATION, WORK ENGAGEMENT, JOB-RELATED LEARNING, NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND INNOVATION.

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Declaration

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted as an award for any other degree or diploma in any other university or tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due references has been made in the text.

Statement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research, the greater part of which was completed subsequent to admission to the candidature for the degree.

Signature:

Date: 17 January 2013

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Abstract

Goal orientation (i.e. learning goal orientation, performance-approach goal orientation and performance-avoidance orientation) is a psychological construct that directs an individual towards different patterns of cognition, affection and behaviour. Work engagement is a positive and self-fulfilling state of mind that and leads to one putting discretionary effort into one's work. Past studies have found that employees who are engaged in their jobs are likely to enhance organisational productivity and profitability, probably because they are likely to acquire skills and knowledge through job-related learning. The first research question is therefore about the influence of work engagement on the relationship between goal orientation and job-related learning.

The ability to innovate at work is considered to be a component of an individual's performance. The need for achievement characterises an individual's desire for significant accomplishment. Job-related learning and need for achievement have both been reported to positively influence performance, which includes being innovative at work. The second research question is therefore about the influence of need for achievement on the relationship between job-related learning and innovation.

The study utilised a quantitative method with a cross-sectional design to examine the above research questions. Using an online survey questionnaire, data were obtained from 203 employees from organisations in the manufacturing industry.

The findings in relation to the research questions are as follows: i) work engagement fully mediates the relationship between performance-approach goal orientation and job-related; ii) work engagement fully mediates the relationship between performance-avoidance goal orientation and job-related learning; iii) work engagement partially

mediates the relationship between learning goal orientation and job-related learning; and iv) need for achievement moderates the positive relationship between job-related learning and innovation such that the strength of this relationship decreases as need for achievement increases.

The implications of the findings for practitioners are discussed, as are the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables