

## The Role of Career Development Subjective Success and Professional Commitment in Workaholism among Employees of Ardabil Education Organization (Northwest Of Iran)

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### Abstract

*This research studies the role of subjective success of career development and professional commitment in workaholism among employees of Ardabil education organization through descriptive-correlational method. Hence, the relationship between professional commitment and subjective success of career development as major parameters and workaholism was evaluated. This research has conducted in two theoretical and practical sections. In theoretical section the required data were collected through document and library method, and in practical section they were collected by field study and through questionnaire; population is employees of education organization in Ardabil province (n= 148). Data analysis has done through Pearson's correlation coefficient and multi-variant regression analysis; the obtained results indicate that there is a meaningful relationship between different scales of career development subjective success and professional commitment as major parameters and workaholism.*

**Keywords:** *subjective success of career development, workaholism, education, professional commitment*

### Introduction

In modern business environment, organizations play an important role in career development systems. Career development management that is also known as organizational support for career development is referred to plans, processes, and supports provided by the organization to increase career development success among employees (Kong, 2012). On the other hand organizational career development management is referred to the activities that must be done by organization to manage career development of employees; and this is in turn includes a wide variety of plans and interventions focused on comparing career development needs between individuals and organization and may appear in quite an official or semi-official activities including educational courses or as an evaluation center for guiding career development (De Vos, 2009).

Providing plans like career development plans for employees in an organization may be taken by employees as valuing their participation and welfare (Schnake 2007). This is in turn will lead to employee job satisfaction, will increase their performance and will decrease their psychological pressure. Moreover, it creates a desirable feeling for being in an organization in which employees have a sense of success (De Vos, 2009).

According to Hughs career development success is divided into two aspects or dimensions: objective and subjective (Mayrhofer 2008). Objective aspects include observable consequences like payment, job raises and job position (rank). But subjective success is generically defined as the level of satisfaction from career development (Heslin, 2005).

Different researches support the existence of positive relationship between subjective success of career development management and professional management. Today societies are of organizational kinds. Most of our lifetimes are spent in organization directly or indirectly. Every organization has a function that meets an especial need in a society. Optimal use of existing resources (manpower in particular) in an organization is a common aspect among all management scholars. They believe that long-term survival of every organization relies mainly on suitable utilization of these resources. Although, acquiring mere educational goals depends on optimal utilization of human and financial resources and also equipment, but academic system dynamism depends on different factors such as having satisfied employees who are of high professional commitment and attachment to their work. The studies conducted by Iranian sociologists and cultural and political elites indicate that in comparison to industrial countries and societies, professional ethics in Iran is at the lower level. Weakness of professional ethics especially in public sector is a cause for concern for many managers and authorities. With regard to overall structure of a society those values are dominant that weaken professional ethics as well as work conscience and job commitment (Norouzi, 2010).

Instead of being a tool for people to attain their goals, organization turns out to be a system that uses man as a tool to attain its goals. Workaholism is a phenomenon that can be either pleasurable or tiresome for an individual. The problem with workaholic people is that they feel they are useless without their work.

Ots (1971) considers workaholism as getting accustomed to a condition. He believes that a workaholic individual has an extreme need to work. Spense and Robbins (1992) suggested the first academic and practical definition of workaholism. They believe that workaholism originates from people's attitudes and conceptions. Moreover they believe that a workaholic is more engaged in work, is stricter and has more internal zest to work but takes less pleasure from his work. Snear and Harpaz (2004) define workaholism as assigning extra time to physical or mental activities related to work. Scott et al (1997) identify three kinds of workaholism:

1) Meticulous; 2) perfectionist; 3) success mania; they believe that workaholics are of higher levels of obsession, anxiety and stress; they are less satisfied from their life and job and are of lower job performance. Workaholics are perfectionists who have more physical and psychological problems and stresses; they are of ineffective and inimical inter-individual relationships; the rate of their absence and voluntary desertion is high but that of their job satisfaction and performance is low. Finally workaholics have success mania and are of high life and job satisfaction, high physical and psychological health, high job performance and more organizational citizenship behavior; on the other hand they are have less stress and voluntary desertion. Previous research findings indicate that workaholism is of more negative results than positive ones. The aim of researcher in this study is to present research findings to employees and managers in Education Organization to improve their organizational condition. Hence in population under study we tried to answer the following questions: what is the condition of career development and professional commitment in the organization? What is the condition of workaholism? And on the basis of answer to these questions, what are the ways in which we can help the organization to improve professional commitment and career development? The overall aim of this research is to answer to this question: what is the relationship between subjective success of career development and professional commitment (as major components) and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization?

### Research hypotheses

1. There is relationship between subjective success of career development and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
2. There is a relationship between career development management and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
3. There is a relationship between career development evaluation and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
4. There is a relationship between career development and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
5. There is a relationship between career development training and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
6. There is a relationship between professional commitment workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
7. There is a relationship between affective commitment and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
8. There is a relationship between continuous commitment and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.
9. There is a relationship between duty commitment and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.

### Review of literature and previous works

In a research titled "To study the role of intermediating variable" Wang and Tsai (2004) study the effective personal factors. In a research among 168 employed couples, Baker et al (2007) study the effects of workaholism on family performance. On the basis of previous researches they suppose that there is a direct relationship between workaholism and work imbalance in a family. With this hypothesis in mind and on the basis of their presented model their results support previous researches.

In a research titled "To study the relationship between organizational atmosphere, profession type and workaholism", Janiston and Janson (2005) show that some factors like work pressure, job engagement, link with others, supervisor support affect workaholism.

Research conducted by Hamersh et al (2008) show that some people with higher education and high income show more workaholic behaviors. They believe that such behavior may be the result of their intense desire and mania for success in life. Moreover, it is observed that such individuals allocate more time to their work.

After analyzing data from a sample of employees and managers of Kashmar Education Organization (n=86), in his research titled "To study the relationship between workaholism and organizational commitment of managers and employees of Kashmar Education Organization", Enayati Gholamreza (2012) showed that there is a positive and meaningful correlation between workaholism and professional commitment. Through analyzing statistical data it is also observed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between work attachment, internal tendency to work and get pleasure from work (as main components) and organizational commitment.

### Theoretical principles

**Workaholism:** This term is used more than three decades for defining workaholics. From the time when Ots (1971) introduced the term "workaholism" to describe people who allocate unusually more time to their work in a way that affects their life multiple performance negatively, this term has been used publicly by mass media, internet, and research papers (Shahnaz Aziz et al, 2008: 553). Workaholics can be defined by 2 characteristics: first they allocate more time to their work; and second they ruminate about their work anywhere at any time. Since such people think they are the only individuals that can afford some tasks, delegation of authority is difficult for them. They totally ignore physical damages from their jobs and do not take pleasure from their personal life and relationships. It is their jobs that form their identity; and they find their success and value in their job. Like many other addicts these people deny their addiction (workaholism).

The term workaholism was first introduced by American priest and psychologist, Otsen Wien, in his book named "Confessions of a workaholic". The term was more common in 1990s.

**Behavioral pattern of workaholism:** Generally it is assumed that studying workaholism structure is complex and multi-dimensional. There are different genealogies in this regard. Although limited number of have been tested empirically but they are of high validity. Some genealogies are merely related to workaholics (Robinson, 2000; Scott, 1997). While some others considered both workaholics and non-workaholics in their studies (Spence and Robbins, 1992; Nowgten, 1987; Boulnez and Polmens, 2004; Burk et al, 2006, p 269).

One of the most well-known and reasonable tool for measuring workaholism is Spence and Robin's "workaholic triad" (1992) in which work is divided into following three parameters on the basis of its level:

- 1) Engagement to work: It involves an individual's commitment to work and allocating his/her free time to work. It is also referred to a condition in which people (despite their other responsibilities) allocate more time to their work; moreover it is referred to a doctrine and normative belief with a concept broader than having an interest in work.
- 2) Having enthusiasm for work: An internal pressure to work even though when it is not pleasurable.
- 3) Get pleasure from work: Doing work more than what is expected just because of taking pleasure from it; in other words it is the eagerness and pleasure that one can experience through their work and this leads them to work more than what is expected.

Recently more field studies have been conducted on workaholism (Scott et al, 1997). The expansion of such researches is so that questions in this regard are more than answers and much attention has given to definitions.

In other research Spence and Robins (1992) define 6 sub-divisions of workaholics and non-workaholics (Burk, 2007, P 339): workaholics, eager workaholics, eager workers, remiss workers, ordinary workers, and indifferent workers. According to following table eager workaholics obtain high score in all three dimensions of workaholism, but remiss workers obtain low score in eagerness to work and high score in taking pleasure from work and work involvement.

**Professional commitment:** In a definition presented by Kopola et al, the extensive professional commitment is to act beyond what is contracted; in other words as professional individuals, teachers develop extensive professional commitment, they are committed to lead the students to success and put more value on them. They believe that in educational institutes, factors such as trainees' education and welfare must be among major principles of education. Teachers with extensive professional commitment devote themselves to teaching students and support their success; having an extensive professional commitment is so important, without which formation of any school or university would be impossible (Albert J. Kopola et al; translated by Khadivi et al, 2007).

Scholars believe that extensive professional commitment is also considered as a subject related to personality and value. Because such a commitment for people with high personality and for those who selected with correct standards can be regarded as a tool for facilitating their professional progress. Since making change in attitudes and behavior is difficult and sometimes impossible, for those with lower personality and value, professional development will be

difficult; in other words extensive professional commitment is not something that one can acquire by learning, but it originates from an individual's existential and psychological values (ibid).

**Career success:** Some believe that career success is the same as career development and is to improve skills and acquire proficiencies, while others believe that it involves gaining more income; career success is divided into three kinds: non-psychic, psychic and universal.

**Career development:** It is referred to a set of works and professions that people do during their professional life. The most common use of this term is advancement in work. In some cases career development is referred to a profession or job that requires a high level of training. In other cases it is referred to any long term commitment along with extensive psychological investment in a profession or an organization. Shine believes that the term career development has implicit (internal) and explicit (external) meaning. In his idea internal career development involves internal feelings that people may develop with regard to their professional life. This concept is referred to the sequence of life roles that people may have in their dream through developing one or several career to reach to advancement. From external point of view career development is referred to a sequence of official roles that is linked to a certain profession. Social roles and steps are defined by organizational policies and social concepts that are expected from an individual to do in a career structure (Timmons et al, 2005). Most people make their career decisions through observing the world around them and trying to conform themselves to it. This is against the thing that must be done in reality. The best career is a process originates from inside (it is a kind of self-awareness evolution).

**The process of codifying personal career development strategy:** In performance appraisal we must identify advantages and disadvantages of an individual. It begins with providing career development program. Personal strategy must be designed in a way that use his advantages and neglect his disadvantages so that he can take the existence opportunity to develop his career. Even though there are different ways for defining career development here we will call it a process of codifying personal career development, which is theoretically similar to organization strategy (Stanly et al, 1995).

#### Research method

- a) **Research method:** This research is applied by goal but it is done through descriptive-surveying method of correlational kind.
- b) **Population:** Research population include all employees of Ardabil Education Organization (n=240).
- c) **Sample volume and sampling method:** Sampling is to select people from a population in a way that represent that population. Sampling is done through random method in which we have selected 148 subjects according to Morgan's table.
- d) **Tools of data collection:** The required data was collected through field study and using questionnaire. For data collection three questionnaires have been used:

**Subjective success of career development:** For measuring this variable we will use 11-itemed scale of Kong et al (2011). Responses to the items were provided on a 5-point Likert scale format (ranging from low, very low, average, high and very high).

**Professional commitment:** For measuring professional commitment we will use the related questionnaire of Arania, Polok and Emeric. This questionnaire will be scored on the basis of a 5-point scale ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree".

**Workaholic:** For measuring workaholism Spence and Robins (1992) questionnaire has been adapted. This questionnaire includes 3 parameters work involvement (6-itemed), internal tendency to work (7-itemed), and taking pleasure from work (7-itemed). This 20-itemed questionnaire is graded on the basis of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree".

**E) Validity and reliability:** Validity is referred to the fact that measuring tool measures what is supposed to measure. Content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by some authorities and experts in the field of management and behavioral science; the obtained reliability for dependent variable and independent variables has been proven to be high with Cronbach's alpha coefficients well over 0.85.

**F) Method of data analysis:** At the present research we have used SPSS software for data mining and analysis.

#### Findings

**Main hypothesis:** There is a relationship between subjective success of career development and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.

**Table 1.** The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient between subjective success of career development and workaholism

	Statistics	Workaholism
subjective success of career development	Correlational coefficient	0.331
	Significant level	0.000
Career management	Correlational coefficient	0.264
	Significant level	0.001
Career evaluation	Correlational coefficient	0.413
	Significant level	0.000
Career development	Correlational coefficient	0.176
	Significant level	0.032
Career training	Correlational coefficient	0.453
	Significant level	0.000

According to the results of table one and with regard to the fact that the significant level of test error is smaller than 0.01 for confidence level of 0.99, hence we can say that hypotheses one to five are accepted and there is a meaningful relationship between all scales of subjective success of career development and workaholism. Moreover, the correlation coefficients of subjective success of career development, career management, career evaluation, career development, and career training are 0.33, 0.26, 0.41, 0.17, and 0.45, respectively.

**Main hypothesis:** There is a relationship between professional commitment and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization.

**Table 2.** The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient between professional commitment and workaholism

	Statistics	Workaholism
Professional commitment	Correlational coefficient	0.365
	Significant level	0.000
Affective commitment	Correlational coefficient	0.460
	Significant level	0.000
Continuous commitment	Correlational coefficient	0.396
	Significant level	0.000
Duty commitment	Correlational coefficient	0.520
	Significant level	0.000

According to the results of table 2 and with regard to the fact that the significant level of test error is smaller than 0.01 for confidence level of 0.99, hence we can say that hypotheses one to four are accepted and there is a meaningful relationship between all scales of professional commitment and workaholism. Moreover, the correlation coefficients between professional commitment, affective commitment, continuous commitment, and duty commitment with workaholism are 0.36, 0.46, 0.39, and 0.52, respectively.

**Table 3.** Regression analysis of different scales of career development subjective success with workaholism

Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	T-value
	B	Beta	T
Career management	1.140	.224	1.993
Career evaluation	1.731	.455	4.537
Career development	1.574	.236	1.222
Career training	1.311	.286	2.550

According to the above table from these four variables, career evaluation with the coefficient of 0.45 is of highest capacity to predict workaholism. All in all career training (with coefficient of 0.28), career development (0.23), and career management (0.22), predict and define dependent variable of workaholism.

**Table 4.**Regression analysis of different scales of professional commitment with workaholism

Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	T-value
	B	Beta	T
Affective commitment	1.406	.389	4.951
Continuous commitment	1.455	.366	4.657
Duty commitment	1.692	.445	3.312

According to the above table from these three variables, duty commitment with the coefficient of 0.44 is of highest capacity to predict workaholism. All in all affective commitment (with coefficient of (0.38), and continuous commitment (0.36), predict and define dependent variable of workaholism.

### Discussion and conclusion

The results of the research indicate that there is a meaningful relationship between career development subjective success and professional commitment as major parameters and workaholism among employees of Ardabil Education Organization; there is also a meaningful relationship between all scales of career development subjective success and professional commitment with workaholism. Moreover, career evaluation with the coefficient of 0.45 is of the highest capacity to predict workaholism. All in all career training (with coefficient of 0.28), career development (0.23), and career management (0.22), predict and define dependent variable of workaholism; and duty commitment with the coefficient of 0.44 is of the highest capacity to predict workaholism. Furthermore, affective commitment (with coefficient of 0.38), and continuous commitment (0.36), predict and define dependent variable of workaholism. Results of this research support Wang and Tsai (2004), Baker et al (2007), Jonson (2005), Hamersh et al (2008), Abbasi et al (2006), Norouzi Feizollah (2011), Rezaeian Ali et al (2012), Enayati Gholamreza (2012).

### Resources

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