

THE BENEFITS OF THE REGULAR PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES OF INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

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Reading the dissertation of Ms Anna Thompson allows to reflect on the ways and challenges which contemporary market with its pace and complexity of change bring to the business life. It becomes evident that successful management requires more frequent and more demanding responses not only to local but also global challenges such as volatility, increased pace of change, artificial intelligence, geopolitical and economic shifts, numerous breakthrough technology innovations, environmental health problems etc. Moreover, it is not only the issue of tangible resources being at the disposal of organizations to effectively cope with perceived turbulences but also the managerial and organizational solutions prepared in the process of organizational learning basing on past, contemporary and expected most likely situations. It calls for innovative ways of searching for the potentially winning solutions as well as their disciplined implementation. It means that all organizational forces should be sufficient and proportional to challenges and ready to be activated on time when the outcomes should be delivered to create value for stakeholders and /or avoid loss.

The Author being conscious of the complexity of timely and adequate responses to challenges turns her focus to the soft power, i.e. individual capabilities and skills of employees as the important drivers for real change. Achieving such resilience and adaptability is not easy when the potentially good solutions do not exist in the company experience base, especially in more demanding markets and “harder” times. Uncertainty and ambiguity become the major challenges for managers responsible for delivering the expected results regardless of existing barriers. They are expected to be accountable in every situation, so they should perceive a change as a challenge or the opportunity to go forward with fostering growth.

Unquestionable role in this process belongs to the workforce: sensitive, well trained and prepared to timely and well managed adequate responses to sometimes unexpected and unusual situations. Experienced managers used to know, how important are the innovative approaches to faced challenges and the responsibility of their timely reaction.

The Author after studying diverse approaches to organizational responses to external changes has found a research gap and turned her focus to the role of soft factors as inner drivers for change such as individual capacities, mindfulness and meditation allowing to reduce anxiety, and enhance capability to achieve resilience to stress, and to concentrate all inherent personal capabilities to go ahead. Altogether it is of unquestionable importance for the timely and well calibrated response to change also in terms of costs of reaction.

This is in line with the recent research on organizational health and developing resilient adaptable workforce for an uncertain future. In this sense meditation techniques may contribute to the process as above described. (McKinsey Quarterly, December 2024).

The Author's research objective was "to determine the impact of the regular practice of mindfulness techniques (mindful meditation) on innovative work behaviour within an organization that requires innovation capability to maintain its competitive advantage". This role is usually played in organizations by the IT professional responsible for aligning IT strategy with business goals. It is resulting from the analysis of business processes and confronting them with external environment to enable defining updated business goals. The major problem organizations may face is not only the accepted concept of necessary change aimed at developing and shaping resilient and adaptable workforce for an uncertain future. (McKinsey Quarterly, *ibidem*).

As business consultants point out unexpected crises, volatility and accelerated pace of change become the norm. Organizations must face and find their rational responses to trends such as climate change, bioengineering innovations, evolving workforce demographics, artificial intelligence, investors and the company employees' expectations. Since such a situation becomes the normality, uncertainty should be treated as an inherent feature of their business life, requiring actions regardless of perceived level of uncertainty. They simply must undertake the well calibrated risks although this is the stressful and exhausting experience. Resilience and adaptability should be developed to the extent allowing to "keep things going". A special mix of skills is needed with strong focus on perceiving the change as the challenge or the opportunity. As McKinsey researchers prove in their research the employees with high resilience and adaptability bring 3,8 times higher level of innovations than those with low level. At the same time numbers indicate that resilience and adaptability matter for business performance while organizations usually underinvest in them and in consequence most individuals feel unequipped to deal with it, while psychological safety is critical for building resilience and adaptability, so the strong organizational support also matters. What is the striking evidence the outcome engagement is 6 times higher and outcome innovation 6,2 times

higher in the companies with high level of organizational support, psychological safety, resilience and adaptability associated with high level of engagement and innovation. The Authors recommend building the psychologically safe community, not just the workforce.

Interesting part of the study was based on proposed by the Author meditation by the selected population conducted from three to six months and their repeated responses to questionnaire on their meditation effects and their wellness and innovative work behaviour.

The importance of innovations as a core capability of contemporary global organizations has been broadly anchored and found in the business practice as well as in the management research. The Author has thoroughly studied the origins of such research and evolution of understanding the notion of innovation.

The Author has investigated its evolution reflected in the findings of the renowned researchers in the field with the special focus on global organizations as the best vehicles for broadly spurring the innovation effects worldwide. Interesting presentation of the Author is the figure illustrating the interplay among individual competences, team mindset and organizational innovation capability to successfully elaborate and deliver innovations exploiting internal and external changes. Some of them may be incremental, the other – radical.

The main issue in this approach is the organizational strategy integrating the key innovative endeavours needed to achieve the fit between the state of market environment and organizational potential. Other factors identified by the author, as being of importance, are the following: organizational culture, idea management processes, knowledge management in the organization transformed to the system of organizational learning. Moreover, leadership and creativity, collaboration and communication as the vehicles for success.

The key concept in this thesis is the relationship between individual innovative work behaviour and strategic competence. The first has been broadly and in depth decomposed into a vast set of factors basing on the literature review, what allowed the Author to distinguish three dimensions of innovative work behaviour, i.e. idea generation, idea implementation and idea promotion.

Mapping personal innovation competences to innovative work behaviour was one of the concepts which required from the Author the transposition of innovative behaviour features to the set of individual innovation competence skills, what in turn required a detailed literature analysis, and the results have been presented in the concise complex illustrative graph.

Chapter 3 has been devoted to describing the relationship between mindfulness and the strategic competence, which resulted from the thorough and in-depth analysis of literature

review, what enabled the Author precisely defining the main categories, i.e. mindfulness technique and meditation, as well as the effect of mindfulness on job performance.

The next step was devoted to in-depth search for data available in major data bases, i.e. SCOPUS, EBISCO and GOOGLE SCHOLAR, and the search was aimed at defining all personal characteristics related to self-esteem, achievement orientation, motivation, engagement and flexibility. The thorough analysis of literature was done to identify future orientation skills, creative thinking skills, social skills, development project management skills, content knowledge skills, concretization skills and implementation planning skills. It allowed the Author to identify the nature of the impact of meditation basing on the studies conducted in 2014-2023.

Own research methodology and framework were logically step-by-step presented in chapter 4. It covered the synthesis of key terms and concepts where meditation components, namely idea promotion, were interlinked with social skills (networking and communication).

The Author worked out the wellness questionnaire used in field research, in which three categories have been distinguished: emotional wellness, intellectual wellness, and occupational wellness measured on a 5p. scale. Next two components of the research tools were: the Capgemini's Architect Competency Matrix with Innovation Competency Matrix.

The desk research covered the collection of data referring to selected population followed by detailed analysis divided into 6 cohorts. The whole data collection in support of the research model has been clearly designed, the structure of research population graphically presented.

The analysis and interpretation of study findings was thoroughly presented in chapter 5 on 93 pages covering the analysis of quantitative results for the groups of meditators and non-meditators in all investigated categories of overall wellbeing. Every step of the planned research has been graphically presented and results were properly interpreted.

Chapter 6. contained the description of theoretical contributions and practical implications of overall results. The Author has paired the theoretical contributions and practical implications of overall results in each of the designed and investigated relationships, i.e. mindfulness as a lever for wellbeing. One of her research discoveries was the difference between the group of architects and non-architects. Author concluded that the difference stems from the stress level, and the practical implication of this finding is the beneficial role of meditation practices for employees in coping with stress, working-out the work-life balance and improving collaboration with others. Further she pointed out the scheme of converting stress into a potential for change and innovation contrary to increased job control. Following



this track of thinking one of the Author valuable observations was that highly demanding jobs when leaving the freedom of decision to individuals helps towards their more innovating behaviours, what supports the observations of other researchers. The practical implications of these discoveries are meaningful showing that a six-month of mindful meditation results in innovative idea implementation what may help decision-makers to more precisely structure their innovative schedules.

In the review stage of the impact of meditation on the idea implementation the Author discovered the scheme of the whole process leading to better results of architects.

In the final analysis of her research data there was an interesting observation on the correlations among three dimensions of innovative work behaviour.

Conclusions

The dissertation presents the original analysis and well calibrated proposed solutions referring to the complex management process of innovation in organizations, what in the contemporary business is not only the necessity, but the must for organizational survival and winning with competitors in the turbulent business environment. In such situations all attempts to furnish organizations' management with useful tools in navigating among the perils of the turbulent business environment are of great importance. It is simply indispensable for the development of organizations preventing them from the dangerous position of "stuck-in-the middle" not allowing them to achieve the competitive advantage based on scale neither the uniqueness.

Considering the scope of this research and the Author's in-depth analysis of all aspects of the whole innovative work within organizations with the use of mindfulness meditation practices the final positive conclusions of their implications for the investigated companies have been convincingly supported. The knowledge of the theory of innovations has been enriched with the new observations from this research in the part of the impacts of the regular practicing with the use of mindfulness techniques influencing the work behaviour and propensity of staff to innovate. The separate issue is the willingness and support of the management staff as this process seems to be very time consuming.

The Author proved and demonstrated her high level of sensitivity in investigating these subtle interrelationships among the psychological aspects of management of innovations which affect the future of organizations.

Her research methodology has been corresponding with the most modern discoveries in the area of organizational psychology and sociology referring to the process of organizational change, which in fact represent the soft part of the whole process of change.

It is well known that aspiring organizations work towards the high scores in the organizations' health index, where such features as alignment, execution, renewal and sharing lessons learned from organizations that achieved health and performance gains are measured and compared with top players.

The deficiency of this thesis is that organizational and management aspects have not been given the adequate attention what is crucial for the contribution to enrichment of the organization and management theory with needed recommendations on the proposed feasible solutions to existing key problems in the fields of strategy, structure and management of operations. Especially the focus should be on strategy development process, human resources involvement and commitment with the focus on organizational learning and performance upraising.

Final conclusion

Regardless of the perceived deficiencies in not going further with useful recommendations how to build upon this idea the presented dissertation may help the management staff to better understand the nature of human aspects of innovative processes and support them with feasible diagnostic and operational tools to better plan and execute intended innovations.

As McKinsey business consultants point out it is important to develop a resilient and adaptable workforce for an uncertain future. The presented thesis contributes to the part of needed general and complex solution.



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