

Qualitative Deductive Research Analyzing the Co-relation of “Being overly Engrossed with Work (Busy) and Achieving Results (Reach Set-Targets)” in Western Australian Corporate Managers

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Abstract—The purpose of the study was to understand reasons behind the successful goal achievement in a highly regulated work place by Corporate Managers. In the sample, Western Australian Corporate manager’s focus and energy quotients and how it affects successful goal achievement was addressed in the research problem, “the co-relation between “being overly engrossed with work” and achieving results”. After reviewing existing literature, researcher adopts a qualitative research design than more dominant quantitative data in studying Corporate Managers. Managers are likely to view the phenomenon of organizational growth and personal development differently in the current turbulent Australian economy thus we emphasis on identified key factors (Focus & Energy) that will enhance and contribute to the way managers achieve results in todays multi-generational Australian workforce. The basic question arises does “being busy” produce the desired results for the business? Is there a positive co-relation between been busy and achieving set goals? The answer based on research is “NO”. To clarify the relationship between “Focus” and “Energy” and their impact on each other, the study has been carried out addressing five business segments in Corporate Australia with the use of stratified and cluster sampling. Further Bruch and Ghoshal (2003) outline in research findings on “Unleashing Organizational energy”, Mintzberg (1973) “Strategic apex” in Management theory are been used to the focus-energy matrix ensuring the right delivery of clarity. In conclusion, having the right blend of focus and energy would ensure purposeful and effective utilization of time for the managers and workers to achieve organizational goals.

Index Terms—Busy, energy, focus, work balance.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the latest 2019 Australian Bureau of Statistics- data and trend estimates, Australian employment increased 28,400 to 12,856,600 persons. Further breakdown elaborated an increase of 13,900 persons to a total of 8,799,800 persons and part-time employment increased to 14,500 to 4,056,800 persons. The unemployment also increased 5,800 to 695,200 persons and the unemployment rate remained steady at 5.1%. Although the figures paint a positive picture a survey of 3,500 employees from 41 organizations across Australia revealed a third of employees were suffering from some form of mental health issue - 36% from depression, 33% from anxiety and 31% from stress [1].

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This startling revelation points to the bleaker fat of loss of productivity, performance and efficiency of the Australian Organizations. In 2008, a research team from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) conducted a survey of 400 medium-to-large organizations in Australia to identify the systems, processes and structures that facilitate high performance [2]. According to the research formalized strategic planning and processes that outline quantitatively measured goals and detailed plans of action will enhance the high performance. The research further substantiated that High performing firms, irrespective of strategic priority, benefited from a focus on human capital and organizations values. Yet according to “safe work Australia” studies work-related mental health conditions take a huge toll on workers health and productivity. On average each year, between 2012-13 to 2016-17, all serious workers compensation claims were work related mental health conditions it has costs the Australian economy over \$ 12 billion per year in lost productivity and organization performance. One in five Australians (21%) have taken time off work in the past 12 months and Australian workplaces paid \$ 146 million in compensation claims. The root cause for all these issues are identified as “Burnouts” due to the increased workload and lack of time.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the time of the Industrial revolution, the concept of management theory and practice evolved and adapted to a technical, analytical approach which very conveniently negated and neglected human factors like emotions and feelings [3]. The trends reversed significantly over the last 50 odd years and the academic fraternity along with business managers confesses pivotal role played by emotions and feelings to shape corporate behavior. The challenge that lies ahead is the ability to link emotions to performance goals and objectives capturing people’s emotions and absorb workers intellectual capacities and capabilities. Professor Heike Bruch of Switzerland University of Saint Gallon along with Professor Sumantra Ghoshal of London Business School [3], further analyzed the “The Smart-Talk Trap” phenomena argued by Pfeffer & Roberts [4] they formed a consortium from world renown companies including Sony, LG Electronics and Lufthansa. Lufthansa teetering from bankruptcy in early 1990’s to posting a record profit of Deutsche Mark 2.5 billion in 2000 contributed with 200 managers whom were involved with at least one of the 130 revival projects and used the insights and experiences to

create a cohort of knowledge.

In today's world most managers were not overly enthusiastic to make changes and to put forward innovative, systematic ideas to make organization financially viable or robust in nature to face the ever growing competition, but the few who use their initiatives and put actions to practice rely on two traits: Focus and Energy. These two factors will be discussed and evaluated to make sense to the multi-generational work force where "Reverse mentoring" is used by the Generation Z. Subramanyam & Greenfield [5] states the key elements of focus and energy has already drifted away from the Generation Z, numerous psychological surveys, findings and insights points out the born digital generation lacking attention span and behavioral patterns affect the robustness thus created rifts in multigenerational work forces. According to Pfeiffer & Sutton The ever prevalent phenomena of "knowing-doing gap", is ever increasing in today's multigenerational workforce with a higher density than the age old "Generation -gap" adage. It is not the inertia of indifference or ignorance but of knowing too much and doing too little. Therefore "focus" and "energy" plays a pivotal role for the success of company. Striking a balance between the old and the new is the new norm in today's work force and effective creation of coherent and cohesive workforce will be the challenge for the future.

III. INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES FROM TRANSFORMING CORPORATES

The Age-old aphorism from Antoine de Saint-Exupery dictates the following,

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to go to the forest to gather wood, saw it and nail the planks together. Instead, teach them the desire for the sea" Bruch & Ghoshal outlines the desire for achievement springs from two sources: namely 1) a meaningful challenge 2) personal choice. If they can amalgamate the mentioned two with a sense of profound urgency the synergy will create a winning formula. The classic example of Lufthansa CEO Weber's discussion with executive board and managers in 1992 and revelation of the company's eminent bankruptcy in the following months gave the participants a sense of urgency coupled with the fact Weber didn't expressly nor impliedly gave any solutions thus giving the team to come up with possible plausible ideas to rescue Lufthansa gave a challenge and direction (Bruch & Ghoshal, 2003). It was a workbook example of avoiding "defensive avoidance" from managers and the executive board and working together to the betterment of the company. A clear cur example for "focus" can be convoluted from the same company. Lufthansa's executive Vice President Thomas Sattelberger was adamant in his pursuit for a corporate university and achieved his dream surpassing un surmountable obstacles. Sattelberger's dream came true in 1998 with Lufthansa school of business becoming the first corporate university in Germany.

The second identified trait "Energy" emerged from the Asian continent with intense personal commitment and vigor. Sony Vaio's CEO Nobuyuki Idei challenged the workforce to create an integrated technological playground. Team leaders like Hiroshi Nakagawa worked 100-hour weeks and

Manager Kazumasa Sato did recon missions every weekend for three years (Dharmasiri, 2012).

IV. FOCUS AND ENERGY EXPLAINED

What is "Focus" -In layman's terms "focus" means concentrated attention Prof. Dharmasiri [6] further explains it as "consciousness and intentional actions by person in order to achieve a particular objective". Gebauer & Kowalkowski, 2012, [7] outline customer-focus and service-focus organization structures relevant to management. Homburg, Christian, Martin and others state product-focused and geographically-focused organizations. In all context and ambience focus is human centric and can be lost due to environmental disturbances and societal change. Discipline, dedication and drive, was needed to overcome tendencies to deviate and to have a clear focus.

Management Guru Henry Mintzberg, discuss this occurrence in his book *The Nature of Managerial Work* in detail. When tasked with a variety of tasks at the same time, managers do delegate work among colleagues. In these situations maintaining focus is difficult and cumbersome. Dharmasiri iterates, maintaining focus is laborious when it encompass e-mails as well as females [6].

Even in religious literature the term focus is revealed, "Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you" (Proverbs 4:25) In Buddhist literature it dwells deep in to consciousness. In Zen Buddhism consciousness or mind implied to a "drunken monkey" [6] and meditation will help to tie the monkey to the tree of concentration, the sublime state of focus conscience. Focusing on the materialistic and non-material needs are essential pre-requisites for the modern managers. In business world, ability to focus and maintain it over a period became an asset without a liability.

High	Disengaged 20% (Australian sample 25%)	Purposefulness 10% (Australian sample 5%)
Focus	Procrastination 30% (Australian sample 25%)	Distraction 40% (Australian sample 45%)
Low		
	Low	High
	Energy	

Fig. 1. Australian data assimilated with Bruch & Ghoshal (2002).

What is "Energy" – In generic terms Australian businesses and house holds confront an energy crisis. This ever prevalent and growing occurrence affects the economy at large. When considering the substance of energy, it means many things, in a management perspective it can be regarded as a higher level of personal involvement or an extra effort. As per the research findings of Bruch & Ghoshal elaborates dedicated and committed manager from Sony Vaio working on an important project with tight targets and set time frames. The case as follows, responding to CEO Nobuyuki Idei's calling managers Hiroshi Nakagawa and his team put 100 hour weeks another manager Kazumasa Sato dedicated every week end for three years conducting consumer surveys in electrical shops which helped Sony to develop a new shop layout plan. The energy and passion was evident in all Sato's

actions as he was working every weekend for three years committing wholeheartedly for their cause. This can be simplified as “Energy”, Fig. 1. Australian data assimilated with Bruch & Ghoshal, 2002.

V. “FOCUS AND ENERGY MATRIX” EXPLAINED

According to Bruch and Ghoshal’s Focus and Energy Matrix, four possible scenarios emerge.

This can be clearly identified in the selected five business segments in Corporate Australia. The data samples were taken from the following well-known industries,

- i) The Financial Industry
- ii) The Business Consulting Industry
- iii) The Metals and Mining Industry
- iv) The Energy and Utilities Industry
- v) The Healthcare Industry

Based on the “Focus- Energy” matrix, four types of managers identified after carefully collating the research questionnaire data. The managers are identified as follows: Fig. 2 “Focus Energy Matrix” – Manager’s Characteristics (Source Bruch & Ghoshal, 2002)

High	Disengaged Managers	Purposeful Managers
Focus		
Low	Procrastination Managers	Distracted Managers
	Low	High
	Energy	

Fig. 2. “Focus Energy Matrix” - Managers Characteristics (Source - Bruch & Ghoshal (2002).

VI. TYPES OF MANAGERS –AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

A. Disengaged Managers (High - Focus, Low- Energy)

According to Bruch and Ghoshal roughly 20% of managers fall into this category, while promulgating Australian data roughly 25% of Australian managers were disengaged. Categorically the “Financial sector” and “Metal & Mining industry” executives were rated high in disengaged managers category. They exhibit high focus but had very low levels of energy.

Due the recent downturn in mining sector and averse and unethical practices found in the Royal commission, financial sector managers were simply exhausted. They lack inner resources to energize themselves and unable to commit to tasks that were meager and insignificant. These disengaged managers exhibited high level of reservations and approached all assigned tasks in a half-hearted manner.

Bruch & Ghoshal (2002) elaborates the “defensive avoidance” incidents when faced with a challenging situation. Rather than acknowledging the problem and take corrective measures they convince themselves that the problem is non-existent. The common problem Australian companies face today is the recurring recruitment drives while facing huge operating losses.

The significant contrast with these “Disengaged Managers”

is that these managers are highly qualified and experience people with industry knowhow. Although they know the processes, practices and insights, they are unwilling to deliver results.

B. Distracted Managers (Low - Focus, High - Energy)

Bruch and Ghoshal states 40% of managers fall into the distracted quadrant and according to Australian data roughly 45% managers are distracted managers. Demographically younger, highly energetic and well intentioned yet unbalanced and unfocused people were identified in this category. They have confused constant motion and hustle with productive action.

“The distracted managers are like the proverbial bull in a china shop”. When under pressure these managers feel a desperate urge to do something and keep occupied. In Australia Business Consulting and Energy and Utility sector employed managers suffers from distracted manager syndrome. They work long hours and always occupied with business activities but do not produce results at time.

These managers are to be blamed for the current economic down turn in Australia. Rather than acknowledging their sheer lack of focus these managers advocate “reverse-mentoring” and “multi-tasking” approaches, these managers does not have clarity of the current economic perspective.

C. The Procrastinators (Low - Focus, Low - Energy)

According to the researchers Bruch and Ghoshal, 30% suffered from low levels of both energy and focus. These managers performed attentively to mundane day to day tasks such as attending meetings and engaging with employees but failed to take initiatives and set bench marks for others to follow.

In Australia ceremonial appointments and finger puppet appointments were done and the procrastinator managers are around 25%. They are mainly from financial industry and business consulting industry due to the uncertain sentiment in the economy and newly legislated financial red tapes. These managers are liability to the organization as others are obliged to carry their burden due to lack of support.

D. Purposeful Managers (High - Focus, High - Energy)

This is the rare breed and the exclusive club of high performers. According to Bruch and Ghoshal’s findings 10% of the research group consisted of these managers. These managers put more effort and achieve long terms goals in due time frames. They not only set the bar high for the others to achieve but constantly break the limits. During those critical and testing times at Lufthansa some managers work like warriors “fighting for survival” with constant supply of motivation and drive.

In Australia the number decreases further to 5% the reason is as follows, In Australia managers feel they are restricted and constrained by outside forces. i.e - job descriptions (demarcated boundary), allocated budgets, peers etc. Purposeful managers do the reverse and start from inside out. They first identify what to achieve and then manage the external environment - tapping into resources, building networks, learning new skills and by doing it they meet the personal and professional goals.

The purposeful managers have a sense of personal volition

and they refuse to let other people dictate terms or organizational constraints set the agenda.

This is the most important distinction between purposeful managers and others.

VII. CREATING THE CRITICAL BALANCE – “FOCUS AND ENERGY”

Having discussed the two key factors of “Focus and Energy” for organizations, we should analyze ways to improve Australian managers focus and energy. Focus can be worked in two areas: physical and mental. As Dharmasiri explain, physical distractions can be minimized by ergonomics and mental distractions by using mindfulness techniques.

Energy works in a more subtle plane where Mind-body balance, work-family balance and strategic-operational balance to be culminated.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Last year 3,500 employees [8] from 41 organizations across Australia revealed a third of employees were suffering from some form of mental health issue - 36% [9] from depression, 33% [10] from anxiety and 31% from stress [11]. The reason is people do not have the right blend of focus and energy to engage in productive activity. There is no positive correlation identified in Australian managers on being overly engrossed with work (busy) and producing results (reach set targets). Purposeful managers drive organizations to success, focus and energy are personal characteristics and with training it can be enhanced and developed. CEO's and Boards should present their employees with meaningful and purposeful challenges thus will create a healthy workforce for future Australia.

The findings are inline with Bruch & Ghoshal's research findings and can be validated using Australian data. The changes are due to dire economic conditions in the Australian labour force and specially the obscure Western Australian economic sentiment.

For further study identified, business process re-engineering and migrating non-critical back office functions offshore is more productive for Australian economy and newly migrated and expat managers are more productive than native managers and achieve results in due

time frames.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All work is attributed to the author.

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