Warsaw School of Economics, College of Business Administration

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION IN ENGLISH**

Alena Ivanova

**"Relationship of positive employee behaviour in the organisation with professional development"**

Doctoral dissertation under the scientific supervision of: prof. dr hab. Marta Juchnowicz

**Keywords:** human capital management, Positive Organisational Scholarship positive employee behaviour, professional development, propensity to professional development

The subject of the doctoral dissertation is two issues. One is the concept of positive organisational behaviour of people. The other is the issue of professional development and, in particular, the employee's propensity for professional development and participation in development activities. This work can therefore be placed in two areas: Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) and human capital management.

In their search for sources of sustainable competitive advantage, companies are increasingly turning their attention to new methods, ways of managing, improving the processes implemented and the practices used. The attention of most management researchers and practitioners focuses primarily on detecting and analysing the weaknesses of the organisation and its employees, looking for inefficiencies, dysfunctions and difficulties blocking their effectiveness and development, and finding ways to solve problems and eliminate negative phenomena.

Over the past two decades, the positive aspects of organisational performance have increasingly attracted the attention of academics and business, including management. One of the reasons for the focus of research on positive organisational phenomena is related to the emergence of a new trend, defined in the English-language literature as Positive Organisational Scholarship. POS focuses on the creation and analysis of positive aspects of organisations as sources of success, instead of focusing on eliminating weaknesses and countering threats, which are characteristic of traditional management.

In the field of management and quality sciences, positive behaviour is treated as a desirable pattern of employee actions in the organisation, corresponding to the assumptions of Positive Organisational Scholarship and consisting of repeated and conscious employee behaviour that directly or indirectly determines the development of the organisation. An analysis of the literature shows that although the positive behaviour of individual employees may be relatively similar, an employee's aspiration for professional development may vary.

The analysis of the literature also revealed that developmental propensity can be a motivating force for taking action and can serve to explain taking action.

The research problem addressed in this paper concerns answering the following research question: How does employees' propensity for professional development affect the relationship between their positive organisational behaviour and their participation in development activities?

The main aim of the dissertation is to determine the relationship between an employee's positive behaviour in the organisation and their propensity for professional development and the employee's participation in development activities.

**Research methods**

The choice of research methods and techniques used was mainly dictated by the problem statement and objectives of the study. To achieve the research objectives, it was decided to combine qualitative and quantitative research (triangulation of methods). The use of triangulation of research methods allows to increase the reliability of the collected empirical material and its interpretation, which influences the accuracy, reliability and objectivity of the research.

The following sources of data were used in the research proceedings: Polish and foreign book items and scientific articles, company research reports, statistical materials and databases, and other publications related to the research topic and concerning the methodology of the research work.

Individual interviews using a survey questionnaire (Paper and Pencil Interview, PAPI) aimed at creating a comprehensive list of development activities.

Focus Group Interview (FGI), which was conducted in order to identify the attitudes of the study participants towards professional development and to identify the factors that, in their opinion, influence the adoption of development activities.

The survey proper, conducted on a sample of 600 people, was previously preceded by a pilot study and conducted using the Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) method.

**Findings from the study**

The analysis of the literature has shown that Positive Organisational Scholarship and the concept of human capital management are close to each other in specific areas, especially those related to the treatment of people in the organisation, recognising and utilising the potential inherent in people, identifying and developing their strengths, etc. Both approaches emphasise the importance of creating an environment and working conditions that are conducive to employee development, innovation and creativity, increasing employee involvement and shaping relationships between employees, which should ultimately lead to the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Investing in employee development has been found to be closely related to the creation of human capital in an organisation. However, investments in human capital can also be misguided investments. Therefore, one of the key conditions for the relevance of investments in human capital should be to identify those employees whose investment in their development will bring higher returns to the organisation. The criterion for identifying such employees in this thesis is the propensity for professional development, i.e. an attitude characterised by a relatively stable, generalised willingness of the employee to undertake developmental activities.

The conducted empirical study and confirmatory factor analysis with an exploratory approach and the estimation of the eight structural equation models built on its basis allowed for positive verification of hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 adopted in the study.

In summary, the analytical and conceptual work carried out, theoretical and empirical, allowed confirming the main thesis of the paper as follows: positive employee behaviour in the organisation positively influences employee participation in development activities, and the strength of this relationship depends on the employee's propensity for professional development.

The research conducted led to the following conclusions:

* the gender, age, education of the respondent and the position occupied by the respondent statistically significantly differentiate positive employee behaviour in the workplace;
* the gender of the respondent and the position occupied by the respondent significantly statistically differentiate the propensity for professional development;
* there is a strong correlational relationship between all positive employee behaviours in the organisation;
* participation in development activities is determined by positive employee behaviour;
* propensity for professional development as a mediator has a very strong effect on participation in development activities.

On the basis of the analyses and research findings, the paper formulates guidelines for the practice of human capital management (e.g. HR departments, human capital management departments, HR Business Partner). Limitations of the research process are characterised and directions for future research are presented. The structure of the work has been subordinated to the achievement of its objectives. The work consists of four chapters. The theoretical part is formed by the first two chapters, while the remaining chapters constitute the empirical part, of which the third chapter is a presentation of the methodology of the conducted research.

The first chapter systematises the theoretical achievements concerning the essence and issues of Positive Organisational Scholarship and their relation to the concept of human capital management. The concept of positive organisational potential was presented. Knowledge concerning the concept of positive employee behaviour was also structured and the manifestations of this behaviour in the organisation were identified.

Chapter two focuses on issues of professional development. It discusses the importance of investments in human capital and their types. The rationale justifying investment in human capital and the benefits of investment in development for the organisation and the employee are indicated. The author's definition of the notion of "propensity for professional development" is presented and individual development activities are characterised.

Chapter three presents the methodological basis of the research. It presents the research model, its elements and relations between them, the main research thesis and specific hypotheses. The research method used, the procedure and the research stages are discussed. In addition, it includes a description of the research tool used, including the elements and operationalisation of the employee's propensity for professional development, as well as the method of measuring it.

The fourth chapter contains analyses of the data obtained from the empirical research, which were used to test the hypotheses, verify the research model and summarise the empirical research.