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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Pathology of Human Capital Productivity in Payam Noor University of Iran



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EXTENDED A B S T R A C T

Introduction

Human capital productivity is widely recognized as a cornerstone of organizational success in the knowledge-based economy. Universities, as fundamental educational institutions, are central to nurturing and advancing human capital. Ensuring that both academic and administrative staff operate at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness is therefore not only desirable but also critical for achieving institutional goals. Declines in productivity, however, can weaken institutional performance and limit the ability to deliver on educational mandates. The analysis of such challenges—often referred to as the pathology of human capital productivity—provides valuable insights into organizational health and performance improvement. This study investigates the barriers to human capital productivity within Payame Noor University, with the aim of offering strategic recommendations to inform policy and managerial decision-making.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research design combining documentary analysis with thematic analysis techniques. MAXQDA 2020 software was used to manage and code the data systematically. The research population consisted of experts in human resource management and senior staff members at Payame Noor University. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and theoretical saturation was reached after 13 interviews. The coding process yielded 236 open codes, which were further refined into 30 subcategories and then synthesized into 10 overarching categories. This approach ensured methodological rigor and provided a robust framework for identifying the factors contributing to reduced human capital productivity.

Fingdings

The results revealed that the productivity of human capital at Payame Noor University is undermined by ten interrelated domains:

Organizational Structure and Culture, Recruitment and Selection,

Appointments and Promotions Compensation and Rewards System, Knowledge and Skills, Performance Evaluation, Role Clarity, Organizational Support, Motivational Incentives, Managerial Decisions and Policy-Making.

The analysis further indicated that these factors are not isolated but rather interconnected, creating a web of systemic issues. For example, weak recruitment processes feed into structural inefficiencies, while inequitable compensation undermines both motivation and professional development. Such interdependencies demonstrate that human capital productivity challenges are multidimensional and mutually reinforcing.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study concludes that addressing the productivity challenges of human capital at Payame Noor University requires a systemic and integrated strategy. Partial or isolated reforms in individual domains are unlikely to yield sustainable results, given the interconnectedness of the identified barriers. Instead, comprehensive reforms should focus on:

Restructuring organizational frameworks to enhance flexibility and adaptability.

Implementing transparent recruitment and promotion mechanisms.

Establishing equitable and motivating compensation systems.

Strengthening training and continuous skill development programs.

Designing fair and comprehensive performance evaluation methods.

Providing greater organizational support and resource allocation.

Encouraging evidence-based managerial decision-making and long-term policy planning.

By adopting such an integrated approach, Payame Noor University can enhance workforce productivity, improve institutional performance, and better align with its mission as a higher education institution. The findings not only contribute to the literature on human capital productivity but also provide practical guidance for policymakers and administrators seeking to strengthen human resource management in academic settings.

KEYWORDS

Pathology, Productivity, Human Capital, Thematic Analysis, Payam Noor University.

