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Impacts of imposed polychronic behaviour upon performance and well
being in academic work environments.

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary workplace individuals differ considerably in the manner they approach their work and achieve outcomes. This thesis examined the construct of polychronicity (preference for undertaking multiple tasks simultaneously) within two intellectually intensive academic work environments. The impacts of imposed polychronicity on performance, job satisfaction, perceived stress and wellbeing were explored. Data was collected from 116 lecturers, teachers, supervisors and managers working in Northern Queensland, Australia. A quantitative approach was taken to data collection. Existing scales were used to measure a range of variables including preferred polychronicity, experienced work unit polychronicity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived stress. To provide a qualitative perspective, respondents were asked for comments which were used to add depth and breadth to the study. The findings indicated that preferred polychronicity and experienced work unit polychronicity did not differ over genders or occupations which suggests that polychronicity is likely to be a personal trait. Responses were divided into polychronic, neutral or monochronic preference categories. The findings indicated that when polychronicity was high organisational commitment was high, but when monochronicity was high organisational commitment was lower. Further the findings indicated that when organisational commitment was high, job satisfaction was high and when organisational commitment was low stress was high, although polychrons relationship with stress was lower than that of monochrons. This may suggest that polychrons work better in an imposed polychronic environment than monochrons which supports previous research. The implication for employers is that through understanding the tasking preferences of employees they may be able to tailor strategies to improve and enhance personal wellbeing which in turn may increase job satisfaction, performance, wellbeing and reduce turnover.

KEY WORDS

Polychronicity; job satisfaction; performance; time management; wellbeing.

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