

AN INQUIRY INTO DOCTORAL STUDENTS' QUEST FOR MEANING: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Coupling critical perspectives of work and organizational psychology (WOP) and current debates on neoliberalization of the academic environment, the present study investigates how doctoral students may strive to find meaning in doing their work. To pursue this aim, the study presents two different empirical studies. The first is a qualitative study that draws on WOP doctoral students' narratives (N = 5) about their viewpoint on academia and WOP as a discipline. The second is a quantitative investigation of doctoral students' experience of meaning in work. Data presents how doctoral students live an in-between condition spanning from studying as students, publishing as researchers, teaching as professors, and funds raising as entrepreneurs. This condition seems to underpin doctoral students' strive for meaning which may result in depression, anxiety and quit intention. Moreover, doctoral students' narratives reveal a novel account of academia and WOP as a discipline. We analyse this finding through the theoretical lens of critical perspectives to advance a set of recommendations for the future of WOP.