

Wellbeing at work and the development of a questionnaire

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Background. Improved employee wellbeing has been suggested to contribute to individual motivation and health, as well as to corporate competitiveness (Grawitch et al, 2006). However, in order to reach these potential benefits, we need to better understand the underlying factors that create wellbeing at work and healthy work environments.

Aim. The aim of the study is to explore how a sample of Swedish blue- and white collar workers interprets the concepts of healthy work environments and workplace wellbeing, as a basis for the development of a questionnaire. In addition, a second aim is to investigate the psychometric properties of the subsequent questionnaire.

Method. Interviews focusing on healthy work environments and workplace wellbeing were undertaken with managers and employees (n=62) at three medium-sized companies. All interviews were verbatim transcribed and analyzed in order to identify factors reported as important for healthy work environments and workplace wellbeing. The interview findings, together with factors identified in a systematic review about indicators of healthy work environments (Lindberg & Vingård, 2012) were used to develop items for a questionnaire aimed at measuring underlying factors for workplace wellbeing. The questionnaire, including newly constructed “workplace wellbeing items” as well as well-established questions for employee health, working conditions, and organizational factors was distributed to all employees at the three companies, where 74 % (n=303) responded. A retest survey was distributed to a subsample of the participants. 86 % (n=107) responded.

Preliminary results. The interview data suggested a broad spectrum of factors to be significant for establishing healthy work environments and workplace wellbeing. These factors represented six categories: Psychosocial climate; Physical working conditions; Communication; Management; Autonomy & Competence; and Values. The survey data showed that the single most important statement for workplace wellbeing was “that work- and family life can be combined in a good way”. Further psychometric properties, including reliability and factor analysis, are being conducted and will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion. A healthy work environment is believed to hold great potential for both individuals and companies. With a mixed method approach this study test a set of questions measuring factors for a healthy work environment and wellbeing at work.

References

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