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Downsizing und Survivors

Stand der Forschung zum Leben und Überleben in schlanken und fusionierten Organisationen

In diesem Beitrag wird der internationale Stand der (vorwiegend psychologischen) Forschung zu den individuellen und sozialen Auswirkungen von organisationalen Personalreduktionen (genannt „Downsizing“) auf die Verbleibenden (genannt „Survivors“) dargestellt. Die fast ausschließlich angelsächsische Forschung kommt zum Ergebnis, dass die mit dem Personalabbau angezielten ökonomischen Gewinne (Bsp. tiefere Kosten) und organisationalen Ziele (erhöhte Produktivität) sehr oft nicht erreicht werden. Eine Erklärung dafür sind die negativen emotionalen, einstellungs- und verhaltensmässigen Reaktionen der Survivors. Besondere Rolle kommt der Verschiebung und Auflösung des „psychologischen Kontrakts“, der impliziten Übereinkunft zwischen Unternehmen und Arbeitnehmenden, zu. Arbeitsplatzunsicherheit und damit verbundene motivationale Verluste an Commitment und Engagement sowie gesundheitliche Folgen sind in Rechnung zu stellen, ebenso die Rolle des mittleren Managements und damit zusammenhängende Status- und Karriereprobleme. Der Beitrag versteht sich als Anregung für die notwendige theoretische und empirische Forschung, die im deutschsprachigen Raum erst in Ansätzen existiert.

Schlagwörter: Downsizing, Gesundheit, Lean Management, Psychologischer Kontrakt, Survivors

This article is a review of the international (mainly psychological) research of the individual and social effects of organisational staff reduction (Downsizing) on the remaining employees (Survivors). The conclusion of the mostly English speaking countries is that the financial and organisational objectives (e.g. lowering costs and rising productivity) that firms expect from Downsizing are often not achieved. An explanation for this result is that Downsizing evokes negative emotional, cognitive or behavioural responses among Survivors. The change of the implicit psychological contract between employers and employees is regarded central for these negative responses. Further workplace insecurity, motivational losses regarding commitment and engagement, changes in health status as well as changes in position and career paths of middle management have to be considered. These findings suggest that more theoretical and empirical research is necessary - especially in German speaking countries.

Keywords: Downsizing, Health, Lean Management, Psychological Contract, Survivors

Andrea Fried, Ralf Wetzel, Christof Baitsch

Performance Appraisal and Sex Discrimination

Critically constructive remarks

The influence of performance appraisal and performance-based payment models is rising. Therefore, it should be considered if and possibly how performance appraisal instruments contain or produce sources of sex discrimination.

The article undertakes a critical review of what we usually call "performance", provides a description of performance appraisal as a social process and explains some crucial sources of discrimination within. Finally, directions for the development and evaluation of performance appraisal instruments are suggested.

Keywords: Performance, Performance appraisal, Sex discrimination

Sabina Littmann, Renate Schubert

Women in leading positions - is the "Glass Ceiling" Discriminating?

Women's professional careers are often limited due to the so-called "glass ceiling". For men's careers such ceiling does not seem to exist. This is an interesting phenomenon since men's and women's (professional) education seems to become more and more similar. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to investigate reasons for existence and persistence of the glass ceiling, especially for women in leading positions.

A principal reason is given by the fact that employees are hired and promoted according to their expected future productivity. Expectations on the productivity of female managers are heavily influenced by stereotypes concerning women's average productivity. In most cases there is no sufficient empirical evidence to support such stereotypes. One important stereotype is that women are leaving their firms more often than men and mainly due to family reasons. A further stereotype indicates that women are more averse to risk than men. Both stereotypes are without empirical support, especially if female managers are considered. Therefore, a "glass ceiling" has to be classified as discriminating phenomenon.

Keywords: "glass ceiling", labor turnover, risk behavior, statistical discrimination, stereotype

Christel Kumbruck

What is Co-operation? Co-operation in the light of Activity Theory

In this paper the author develops a process-oriented concept of co-operation. It includes four points of view; one is the task orientation, the second the social angle, the third the organizing one and the fourth the communicative perspective. These perspectives are dealt with in industrial psychology, social psychology, organisation science and communication science. Single approaches to co-operation are static. What we need is a development and an integration of these four points of view based on activity theory.

Keywords: Co-operation, activity theory, industrial psychology, trust

Barbara Weißbach

Expert Knowledge and Management Practice: On Micropolitics of Knowledge

As modernization projects approach organizations, the relative superiority of expert knowledge becomes an important issue. At the same time, the need for subjectivity arises to enable decisions and action. This paper delivers a contribution to the understanding of experts' roles in modernization processes. In terms of micropolitics of knowledge, the conditions of the acknowledgement or denial of legitimate knowledge of experts and their power to convince people of their situational definitions will be discussed.

Keywords: expert knowledg, expertrole, Knowledge, Micropolitics