Recognition and Respect (or lack thereof) as predictors of occupational health and well-being"
A positive self-evaluation and a positive evaluation by others

- Constitute basic needs (e.g. Epstein, 1998)
- Self-esteem can be regarded as an indicator of well-being - people with low self-esteem tend to be depressive;
- Social isolation and lack of social support are associated with
  - higher morbidity (Visweswaran et al., 1999) and
  - lower life expectancy (e.g. House, 2001)

We go to great pains to defend their personal esteem and social self-esteem

➢ E.g.,
   a benevolent evaluation of ourselves
Self-evaluation

Question: How good is your performance?
(in comparison to other people doing similar work)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poorest</th>
<th>Middle Range</th>
<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am among the

20% 20% 20% 20% 20%
Selbsteinschätzung

Question: How good is your performance?

about 80% say:

I am among the

<table>
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<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

about 80% say: I am among the Best
“How important was your contribution to the group’s performance?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative feedback</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We go to great pains to defend our personal and social self-esteem...

➢ e.g. Distancing ourselves from others
### Differences in earnings between groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toolroom (&quot;we&quot;)</th>
<th>£69</th>
<th>£68</th>
<th>£67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production (&quot;the others&quot;)</td>
<td>£70</td>
<td>£68</td>
<td>£66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which system does the Toolroom group chose?

We go to great pains to defend our personal and social self-esteem...

e.g., dealing with negative feedback

- People who get good scores in intelligence tests regard such tests as more valid than people with lower values
- People who assume their performance was not very good tend to seek less feedback (although feedback would be especially valuable for poor performers...)
Justice / Fairness
Justice

- **Distributive Justice**
  - Do I get what I deserve?

- **Procedural Justice**
  - Are the rules / procedures fair?
  - Are they applied in impartial way?

- **Interactional Justice**
  - Can I present my views?
  - Am I listened to?
  - Are my concerns taken serious?
Fairness in Organisations

Two plants of the same company
- Similar conditions
- Wages cut by 15% for 10 weeks

Two conditions:
a) Simple announcement
b) Extended, sensitive explanation
Fairness in Organisations:
Quitting during pay cut period

Fairness in Organisations: Cutting wages and petty theft

Human Ressources Policy
Human Resources-Policy and performance

Human Resources-Policy and absenteeism

Satisfaction with leadership-climate and voluntary quitting

Turnover after one year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with leadership climate</th>
<th>++</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Turnover</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incentives for performance
Pay by performance vs. Supervisors’ behavior: Effects on performance (Meta-analysis)

**Production**
- Pay by performance: 39%
- Performance feedback: 41%

**Service**
- Pay by performance: 14%
- Praise, Recognition: 15%

Stress, Well-being, and Health
Stress as Offense to Self (SOS)

**Stress through INsufficiency (SIN)**
- Failure / wrongdoing

**Stress As Disrespect (SAD)**
- „Illegitimate“ behavior: unfair, disrespectful

Stress-Symptoms
Indicators of health / well-being

- Blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease
- Irritation
- Resentments
- Job satisfaction
- Exhaustion
If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... **social stressors** should be especially important because they typically involve (the perception of)
- a lack of fairness,
- a lack of respect
- open or indirect attacks, ridicule, derogation

This is supported by research:
- Social stressors have consistent effects on well-being and health
- Bullying / mobbing as an extreme form of social stressors has dramatic consequences
- Social stressors have a special potential to carry over from work to private life and to preoccupy people („rumination“)
Social stressors and SBP-Recovery
Multilevel-analysis; 240 BP-readings, evening, 40 men

If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... the well-established positive effects of social support

- should be due to the communication of esteem, appreciation, and care ("emotional support")
- even if the type of support provided is instrumental (i.e. tangible help / information)
### Social Support: Behavior vs. Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Esteem / Emotional</th>
<th>Inform. / Instrum.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteem/ Emotional</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform. / Instrum.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stressors, social support by the supervisor, and psychosomatic complaints

Percentage of employees with high psychosomatic complaints*

*upper third

If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... Unfair transactions in the sense of **not being properly rewarded** for one’s input should be especially important
Effort-Reward Balance

Demands
Obligations

Motivation
„(Over-) Engagement“

Effort

Recognition, Support,
Salary, Job prospects,
Job security

Rewards

Fair Balance


http://www.uni-duesseldorf.de/MedicalSociology/eri/theorie.htm#keypublications1
Effort-Reward Imbalance

Demands
Obligations

Motivation
„(Over-) Engagement“

Effort

Rewards

Imbalance: Higher risk for impaired health and well-being
e.g., Cardiovascular disease: 2 to 6 times higher risk


http://www.uni-duesseldorf.de/MedicalSociology/eri/theorie.htm#keypublications1
If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... task assignments that are perceived as **illegitimate** because they are perceived as

- unnecessary
- unreasonable

should be especially important
### „Illegitimate Tasks“
#### Bern Illegitimate Task Scale (BITS)

#### Sample Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 Items, $\alpha = .79 - .90$ in several studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unnecessary Tasks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have to carry out tasks where you keep wondering if ... they make sense? ... they would not have to be done (or could be done with less effort), if things were organized differently?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Illegitimate tasks and Ressentments towards the organization**

**Illegitimate tasks:**
Task appraised as
- unreasonable
- unnecessary

**Ressentiments:**
- Indignation
- Anger
- Unfairness
- Disappointment
- Hurt
- etc.

**Percentage of managers with relatively high ressentiments (upper third):**
- Low: 7%
- Intermediate: 31%
- High: 62%

146 Senior Manager Swiss Company

$r = .48^{***}$
If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... Stressful situation should have a stronger impact when they are perceived as illegitimate

i.e. one blames others for having been exposed to this situation
Illegitimate stressors and feelings of resentment

Multilevel-analysis. Controlled for „stressfulness“ of the situation, age, sex, and a number of work-related stressors and resources.


N = 384 Stress-situations (daily hassles) Low/high illegitimacy: +/- 1 SD
If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... **Social support** that is not given in a way that signals appreciation, understanding, and care

- should be stressful rather than helpful
Dysfunctional Social Support

Items

How many people are in your work environment who do help you in a difficult situation, but...

- ... combine this with reproaches
- ... support you reluctantly
- ... expect infinite thankfulness
- ... do not support in a way that is matter-of-factly
- ... do so with a reproachful tone or gaze
- ... indicate that you should have dealt with the problem yourself

Predicts various stress-symptoms

Scale values: AM = 1.78; SD = .94; α = .93

Response from (1) very few to (7) very many
Undermining of social support by dysfunctional support

Dependent Variable: „Irritation“

Task-related and social stressors are controlled for

Beta_{int} = 0.98*
If recognition and respect are important for health and well-being, then...

... Experiencing appreciation should increase job satisfaction
Appreciation and Job Satisfaction: Cumulative Effects
4 measurements between 1997 and 2002

Job Satisfaction last year (Mean)

No. of measurements with high appreciation (Median split)

423 young people entering the work force

Controlling for
Job satisfaction t1,
Region, sex, occupation

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

Conclusion

Respect and Recognition are important

- for the employee
- for the organisation
Consequences

Communicate appreciation and respect

- through job design
- through organizational policy
- in daily interactions
Appreciation and job design

- Interesting and challenging tasks
- Decision authority
- Good ergonomic design, good tools and machinery
Appreciation and organizational policy

- **Fairness:**
  - Decisions,
  - Procedures,
  - Treatment

- **Information**

- **Involvement of employees in decisions that affect them**
  - «Voice» as element of interactional justice

- **Climate**
  - Support and trust
  - Open communication
Problems and Dilemmata
Appreciation: Problems and dilemmata

It is not always *useful* to avoid a threat to someone‘s self-esteem

- Protecting self-esteem sometimes has to be balanced against other values
  - e.g., Self-esteem protection vs. Learning and development
    - using unambiguously negative feedback / exerting pressure in order to stimulate learning
  - e.g. stopping people who cultivate their own self-esteem at the costs of others

- In such cases, a (temporary) threat to someone‘s self-esteem may be necessary
  - Fine line
  - Has to be done as a result of careful deliberation
    - Not in order to protect one‘s own Ego
    - Not out of momentary emotional reactions
Appreciation: Problems and dilemmata

It is not always possible to avoid a threat to someone’s self-esteem

- Some people are extremely touchy
- Some people clearly overestimate their own competences
- Some measures are a threat to Self for (almost) everybody (e.g. being laid off)

Fine line
- Danger I: Avoiding necessary action (such as negative feedback) in order not to hurt somebody or to provoke conflict
- Danger II: Attribute defensive Reactions prematurely to the person (too touchy, too grandiose self-image)
Appreciation: Problems and dilemmata

It is not always possible nor useful to avoid a threat to someone’s self-esteem

- Protecting people’s self esteem is not simply being nice and avoiding any conflict or confrontation.
- Being tough is likely to be accepted if it goes along with fairness and a basic attitude of respect.
Overall Conclusion

Appreciating people pays off

➢ for the employees
➢ for the organization

Informing managers and leaders about the importance of appreciation and Training them in ways of communicating it is an important aspect of preventing stress and burnout
Stress is to a considerable degree a matter of Human Dignity...
Thank you!