

RESTRUCTURING, ITS APPRAISAL AND EMPLOYEES WELL-BEING: PILOTING THE NEW RESTRUCTURING QUESTIONNAIRE

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Aim

Relationship between restructuring and employees' health, confirmed in a number of studies, depends on a social context in which the restructuring is conducted. Among other countries taking part in PSYRES project, in Poland an implementation of flexicurity system is least advanced. It means that loss of job is related to big difficulties in finding new job and low compensation received during the transitional period. Hence, relationships between restructuring and health in Poland may be particularly explicit. The aim of this study was to gather preliminary information on this relations on the basis of the newly developed questionnaire.

Research questions

1. Do employees who have experienced any kind of restructuring during the last two years have poor well-being in comparison to those employees who have not been affected?
2. Are appraisals of magnitude and significance of changes during restructuring related to employees well-being?
3. Are appraisals of organizational treatment during restructuring related to employees well-being?
4. What are the main mediators/moderators of the restructuring-well-being relationship?

Participants

A cross sectional study was carried out on two samples of organizations: restructured during /and 2010 (58 organizations) and un-restructured during this period (37 organizations). In each organization up to 10 or 20 employees (depending on size of an organization) filled out the questionnaire. In total there were 1381 respondents: 858 from restructured enterprises, and 523 – from un-restructured.

Measures

The new restructuring questionnaire included the following group of variables:

1. *Types of restructuring*
2. *Appraisals of magnitude and significance of change during restructuring* taking into 10 types of changes related to job tasks, superior, team, quantity of work and others.
3. *Appraisals of organizational treatment during restructuring* such as communication and support from management and immediate manager, employees involvement and others
4. *Psychosocial job characteristics*
5. *Individual differences* (including: coping styles, resistance to change)
6. *Well-being* (including negative aspects, e.g. exhaustion, intention to leave, and positive, e.g. engagement, innovative behavior)

Analyses

The associations between restructuring, well-being and psychosocial job characteristics were analyzed by applying ancova (controlled for age, gender and education). The mediations were calculated by series of regression analysis. A sobel test was used to test mediation.

Results

- Respondents who experienced restructuring in 2009 and/or 2010 had: higher work-related stress, lower job satisfaction, lower work ability and higher sickness absences. Moreover, they had higher qualitative demands, higher effort/reward imbalance, higher job insecurity and lower task clarity
- Appraisal of magnitude of change was a good predictor of well-being and perceived job characteristics: for example, it explained 22% of variance of job satisfaction, 8% of variance of work-related stress and 14% of task clarity.
- Five job characteristics (out of 7 tested) were mediators between restructuring and work-related stress. These were: quantitative demands, effort/reward imbalance, job insecurity, work/family conflict and task clarity.

Conclusions

Employees from organizations restructured in 2009 and/or 2010 had lower well being (i.e. lower job satisfaction and work ability, and higher work related stress and sickness absences) than employees from un-restructured organizations during this time. The psychosocial job characteristics are important mediators in the above relationships. It can be concluded that appraisal of magnitude of change during restructuring plays a greater role

as a predictor of well-being (associations with 8 (out of 9) well-being indicators than restructuring as such (associations with 4 well-being indicators).

Groups of variables taken into account in the questionnaire play a significant role as predictors of well-being in restructured organizations. So, a selection of these group of variables was valid, and the questionnaire can be used to analyze the relationship between restructuring and health .

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