

Psychosocial Risk Factors and their Influence on Occupational Health and Well-being

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Abstract:

The structure and nature of the labor market have changed dramatically in recent years and with it workplace characteristics, for which the need to improve working conditions is a collective concern, prompted by both humanitarian and economic reasons. Many studies have demonstrated associations between work-related risk factors and occupational health and well-being using Karasek's stress model. Following this model, the aim of this study was to investigate the effects of work demands and work control (predictors) on occupational health and well-being, and whether interpersonal relationships and equity can moderate the effects of the predictors on occupational health and well-being outcomes. The hypotheses of study state (1) work demands and work control have a significant effect on occupational health and well-being, and (2) interpersonal relationships and equity moderate or 'buffer' these relations. The random sample was composed by 865 teachers and administrative staff from Italian school organizations. The data was tested with questionnaire of 'Rilevazione del Benessere Organizzativo nel Contesto Scolastico'. Hierarchical regression analyses was used to evaluate the effects and moderations, the results supported the direct influence of work demands on psychosomatic disorders, and the direct influence of work control on the three outcomes of occupational health and well-being. The hypothesis of moderator role of interpersonal relationships and equity was rejected, only coworker relationships weakly moderated the relationship between work demands and psychological symptoms. Furthermore, the analysis showed that the interaction demands x control as is proposed by Karasek, only exerted a significant effect on indicators of malaise. In conclusion, work control, interpersonal relationships and equity were good predictors of malaise, well-being and psychosomatic disorders (occupational health and well-being outcomes), and moderating effects were not supported.

Keywords: Psychosocial risk factors, work demands, work control, occupational health, interpersonal relationships, organizational equity, occupational well-being.