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Creating a healthy working environment with leadership: e concept of health-promoting leadership

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, a concept of health-promoting leadership is presented that focuses on the interaction between working environment and leadership behavior. Seven key aspects define health-promoting leadership: health awareness, low workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. The self-assessment version of the questionnaire was used in this study for the first time. Analyzing the data of 299 leaders, the results showed satisfactory reliability and validity coefficients for all dimensions. Structural equation modeling indicates that all dimensions can be assigned on a main factor of health-promoting leadership. The questionnaire offers two main advantages: first, it is possible to measure health-promoting behavior strategies of leaders and thus show their leadership potential. Second, the instrument allows analyzing critical aspects in the working environment and further helps establish basic conditions in the workplace, where a health-promoting workplace can be created.

KEYWORDS

Assessment; health-promoting leadership; leading culture; working environment; health

Introduction

Health has a high value for individuals and for organizations and their employees. One aspect that is able to influence health on the workplace is the quality and way of leadership. The concept of health-promoting leadership – in some cases, the terms healthy, health-relevant or health-specific leadership are used – tries to identify specific components in leadership behavior that are able to influence health and shape a health-promoting working environment.

Different studies show the positive effect of transformational leadership on employee health (e.g. Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012; Munir, Nielsen, & Gomes Carneiro, 2010; Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008). However, approaches to define health-promoting leadership (sometimes, other terms are used: health-relevant

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