
Summaries

Employment implications of downsizing strategies and reorientation practices: an empirical exploration

The aim of this study is to investigate downsizing approaches and their employment implications across several industries in Belgium. Therefore, a categorisation scheme of different downsizing approaches was theoretically developed and validated with a sample of 19 downsizing cases in Belgium-based organisations across a variety of industries. The categorisation scheme represents a two-dimensional model. The first continuum of the model represents the time frame (reactive to proactive) of downsizing strategies, while the second continuum represents the focus of reorientation practices towards the internal or external labour market. Based on this categorisation scheme, a preliminary attempt was made to explore the employment implications. Further, theoretical, managerial and governmental implications are suggested.

Dual commitment to company and labor union

This paper examines whether unionized employees (can) feel committed to their employing organization and their labor union at the same time. Three approaches that have guided dual commitment research in the past decades are reviewed and applied to data collected among two independent samples of union members in the Netherlands. Results revealed that in both samples there is a significant association between organizational commitment and union commitment and that approximately 30% of the members can be classified

as dually committed. However, regression analyses showed virtually no similar antecedents of organizational commitment and union commitment, which argues against the existence of dual commitment. Further analyses revealed that dual commitment depends on the industrial relations climate in an organization. That is, more respondents were simultaneously committed to their employing organization and their union in organizations with a cooperative, rather than an antagonistic industrial relations climate. Implications for unions, management and future research on commitment are discussed.

Rehabilitation of long term sick: Equal chances for all?

The number of people who receive a disability benefit is increasing in the Netherlands. This is why the Dutch government puts more emphasis on starting the rehabilitation of a sick employee as early as possible. The present study investigates whether activities of employers to rehabilitate long term sick employees and the chances for success are the same for all categories of personnel. In this study we interviewed about 120 employers in Small and Medium Enterprises about their activities to enhance the return to work of more than 240 employees who were long term sick in 1997. In the beginning of 1999 we asked which of the activities had proven to be successful.

The results indicate that the activities to stimulate return to work differ somewhat per personnel category. Work adjustments are taken less for women, for employees who are ill because of psychological reasons and for employees who are less motivated (according to their

employer). In spite of this, the chances for successful work resumption are equal for old and young employees, for female and male employees, for employees who are ill because of psychological reasons and because of other reasons and for employees who are less and who are more motivated according to their employer to return to work. Only employees who are well motivated to return to work reintegrate better.

The portrayal of man in sociotechnique

In this article we aim to explicate the presuppositions of Sociotechnical Systems Design (STSD) regarding the nature of human resources and human motivation. Although some claim that STSD handles about 'structure' and not 'people', it is claimed that some assumptions about the nature of human resources cannot be avoided. Regarding the nature of human resources it is argued that rule-breaking and rule-bending qualities are specifically important to STSD. Regarding the nature of human motivation it is argued that human beings are not determined by a fixed number of needs. Different and even contrary motives can be evoked as a consequence of specific characteristics of the social system. It can be stated that human beings are regarding both their potential and their motivation a 'bundle of contradictions'.

The art of mainstreaming. On equal opportunities, European guidelines and the Dutch National Action Plan for Employment 2001

The NAP 2001 outlines the Dutch efforts in the fields of employment, the labour market and education, following the format of the European Employment guidelines 2001. Given the prominent place of both gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities in these guidelines, the NAP 2001 is analysed in order to monitor the Dutch efforts with regard to this twin track approach. It appears there is no clear progress with regard to gender mainstreaming in the 2001 NAP. Despite the growing emphasis on an effective mainstreaming policy, employment initiatives are still mainly framed in general terms without any recognition of the gender issues involved. Gender mainstreaming is not thought of as an important instrument to achieve the twin goals of promoting employment and gender equality. As a result, the NAP 2001 displays the traditional gap between employment policy on the one hand (covered the first three pillars) and equal opportunities policy (covered) by the fourth pillar on the other.