Low skilled work, aging workforce and the multicultural workplace

New challenges for disability management at the workplace in Switzerland?

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why disability management?

1. globalization of work: health, well-being and productivity of workers in all countries

2. trends in global labour markets: aging workforce and shortage of skilled work

3. implementation of disability management policies and programs in a large number of countries

4. disability management contributes to the reduction of absenteeism and health related costs in companies

5. disability management contributes to good leadership, organisational development, and productivity in companies

Does disability management contribute to qualification in an international and multicultural workplace?
overview

_health and the workplace
_labour market
_study design
_simple work/low skilled work
_migrant work
_(new) complexity of disability management
_conclusion
health and the workplace

_general trends_
  – demographic change
  – skills shortage

_increase of work related health issues_
  – mental illness
  – aging workforce
labour market

- shortage of skilled work and demographic change
  - political strategies (SECO)
    - to improve the qualification of those entering the workforce
    - to keep older workers longer at work
  - to improve compatibility of work and family
  - to promote innovation (technical, social)
- focus on
  - improving access to the labour market
  - improving workplace retention (internal labour market)
- challenge for employees, companies, and society
study design

the study “aging workforce and simple work ABEA”
– funded by the strategic initiative “aging society” of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
– from 2015-2017, 240'000 CHF

research question
– How can potentials for employment in the context of simple work and aging in companies be identified and developed?

research perspectives and research team
– work and health: Prof. Dr. Thomas Geisen, Benedikt Hassler, Lea Widmer (School of Social work
– personnel and diversity: Prof. Dr. Nathalie Amstutz, Prof. Dr. guy Ochsenbein, Nadine Wenger, Jasmin Diezi (School of Business FHNW)
– education and qualification: Prof. Dr. Katrin Kraus, Nico Scheidegger, Lia Steiner (School of Education FHNW)
_study design

_research design

– systematic literature review 2000-2015
– secondary analysis of quantitative data for Switzerland (SAKE 2014)
– ABEA1: interviews with CEO/HRM from companies (N=20) and with experts (from unions, social insurances and cooperations) (N=10)
– ABEA2: case studies in companies of the industry and the service sector (N=6), the case studies includes guided in-depth interviews with CEO/HRM (N=6), line-managers (N=12), and focus-group discussions with employees (N=12)
– data-analysis: “qualitative content analysis” (Mayring, 2002)
simple work/low skilled work

_simple work in the industry (Abel et. al. 2014)

– no specialised vocational training
– requires only longer or shorter training on the job
– workplace or work-area related, comprehensive knowledge and background knowledge is not requested or only relevant to a minimum
– the focus is on the work activity and not on the qualification level an employee has (e.g. low qualified workers) or on the conditions of the work (e.g. low wage workers)
simple work/low skilled work

_simple work is a heterogeneous labour market segment_
– highly different fields of activity and very different activities
– Includes qualified and low-qualified workers

_simple work does exist in all economic sectors_
– In the context of qualified activities there are also simple work activities
– Simple work as a result of the labour market segmentation

_extent of simple work_
– no systematic and comprehensive data on simple work in Switzerland
– in Germany: approx. 20% of all employees in 2010 (Abel et al. 2014, 33)
– in Europe: main vocational groups ISCO 5-9 (50%), according qualification ISCED 0-2: 26% (Lyly-Yrjänäinen 2008)
simple work/low skilled work
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_age and simple work_
simple work/low skilled work

_social change: from industrial age to the digital age

_progress in productivity: from industrial age to knowledge-production
– new forms of simple work, e.g. in the service sector (detail trade, cleaning, hostelry, call centre, care work)
– change in functional complexity and autonomy of action in simple work

_trends in simple work
– labour research
  – polarisation thesis (Kern/Schuhmann)
  – theory of segmentation: unstructured labour market segment (Lutz)
  – up-skilling thesis (Voss/Pongratz)
simple work/low skilled work

challenges in simple work
– shortage of qualified labour force and demography (Bellmann et al. 2015)
– continuing education and qualification (Severing/Baethge 2015)
– aging workforce (Dunst 2011)
– health problems (Sanders et al. 2011)
migrant work

_relevance of migrant workers in simple work_
– recruiting strategies in simple work are often directed towards specific groups of migrant workers, e.g. over ethnic and familial networks
– simple work areas are multicultural work areas, with up to 99% of migrant workers

_challenges with the labour force in simple work areas_
– processes of ethnic group building in multicultural work areas
– difficulties with the dominant work place language as a means of communication
– faculty of spoken and written language as an important factor for an occupational career, e.g. for becoming a team leader, getting work with contact to clients
– health problems due to cultural differences, e.g. in understanding health prevention activities
migrant work

_relevance of work in simple work areas for migrant workers_

– migrant workers appreciate the openness of the multicultural workplace in simple work areas

_challenges for migrant workers in simple work areas_

– the multicultural workplace is perceived as a hindrance to learn the workplace language, e.g. more Swiss workers would be of advantage to improve language skills
– origin and language of migrant workers can be perceived as a means for integration and exclusion
– social mobility and occupational success are often perceived as individual and familial life goals
– problem to stick for a long time in simple work
– high aspirations for continuing education and the acquisition of new qualification within simple work but as well to go beyond simple work, e.g. to develop new professional perspectives by vocational education
migrant work

_simple work and migrant workers_
– work area with an high influx of migrant workers
– the simple work areas are multicultural work areas
– companies are confident with their migrant labour forces
– challenges for companies: language, culture, gender
– migrant workers like the openness of the multicultural workplace
– challenges for migrant workers: language skills, culture,
complexity of disability management

- implementation of a DM-system
- organizational development
- case management
- role and process definition

action/interaction

causal conditions
- absenteeism/costs
- health challenges

intervening conditions
- welfare state development
- public discourse

to maintain working ability

consequences

context
- corporate culture
- development of a company
- national/international companies
- market position
- personal factors

training, education and learning
- cost reduction
- RTW
- outplacement
- image
conclusion

_simple work as a work activity
– activity related perspective on gainful employment
– socially stable segment of the labour market
– sectoral comprehensive relevance

_migrant workers need support
– in workplace integration
– by disability management
– in continuing and vocational education

_sustainability in disability management
– by health promotion, prevention and support in health integration
– by providing training, education and learning
Thank you very much!