

Managing the work environment: Meaning of company size and work organisation

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Introduction

- Developments regarding management of the work environment
 - regulations and policies risk and safety, work load and stress, bullying and equality
- A need to understand more about about how regulations and policies are put into practice and what factors that contributes to successful work environment management
- Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise (SAWEE) – Annette Nylund
- Two parallell studies



Aim and research questions

- **Purpose:** to identify academic articles that highlight the relationship between work environment management and company size, and between work environment management and work organisation in the business community
 - How is work environment management described in relation to company size? What differences are identified between small, medium-sized and large companies, if any?
 - How is work environment management described in relation to work organisation? Does the way in which work is organised create different conditions for the company's work environment management?

Method

- Systematic review of scientific articles, focus on results
- 53 articles identified
 - Quite even distribution of quantitative and qualitative methods
 - Peer-reviewed, from 2000 and onwards
 - Nordic countries, Europe, few others
- 31 related to company size
- 22 related to work organisation

Results on the meaning of company size

How is work environment management described in relation to company size? What differences are identified between small, medium-sized and large companies, if any?

- Often more structured and systematic in larger companies
- More investments of health promotion activities in larger companies
- ...but not only company size decides the quality
- Small companies
 - Lack of implementation of work environment legislation
 - Lack of resources
 - A diversified group, a need of adapted strategies

Results on the meaning of work organisation

How is work environment management described in relation to work organisation? Does the way in which work is organised create different conditions for the company's work environment management?

- Learning at group and at organisational level is important
 - Good examples of learning: learning in networks, competence development
 - ...and examples of lack of learning: lack of information, not learning from incidents
- Cultural aspects such as safety culture development – knowledge transfer
- Employee participation important in change processes made to enhance work environment management
 - Successful strategies: makes visible positive results for everybody concerned, involves employees that is affected by the change, openness to identify problems

Conclusions

Company size

- Company size is a significant aspect...
 - Implementation of work environment legislation
 - Investments in health promotion activities
 - Investments in occupational health services
- ...but there are also other important aspects
 - Industry, economy, external context, organisational structure and culture
- Small companies are different from each other

Work organisation

- Learning processes at group and organisational level are important
 - Network based learning
 - Competence development
 - Safety culture
- Employee participation and involvement at all organisational levels are important
 - Employees and managers
 - Autonomy
 - Commitment

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