Call for Papers for Special issue of Applied Psychology: An International Review

Topic: Inclusion of people with limitations in organisational contexts

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Background

Diversity and inclusion have been popular topics for organisations in the last decades (Roberson, Ryan, & Ragins, 2017). However, most attention focusses on topics such as age, gender, and ethnicity, while the issue of diversity in capacity has hardly received any attention in the I/O literature. This is surprising, given that the group of people with some kind of functional limitation according to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is growing. This group encompasses not only people with disabilities, but also people with low intellectual abilities, people with chronic diseases (limiting their energy investment), employees who try to return-to-work after long-term absence, and people with mental health issues (see ICF; WHO, 2002). All these groups have in common that their functioning is to some extent limited, but they are not without capacity to work (Vornholt et al., 2018). Organisations tend to focus on recruiting the strongest, healthiest, youngest employees. Therefore, topics related to (re)integrating people with reduced, or limited capacity to work (i.e. disabilities, rehabilitation, reintegration, and return-to-work) deserve wider attention in the I/O literature.

In their strategy plan 2010-2020 the European Union expected that by 2020, one-fifth of the EU population would have some form of disability, or issue that would limit them in functioning (https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1137). The EU and its member states are therefore committed to improving the social and economic situation of people with disabilities. To be a full member of society generally implies being able to earn one’s own income, which means having a job. However, according the OECD (2018) and Eurobarometer (2019), people with a disability, or mental health issue are underrepresented
in employment (statistics vary somewhat per country, but the range is roughly around 40% of people with a disability, versus over 80% of people without disability are employed). Despite their functional limitations, they also want to work and participate in society. There is a clear societal responsibility to include these people in society, and many organisations are willing to accept their societal responsibility. Therefore, an important question is how can we facilitate and stimulate employment of these groups? And how can organisations be supported to fulfil their societal responsibility?

At the same time, organisations are confronted with a number of challenges concerning their workforce (both pre Covid-19 and after Covid-19). Challenges are amongst others an aging workforce with a growing prevalence of chronic health conditions, while the age of retirement is increasing; and also increasing complaints of high work pressure and mental health issues among staff (OECD, 2014, 2018; Eurofound, 2016; Peiro & Medina, 2020) that are threatening the sustainable employment of staff (Fleuren et al., 2018). This makes topics like ‘workplace reintegration’ and ‘return-to-work’ more relevant for organisations (D’Amato, & Zijlstra, 2010; Hoefsmit, Houkes, & Nijhuis, 2012). It has been shown, for example, that employees with previous or current cancers have an increased risk of physical and psychosocial problems after returning to work, such as reduced workability (Duijts et al., 2014), and early retirement (Carlsen et al., 2008). Lack of support within organisations might result in turnover and premature labour market exit of people (Roberson et al., 2017). In addition, HRM practices can be instrumental in managing diversity and promoting inclusivity in the workplace (Arenas, Di Marco, Munduate, & Euwema, 2017; Nevala, et al., 2019).

Therefore, relevant questions are what can (and should) organisations do to stimulate inclusion and participation of people with diverse capacities? What kind of organisational practices are useful, and can organisations also benefit from hiring people with limitations in their functional capacities?

These questions are underrepresented in the I/O literature (Vornholt et al., 2018), thus more research in this area is needed. With this special issue, we want to bring this topic to the
attention of the Psychology community, and stimulate and bring together authors that have already done work that is relevant for this area.

The Call for papers

Based on the fore mentioned gaps in the field, the aim of this special issue is to bring together research concerning the inclusion and participation of people with functional limitations in organisational settings, including research that compares best practices in various countries, industrial sectors, organisational types, and forms of employment. We welcome systematic reviews, conceptual and empirical contributions employing qualitative or quantitative methods. The articles in this special issue can address different topics concerning people with functional limitations (disabilities, chronic illnesses or, for example mental health issues) in relation to work.

We invite manuscripts that address, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Which organisational policies have been effective in increasing inclusion of employees with functional limitations?
- Which organisational factors are important in attracting and retaining employees with limitations?
- What types of support can be helpful for employees with limitations?
- What kind of solutions can job (re)design provide?
- What are the career paths and needs of employees with limited capabilities?
- Which interventions are available?

Abstracts

Abstracts (between 250 – 300 words) detailing the aims of the paper, main findings and implications should be submitted by March 1st, 2021, via the Submission portal of Applied Psychology: An International Review. Authors will receive feedback on their abstract by June 2021. The deadline for full papers is December, 1st, 2021.
Questions concerning suitability of the paper and other questions can be sent to one of the guest-editors:

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References


Hoefsmit, N., Houkes, I., Nijhuis, F.J.N. (2012). Intervention characteristics that facilitate return to work after sickness absence: a systematic literature review. Journal of


