

Analysis of Collective Action Regulation and Cooperation-Relevant Attitudes in Industrial Group Work

Wolfgang G. Weber & Bettina Lampert

Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck / Institut für Psychologie

ABSTRACT

In this article, a conceptual framework of collective action regulation in industrial work groups will be presented which is based on action regulation theory and related approaches. We state that collective regulation requirements resulting from collective planning and decision-making autonomy of work groups will be positively associated with the group members' common task orientation, cooperative attitudes, work means and stores of knowledge (collective objectifications) developed and shared by the group members. Further, we report the results of a first test of the inter-rater reliability of a measurement method based on a condition-related observation interview that can be used to analyze and evaluate the structure of collective action regulation in industrial work groups considering psychological criteria for quality of work life. Findings of two cross-sectional field studies testing the hypothetical framework are reported. In total, 51 groups from three enterprises (automotive industry, engine manufacturing, tool manufacturing) in three German-speaking countries were analyzed using semi-standardized observation-interviews. Furthermore, 235 members from 28 of these groups in various production departments were interviewed applying standardized self-report scales. Results show that a high level of required planning and decision-making, together with joint thinking and communication, is positively associated with several cooperation-supporting attitudes as well as with the number of collective objectifications. Though, findings concerning a hypothesized relation between collective regulation requirements and common task orientation are inconsistent. High time pressure seems to act as a moderator.

Keywords

action theory – activity theory – socio-technical systems – cooperation – job analysis – self-managing work groups – attitudes