

Participation at setting performance goals – A cross-sectional study on self-reported control, objective control and vital exhaustion

Johannes Hoppe, Florian Schweden & Renate Rau

Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Department of Psychology

ABSTRACT

Management by objectives is widely used and very popular in company practice. However, if performance goals are used as a tool of control from above, negative effects can be a consequence. A cross-sectional field study was conducted to test the hypotheses. The sample consisted of 275 employees of a bank and a public service provider. We measured control the job provides by expert-ratings. The perception of control, vital exhaustion as well as the goal source (imposed versus participatively set) were measured with self-reports. Factorial variance analyses were used to identify main effects and interactions. In jobs that offer a high level of objective control and that have imposed performance goals, employees report a vital exhaustion sum score of $m = 18.88$, which is twice as high as in jobs that offer a high level of objective control but have participatively set performance goals ($m = 9.34$). We conclude that participation at setting performance goals can help to adapt the performance goal to individual performance requisites of employees. Through participation at goal setting performance goals do not limit control and avoid vital exhaustion.

Keywords

Goal setting – management by objectives – task design – control – mental strain