

NIJMEGEN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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Workplace Innovation: history, definitions, programmes, theories

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Definitions 1

- **Workplace innovations** are new and combined interventions in work organisation, human resource management and supportive technologies.
- **Workplace innovation**
 - is a process of productive reflection as part of everyday working life,
 - derives from interaction between stakeholders within and outside the organisation,
 - builds bridges between the strategic knowledge of the leadership, the professional and tacit knowledge of frontline employees and organisational design knowledge of experts,
 - Works towards win-win outcomes as a creative convergence rather than a trade-off



Definitions 2

- **Performance**: productivity, innovation capability
- **QWL**: learning opportunities, wellbeing at work,
- Related concepts:
- **Non technological innovation** (EUROSTAT) including business models, marketing practices, collaboration in chain; no QWL
- **New World of Work** refers in particular to mobile work, independent of location and time, supported by ICT.
- **Working smarter**, as opposed to working harder
- **High performance/involvement workplaces**
- **Innovative Workplaces** (OECD, EESC)
- **Sustainable Work Systems** (Sweden)



Urgency workplace innovation

- Decreasing workforce – increasing labour productivity
- Global competition and knowledge based economy – development of competences and skills
- Making new technology work through innovative work organisation
- Workplace innovation explains a larger part of innovation success than technological innovation
- **National programmes** in Finland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, UK, Ireland, Sweden
- Governance roles of govt, soc partners and research differ



Promises

- Workplace Innovation claims simultaneous improvement of organisational performance (in particular productivity and innovation capabilities) and quality of working life (learning opportunities, wellbeing, stress prevention).
- These claims are supported by a number of theories, of which the most important ones will be addressed.



Best and poorest performers in Finland (409 self assessments)

		Quality of working life	
		+	-
Performance	+	Best group 152 projects participation internal collaboration	
	-		Poorest group 31 projects top-down interventions

Source: Ramstad, 2009



History collaboration in Europe

- Green Paper Work Organisation 1997
- 'High Road' report 2002 (Totterdill, Dhondt et al.)
- European Work Organisation Network (DG EMPL)
- WORK IN NET (FP6; Zettel, Alasoini, Abrahamsson et al.)
- Sustainable Work, Stockholm 2009 (FAS, VINNOVA)
- Launch Social Innovation Europe 2011 incl workplace
- Connection with OSH (EUROFOUND and EU OSHA)
- Dortmund Brussels Position Paper
- Workplace Innovation in Industrial Policy and Innovation Policy DG ENTR, 10 October 2012
- Launch EUWIN 10 April 2013 (DG ENTR)

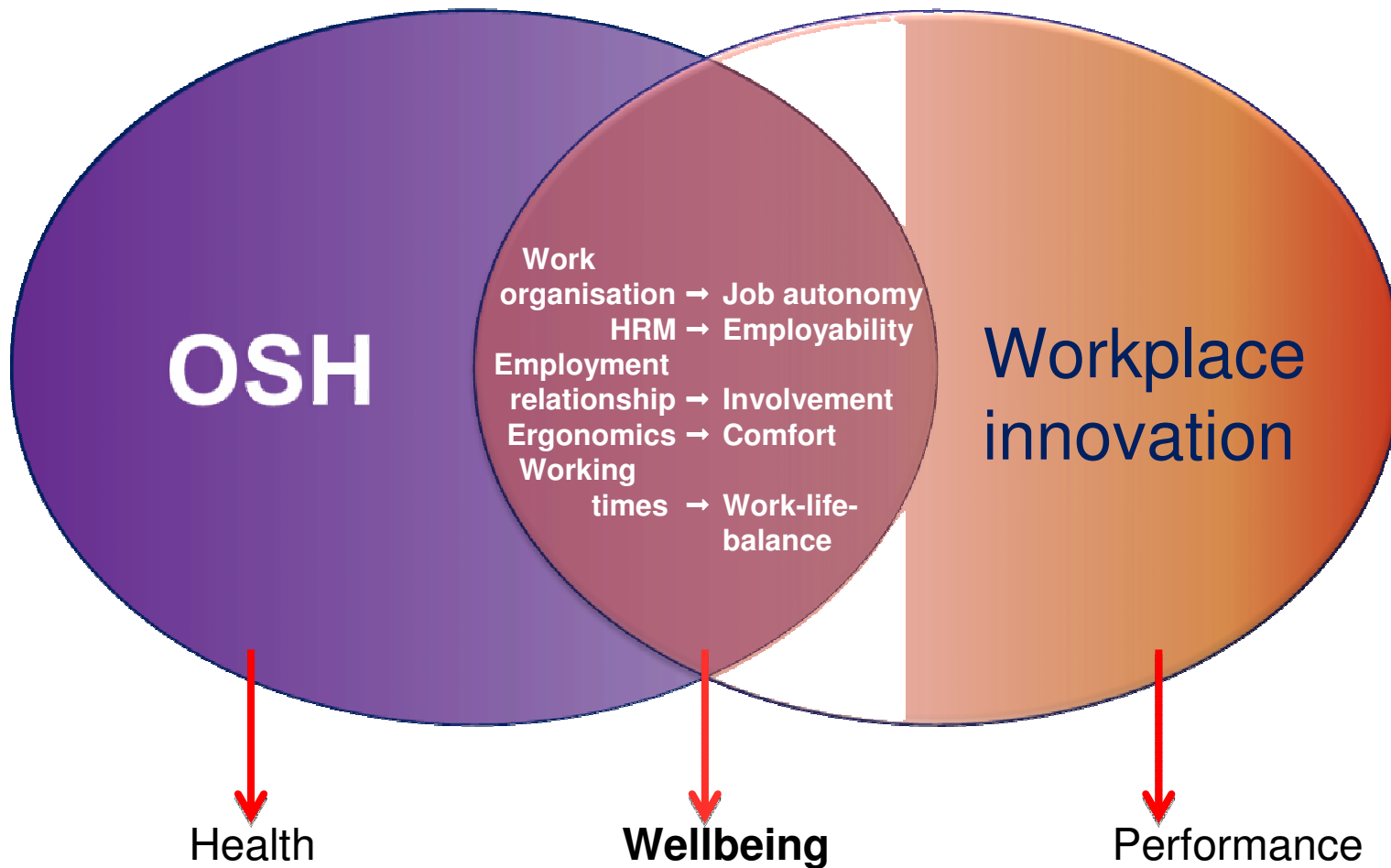


Connection with EU2020 Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

- Smart, by: 'Flagship initiative Innovation Union'
- Sustainable, by: 'Industrial policy for the globalisation era'
- Inclusive, by: 'Flagship initiative for new skills and jobs'
- Wellbeing on societal and individual levels, by: 'Social Innovation Europe'
- Workplace innovation integrates these objectives on the level of organisations: working smarter with less CO2-emission, developing skills and competences and improving organisational performance and job quality, creating wellbeing.
- This opportunity was recently recognized by the Commission: European Workplace Innovation Network



Overlap of OSH and workplace innovation



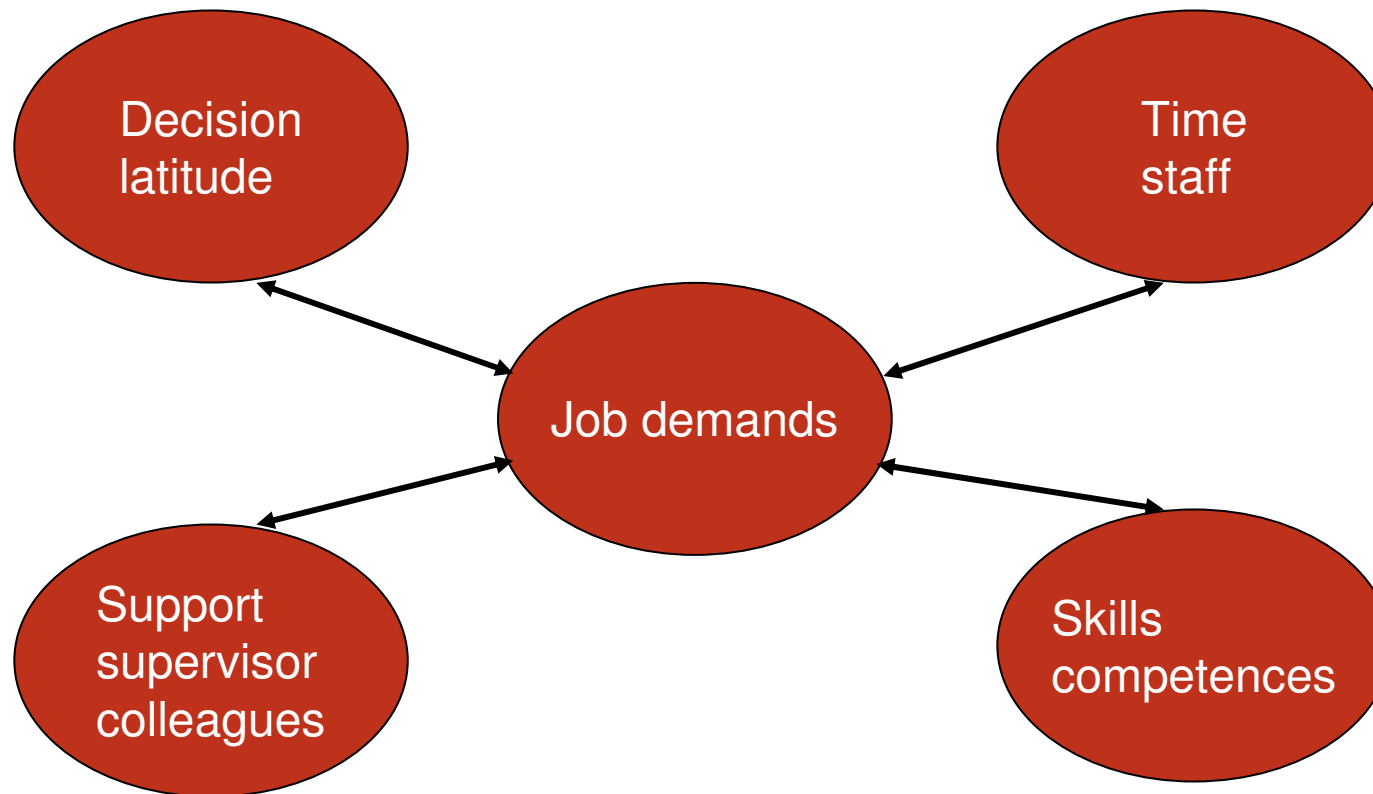


Ergonomics

- Workplace ergonomics serves not only as the objective of reduction of physical workload (allowing better postures and movements; reducing lifting) and health promotion (physical exercise) but also that of productivity (easier and faster handling and processing; better lay-out)
- Ergonomics is an important field of interventions both for OSH and for workplace innovation

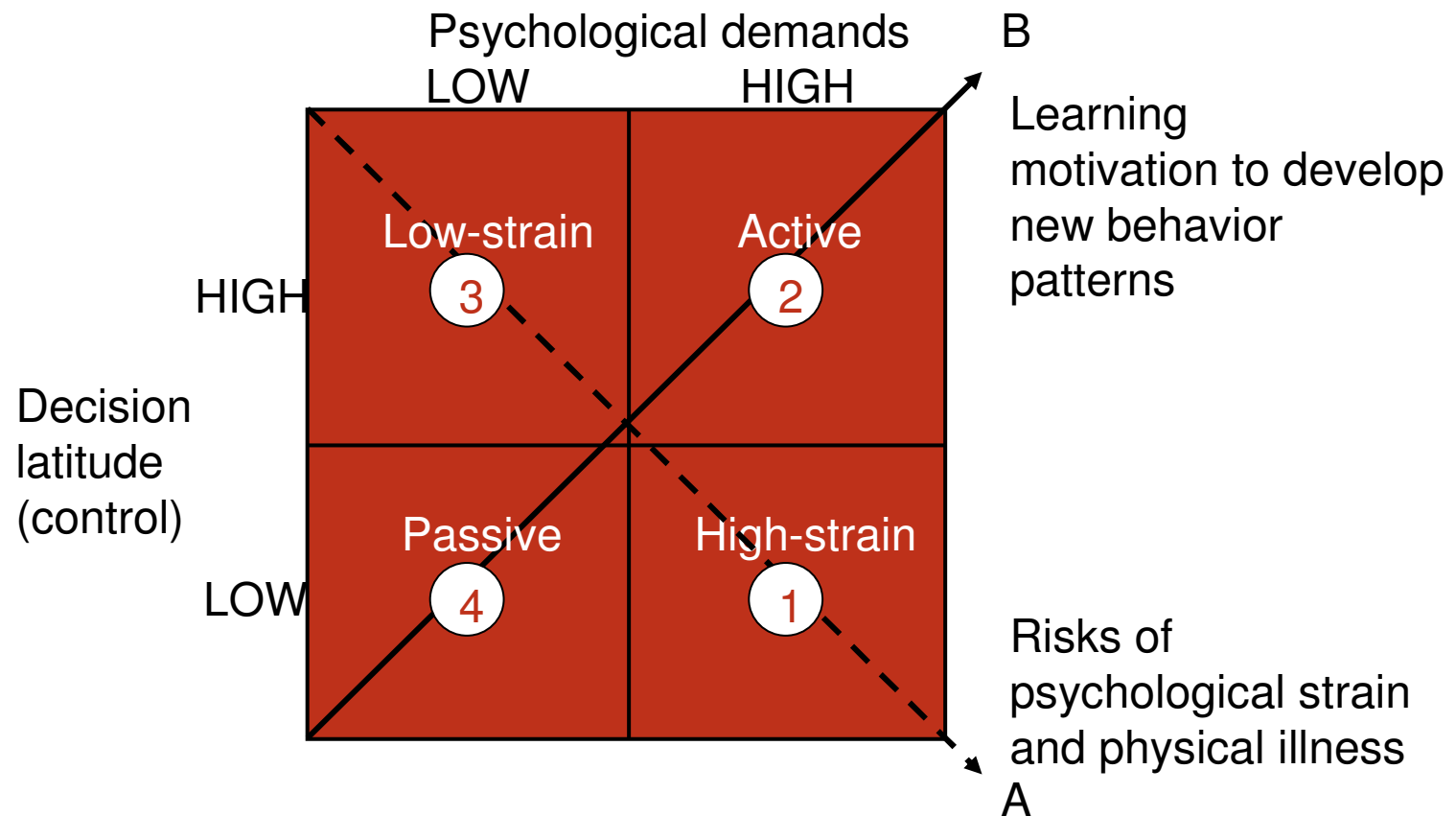


Discrepancies in the work organisation: stress risks and impediments to performance





Psychological demands/decision latitude model





Modern Sociotechnology

- From complex organisations with simple jobs to simple organisations with complex jobs
- Internal (job autonomy) and external control capacity (direct worker involvement/influence/consultation and formal co-determination)
- Simultaneous improvement of organisational performance, QWL/wellbeing and quality of work relations
- Sources: Ulbo de Sitter et al. 1981, 1994, 1997; Pot et al., 1994; Van Hootegem et al., 2008



Work organisation and learning

- Concept 'active jobs' in job demands/control-model implies job autonomy (internal control capacity) related to single loop learning: are we doing things rightly
- Even more important is external control capacity (decisions about work organisation and targets) related to double loop learning: are we doing the right things.
- Sources: modern sociotechnology, JDC-model, Argyris & Schön, 1978



More theories

- Democratic dialogue
- Configurational approach of SHRM
- Human capital theory
- Social capital theory
- Engagement theory
- Leadership theories
- Resource based view; dynamic capabilities
- Absorptive capacity
- Innovative firm
- Open innovation
- Etc.

Conclusions

- Urgency to increase labour productivity by working smarter
- All research shows wide variety of better performance, to be shown in session 3 of today
- Simultaneous improvement of performance and quality of working life is possible but not always achieved
- Conditions:
 - Commitment of management
 - Participation of employees and their supervisors
- National and international coordination helpful
- HELIX collaboration essential (organisations, social partners, government, researchers)