

EWOP.ΣPRACTICE

European Work and Organizational Psychology in Practice

e-journal of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP)

ISSUE 6/2014



ISSUE 6/2014

Contents

Editorial	3
Asta Medisauskaite, Caroline Kamau & Aukse Endriulaitiene	
Activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype during job candidate selection: What is the role of the recruiter’s own characteristics?	6
Sarah Brooks	26
Understanding workplace voice and silence	
Kieran Duignan	39
The Amsterdam Effect - Report from EAWOP’s 2nd WorkLab, 2013	
Martha Knox-Haly, Timothy C. Bednall & Fay Walker	47
Building employee resilience: The impact of a workplace training seminar series designed to enhance positive psychological capabilities	
Matic Kadliček	63
Slovenian Psychologists’ Association: A new EAWOP Constituent Member	
Despoina Xanthopoulou & Ioannis Nikolaou	70
The Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS)	

Copyright information: copyright of articles published in EWOP in PRACTICE belongs to the author(s).

Hello readers

Welcome to the 6th issue of EWOP In-PRACTICE with papers on the application of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP). I am delighted to say that we are receiving more material for the journal and I am sure this has been boosted by the excellent EAWOP congress in Munster and another successful WorkLab held in Amsterdam (for a participant's review see pages 38 to 45 of this issue).

This edition offers six excellent articles representing a wide range of WOP practice. The edition opens with a thought provoking article about how bias can affect recruiters' decisions in selection. Little has been written in WOP about the stereotype "What is beautiful is good" and this topic is explored in-depth by *Asta Medisauskaite and Caroline Kamau* (Birkbeck College, London University) and *Aukse Endriulaitiene* (University of Vytautas Magnus, Lithuania). In particular, this article explores the interaction of the recruiter's characteristics with that of the candidates. Next, we have an excellent account examining the topics of voice and silence

in the workplace. Sarah Brooks (the University of Sheffield) explores how managers hear (and don't hear) about information vital to organizational performance and considers what stops employees expressing what they think. This intriguing area of practice will be the topic of our **3rd WorkLab to be held 13-15 November, 2014 in Vilnius, Lithuania** (visit the [site](#)). In order to whet your appetite to attend the next WorkLab Kieran Duignan offers a participant's view of the particular brand that is the EAWOP WorkLab.

Next, *Martha Knox-Haly* and her colleagues from the University of New South Wales and the University of Sidney describe the further development of employee resilience by workplace training. There is a good deal of interest in the topic of workplace resilience at present. Martha and her colleagues offer a clear description of an intervention aimed to build employee resilience and offer a balanced evaluation of the training. Not only is this an interesting and practical account; it demonstrates the

value of In-Practice in being able to represent the application of WOP in wider contexts.

The final articles are accounts of the activities of two of the new Constituent Associations elected at the last EAWOP General Assembly. First, *Matic Kadliček*

offers us a pictorial summary of the activities of the Slovenian Psychologists Association (SPA). He describes changes in the Association when one of the largest groups of psychologists left to form their own association. Several years later SPA is developing strongly and has been working with EFPA's Board of Ethics to develop a Model Code of Ethics. The issues occupying the Association's agenda are of interest to all WOPs and we will enjoy hearing SPA's progress in these areas at the next Constituent Council meeting in Oslo (June 6, 2014). This article is followed by *Despoina Xanthopoulou* and *Ioannis Nikolaou's* account of the Hellenic Psychological Association (HPA) and their many activities. It is delightful to hear from new Constituents and In-Practice would welcome input from any of the other Constituents; new and old. Ioannis is the current Constituent Co-ordinator on EAWOP's Executive Committee and he

would support and advise you to develop material for publication.

These papers will cause you to pause and reflect on your own and others' practice and how knowledge, attitudes and behaviours can be developed to enhance day-to-day working activities enabling them to be more effective. I would like to thank the authors for their valuable contributions to in-Practice and look forward to further papers being presented in our next editions.

Hopefully these articles will inspire you reflect and comment. Please contact the authors directly by email to continue the discussion; or use EAWOP's LinkedIn Group again with the author's permission). I will ask the authors to summarise these discussions for you to be published in the next edition of In-Practice.

In-Practice is a journal that is for you, the EAWOP Practitioner; and also made by you. Think about writing for the journal yourself. The philosophy of the journal is to publish papers about the practice of WOP. We are interested in articles describing practices, procedures, tools, or even changes in organizational procedures stimulated by shifts in national economies and organizational

processes. Some of these activities are successful while others may not be. We are as interested in what did not work well and reflection why this may be; as well as those projects that are successful. We will only learn as a community if we examine all aspects of practice.

Are you an expert in Management Development? Leadership? Empowerment interventions? Is there a project that you have led, or contributed to, that you would like to share with others? Here you can find the right place to present and discuss these types of experiences. As for length, a two-three page contribution is perfectly OK; or more if you wish.



Dr. Angela Carter
Editor EWOP In-PRACTICE
a.carter@sheffield.ac.uk

The format for the papers is described in the style guide associated with this page. If you would like to discuss your ideas for a contribution or send me an outline I would be happy to comment on this and assist in its preparation. Helen Baron is the Practitioner Co-ordinator on EAWOP's Executive Committee and she would be delighted to hear from you about any further practitioner activities you think EAWOP should undertake.

Best wishes for the coming year. Enjoy this issue of In-Practice and ... don't forget ... I look forward to your contribution.

Activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype during job candidate selection: What is the role of the recruiter’s own characteristics?

Asta Medisauskaite &
Caroline Kamau
Birkbeck College
University of London, UK



Aukse Endriulaitiene
University of Vytautas Magnus, Lithuania
asta.medisausk@gmail.com

About the authors

Asta Medisauskaite holds a Master’s degree in Organizational Psychology and her research interests include social categorisation, interpersonal perception and judgment. Dr. Caroline Kamau is a lecturer in Organizational Psychology and her research interests are group processes and social cognition in organizations. Prof. Dr. Aukse Endriulaitiene is an Associate Professor at University of Vytautas Magnus, Lithuania and her research interests are risky behaviour, leadership and organizational commitment.

Abstract

When a recruiter is assessing a large number of job candidates, the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” can be used as a cognitive shortcut towards a quick decision. Previous literature has not explained the role of individual differences among recruiters. This article is drawing a possible connection between

activation of the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” and recruiters’ ideological attitudes, personality, their own physical attractiveness, and their socio-demographic characteristics. Understanding these relations could help to improve selection processes by reducing bias in hiring decisions based on stereotypical thinking. Recruitment staff should be trained about social cognition and Human Resource (HR) departments should establish protocols and policies that anonymise job applicants. HR departments should commission psychometric testing to evaluate personality/ideological attitudes of potential would-be recruitment staff and gain advice about the implications of staff test scores.

Introduction

The purpose of the hiring process is to select the most appropriate candidate for the job and the organization. When there are a large number of potential job

candidates and limited time resources, recruiters have to obtain the information they need quickly to help them make a decision. Unfortunately, stereotypes such as the physical attractiveness of job candidates become important cognitive resources used by the interviewer to make an assumption about how well a given candidate will suit the job (Desrumaux, Bosscher, & Leoni, 2009). Desrumaux and colleagues (2009) revealed that candidates' physical attractiveness influenced decisions about their 'hireability': attractive candidates were evaluated as possessing more job-relevant qualities and were more often selected for the job.

Stereotypes are prejudices or beliefs about the characteristics of people from a particular group of individuals, who are seen as sharing the same attributes (Fiske & Macrae, 2012, p. 76). Stereotypes can be positive or negative beliefs. For instance, negative gender stereotypes suggest that women are worse at mathematics than men, whereas positive gender stereotyping suggests that women leaders are better at nurturing team cohesion than male leaders. Consequently, stereotyping creates a feeling that a recruiter knows what a candidate is like and if they will

suit the organization. This assumption becomes problematic if there is a mismatch between the candidate's actual traits and abilities and those suggested by the stereotype; the attractive candidate receives an undue privilege and the less attractive candidate is deprived of an opportunity.

The stereotype that "What is beautiful is good" exists and is pervasive in human consciousness (Lorenzo, Biesanz, & Human, 2010) involving the belief that physically attractive people possess other positive characteristics, for example, that they are also reliable, trustworthy, and efficient. Based on this stereotype, less attractive individuals could be discriminated against in work-related situations, including during the candidate selection process. Researchers have shown that physically attractive people receive more favourable treatment during hiring, promotion, assignment of pay and benefits, and they are also evaluated more positively by managers (Harper, 2000; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Langlois et al., 2000; Mobious & Rosenblat, 2006). Söderlund and Julander (2009) suggest that a worker's attractiveness is also related to better performance evaluations and even higher customer satisfaction. Even though less

physically attractive individuals face negative outcomes in a variety of work-related situations, the discrimination they face during the hiring decision-making process is one of the most serious outcomes of the stereotype that “What is beautiful is good”. Discrimination during the selection process can cut-off or even delay the possibility of less physically attractive individuals entering the labour market.

Although many studies have demonstrated a strong effect of physical appearance on hiring decisions, previous literature is limited in not having explained the role of individual differences among recruiters (Desrumaux et al., 2009) or the complex interactions between the factors involved. Recruiters vary in personality, physical attractiveness, ideology, gender, age and other ways; and so their own characteristics can work as a reference-point when it comes to judging candidates’ attractiveness and applying (or not applying) the stereotype that “What is beautiful is good”. Further, recruiters’ own characteristics could cognitively reinforce or reduce the effect of the stereotype that “What is beautiful is good” and determine how favourable their attitude is toward a physically attractive job candidate. Taking this into

consideration, the current article focuses on the role of recruiters’ characteristics in the activation of stereotypes about physically attractive job candidates. The purpose of this article is to review previous literature about the topic and extrapolate research findings which reveal how different sorts of social characteristics influence the activation of the stereotype that “What is beautiful is good” and its consequences for a hiring decision.

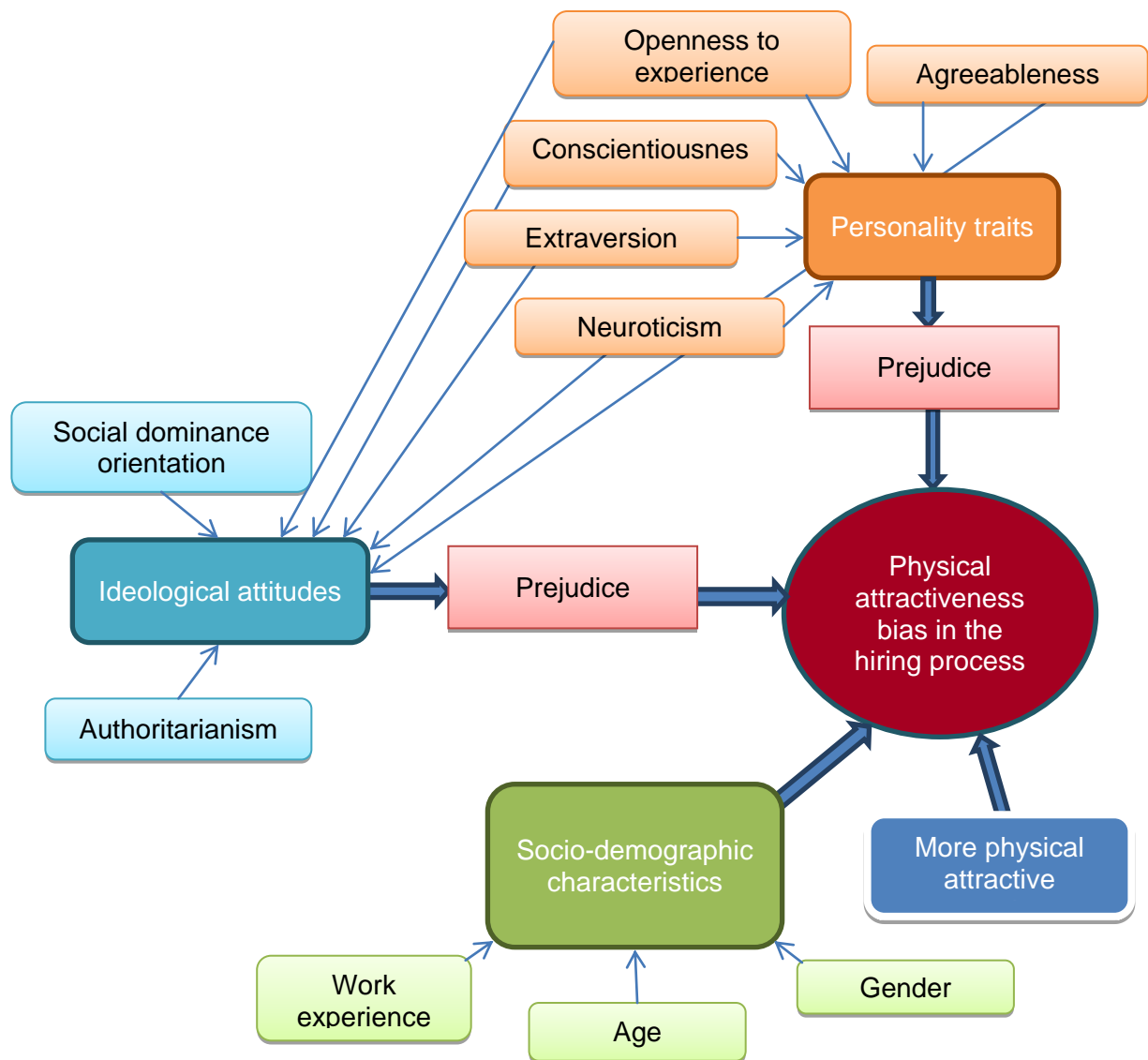
Overview

This article focuses on four types of recruiter characteristics: a) the recruiter’s personal beliefs (e.g., authoritarian ideology, social dominance orientation); b) characteristics of the recruiter’s personality traits (e.g., extraversion, conscientiousness); c) the recruiter’s socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, and employment experience); and d) the concerns the recruiter has over his/her own physical attractiveness. Figure 1 below shows the pattern of relationships between these four sets of recruiter characteristics and bias towards physically attractive job candidates during the hiring process. These factors play a primary role in the process of evaluating others and determining the level of prejudice held against particular groups

(Agthe, Spörrle, & Maner, 2011; Cohrs, Kampfe-Hargrave, & Riemann, 2012; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; Foos & Clark, 2011; Haas & Gregory, 2005;

Marlowe, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996; McFarland, 2010; Senior, Thomson, Badger, & Butler, 2007).

Figure 1: Factors shaping the activation of the stereotype that “What is beautiful is good”



The role of the recruiter's ideological attitudes activating the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype

People hold certain beliefs or ideological attitudes which shape their perception of their surrounding world (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). In recent years, researchers have been especially interested in two kinds of ideological attitudes: authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (McFarland, 2010; Cohrs et al., 2012). Authoritarianism involves believing in submission to authority, convention, and is negatively related to the idea of democracy (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 2004). Social dominance orientation involves believing in group-based hierarchies, inequality between individuals, and social power (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Research shows that these ideological attitudes are closely related to prejudice and can have the impact of shaping discriminative decisions against particular groups (Altemeyer, 2004; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009).

Even though some authors analyse ideological attitudes as personality traits we distinguish between these two types of characteristics. Duckitt and Sibley

(2010) pointed out that ideological attitudes should not be conflated with personality traits because ideological attitudes reflect social attitudes and beliefs and do not describe reactions and behaviours like personality traits do. Also, it should be noted that authoritarianism and social dominance orientation can change over time, contrary to personality traits that are relatively stable in adulthood (McCrae & Costa, 2008).

In terms of ideological attitudes, there are some typologies. First, *right-wing authoritarianism* (RWA) was described by Altemeyer (1981) and subsequent research showed that such authoritarianism relates to being prejudiced (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Individuals high in RWA can be described as being politically conservative; they value traditional norms and stability. They also tend to be rigid and inflexible, and considering only their own values and moral rules over those of others (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Having an authoritarian attitude makes an individual perceive the world as a dangerous place to live in and they feel the need for social order that will create stability and security. As a result, individuals high in RWA tend to discriminate against other people who are

perceived as socially threatening as these characteristics do not conform to accepted social norms (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Mazeikiene & Sulcaite, 2010; McFarland, 2010). Cohrs and colleagues (2012) and McFarland (2010) found that scores in RWA relate to general prejudice (e.g., sexism, homophobia, extreme in-group patriotism, prejudice toward foreigners and against disabled people).

There is little variation in how people evaluate others' level of attractiveness; researchers have found a considerable degree of consensus in how different people rate others' attractiveness (Langlois et al., 2000). Recruiters who hold authoritarian ideologies can therefore evaluate job candidates who are low in physical attractiveness as deviants from the norm who are lower in the societal pecking order and consequently not worth being hired. In addition, a study by Swami et al. (2011) showed that individuals high in RWA have a narrower idea of what is beautiful; for example, they were less likely to judge people with a facial piercing positively, compared to individuals low in RWA. This phenomenon is likely extends to other 'unusual' aspects of a candidate's

physical appearance, such as non-normative weight, height or clothing style.

A second, important, type of ideological attitude is *social dominance orientation* (SDO). This is the tendency to justify unequal social outcomes as inevitable consequence of the social hierarchy (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; McFarland, 2010; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009). Social dominance believers are not very agreeable, are tough-minded and they pursue their own interests; they also value dominance as well as personal and group power (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Their attitude about the world is that the strong survive and the weak lose and they see the world as a competitive place dominated by some and having a hierarchical social order. It is not surprising that SDO, which justifies inequality between groups, relates to prejudiced decision-making (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Taking into account the fact that people tend to divide other people into separate groups based on their physical appearance (Gulas & McKeage, 2000), the propensity to discriminate against others could be especially important in determining someone's use of such categorisation. A recruiter's SDO can shape their categorisation of job candidates on the

basis of their physical attractiveness and this categorisation then becomes the basis for the decision about the applicants' suitability for the job.

It is also worth noting that individuals high in SDO express negative feelings toward people in low status groups (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Considering that physically less attractive individuals are judged as having a lower status (Anderson, John, Ketner, & Kring, 2001; Senior et al., 2007), this view could explain why individuals high in SDO tend to evaluate less physically attractive candidates as having less positive attributes (Asbrock, Sibley, & Duckitt, 2010). Therefore, a recruiter high in SDO can make a more negative selection decisions toward individuals that they judge to be less attractive.

To summarise, individuals high in RWA express negative attitudes toward people who deviate from social norms (Asbrock et al., 2010; Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; McFarland, 2010). Recruiters high in RWA are likely to judge job candidates low in physical attractiveness as people who are not the 'norm' and who, therefore, are not worthy of the job. SDO relates to prejudice against people who belong to groups judged as being lower in the social

pecking order (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). That includes people who are categorised as being less physically attractive (Asbrock et al., 2010). Therefore, recruiters high in SDO are likely to categorise job candidates as being high/low in the social order on the basis of their physical attractiveness and, following that, to feel prejudiced against those candidates who are 'low' in the social hierarchy.

The role of the recruiter's personality traits in activating “What is beautiful is good” stereotype

The next part of this article reviews the influence of a recruiter's personality traits on the emergence of a physical attractiveness bias. The Big-Five theory/Five-Factor Model of personality provides the most widely used approach to personality (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 2008). Personality is structured into five personality factors, each of which varies on a continuum: extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. Everyone possesses some level of each personality factor. What impact does a recruiter's personality have on their use of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype when making a hiring decision? We argue that some personality traits are

associated with bias toward physically attractive job candidates because they are traits which involve a tendency to make decisions based on prejudice (Cohrs et al., 2012; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009).

Openness to experience is a personality trait linked to a low tendency towards being prejudiced. High scores in openness to experience are associated to open-mindedness, liberalism, non-conformity, a strong need for variety, change and innovation (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; McCrae & Costa, 2008). Such individuals are also critical of conforming to social, political or religious attitudes and are ready to re-evaluate it (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007). Researchers have found that individuals with a higher degree of openness to experience tend to make decisions based on prejudice less often than other individuals (Cohrs et al., 2012; Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007). Therefore, it seems likely that recruiters reporting high openness to experience may not strictly follow existing social norms about physical attractiveness and they do not have a high need for conformity to such norms by job candidates. As well, such recruiters are

likely to have broader ideas about “what is beautiful” because of their open-mindedness. Swami et al. (2011) found that people higher in openness to experience evaluated other individuals ranging in body size as attractive, compared to people low in openness to experience who judged individuals less favourably depending on their body shape.

In addition, the relation between personality and prejudice is likely to be mediated by ideological attitudes. Personality predisposes recruiters to certain views about the world (as a competitive place governed by a social hierarchy or as a dangerous place with threats and unpredictability) and, in turn, ideological attitudes. Personality can determine which ideological attitudes are developed by a recruiter, and so personality can be pivotal in determining the series of effects leading to prejudice and the tendency to make discriminative decisions (Sibley & Duckitt, 2009; Cohrs et al., 2012). As an example, recruiters who score low in openness to experience are likely to have highly developed RWA. People low in openness to experience have been found to prefer social conformity; they identify with existing social norms, values and structures, seek

the security provided by an authoritarian leader, which, in turn, increases dangerous-world beliefs supporting RWA and eventually prejudice (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Ekehammar et al., 2004; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009).

A second personality factor relevant to the activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype is *agreeableness*. This aspect of personality concerns sensitivity toward others, tolerance, altruism, attentiveness toward others and empathy (Berger, 2010; McCrae & Costa, 2008). As a result, people who score high on agreeableness are less likely to make judgments based on prejudice (Cohrs et al., 2012; Ekehammar et al., 2004). These people less often make judgments about others based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or mental disabilities. Ekehammar and Akrami’s (2007) analysed specific facets of agreeableness, which could explain why this trait is related to prejudice. They found that tender-mindedness, one of the indicators of agreeableness, was the strongest inverse predictor of prejudice among all other facets of agreeableness. The more tender-mindedness was associated with less prejudice. Therefore, recruiters high in agreeableness are less

likely to base their hiring decisions on prejudice than other recruiters.

Moreover, individuals low in agreeableness have limited concern for others and so they may experience regular social conflict between their own desires and the desires of others, making their competitive world view appear even worse (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Furthermore, low agreeableness could be related to the tendency to justify social hierarchies. Consequently, agreeableness could be negatively related to SDO and then to prejudice (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Ekehammar et al., 2004).

Researchers have also found a relation between the other three personality factors (neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion) and prejudice (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; Ekehammar et al., 2004). However, it seems that these connections could be better explained by adding ideological attitudes as mediators (Cohrs et al., 2012; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). In a sense, we are arguing that the activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype among recruiters depends on not just their personality but also their ideological attitudes.

Interestingly, *extraversion* is a personality trait which can be positively related to prejudice (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007). Individuals with a high degree of extraversion are seen as friendly people who genuinely like other people and enjoy others' company (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007; McCrae & Costa, 2008). Because of their level of outgoingness, highly extraverted people tend to seek attention, they speak their own mind, and they often seek to gain leadership in group contexts. This can predispose them to viewing the world as a competitive place (Sibley & Duckitt, 2009) where there is the need to compete for the position of receiving more attention and being a leader. As a result of seeking higher social positions, extraverts justify social hierarchies and they place authority in high esteem. This attitude makes extraverts at risk of high RWA and SDO, and further making them at risk of prejudiced decision-making based on these ideologies (Cohrs et al., 2012; Ekehammar et al., 2004). Noting these links, extraverted recruiters are likely to be particularly sensitive to candidates' position within the social order, such as based on their level of physical attractiveness, leading to more negative judgements against less attractive job candidates.

Higher scores in *neuroticism* are associated with low self-esteem and a pessimistic approach to the world (McCrae & Costa, 2008). This makes neurotic recruiters likely to evaluate both physically more attractive and physically less attractive candidates negatively. The physically attractive job candidates are likely to be evaluated by a neurotic recruiter as threatening to their own self-esteem, while the physically less attractive job candidates are evaluated as deserving of misfortune. From another point of view, neurotic individuals see the world as a place full of enemies and danger. Therefore, individuals high in neuroticism can be high in RWA and the tendency to make decisions based on prejudice (Ekehammar et al., 2004). As a result, neuroticism could be associated with making less favourable decisions about less attractive candidates.

The last personality trait, *conscientiousness*, is related to attentiveness, being hardworking and organised, being ambitiousness, preferring order, stability, structure and security (Berger, 2010; Uysal & Pohlmeier, 2010). Individuals high in conscientiousness support the existing social order and, in turn, are likely to be high in RWA and they can tend to make

decisions based on prejudice (Cohrs et al., 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009). In addition, it can be argued that because physically more attractive individuals are perceived as having a higher status (Anderson et al., 2001; Senior et al., 2007), conscientiousness might be associated with value for authority and social order and mean bias towards physical attractive candidates in a bid to maintain that social order. Conversely conscientiousness is related to competence, dutifulness, and self-discipline (Berger, 2010). Therefore, a recruiter with high scores in conscientiousness could be more concerned with moral values and feelings of justice or what is right; in turn, recruiters who score high on these facets of conscientiousness are likely to be low on SDO, RWA and prejudice.

Overall, personality is one of the factors that determine whether an individual makes discriminative decisions. Therefore, personality can have a significant direct impact on the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” or an indirect impact (through ideological attitudes).

The role of the recruiter’s socio-demographic characteristics in activating “What is beautiful is good” stereotype

Research shows that socio-demographic factors such as employment experience, gender and age can shape judgements of job candidates based on their physical attractiveness (Foos & Clark, 2011; Marlowe et al., 1996; Senior et al., 2007). However, the results of these studies are contradictory.

A recruiter’s *employment experience* seems to be the most essential factor. It buffers the emergence of bias when making a hiring decision. Marlowe et al. (1996) presented the idea that physical attractiveness has a smaller impact on hiring decisions made by more experienced managers. Recruiters with limited experience tended to use inappropriate factors such as gender and appearance more often when deciding about the suitability of a job candidate. The explanation the authors put forward was that less experienced recruiters cannot make a decision based on more accurate and rational information about the fit between the person and the organization. Instead, less experienced recruiters rely on external cues or heuristics and stereotypes. Conversely, Hosoda et al. (2003) found that the physical attractiveness of a job candidate has the same effect on all recruiters regardless of their experience in

recruiting. They argued that the bias towards physically attractive candidates is so strong and influential that it cannot be mitigated by length of experience in recruiting. Therefore, we cannot unequivocally claim that lengthy experience as a recruiter makes the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype less likely to be activated. More research is needed to clarify that.

A second, important, socio-demographic variable is *gender*. In Senior et al. (2007) study participants were provided with photos of female/male more/less physically attractive faces and were asked to assign a high or low status work package for them and evaluate their physical attractiveness. The study found that males’ evaluated females as more physically attractive compared to other males. Moreover, women stereotyped physically attractive men as being more competent than physically attractive women, whereas men evaluated both attractive men and women as being more competent than unattractive ones. Senior and colleagues’ findings draw our attention to the psychology of mate selection, and from this we can extrapolate that male recruiters stereotype physically attractive female job candidates for different reasons than

female recruiters. Based on literature about mate selection, men tend to focus more on aspects of women’s physical attractiveness which signals good health and the ability to produce healthy offspring. Women, on the other hand, relate physical attractiveness to competence because this trait is extremely important for them (e.g., in showing a man’s ability to provide resource security for her and her offspring; Langlois et al., 2000; Workman & Reader, 2004). Hence, female recruiters are likely to evaluate physically attractive men as better candidates for a job because they stereotype their level of competence. For men, the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” is likely to apply when it comes to judging women’s attractiveness as potential mates. In addition, evolutionary indicators of social power or dominance, such as male height and girth could shape both male and female recruiters’ judgements (Senior et al., 2007).

Additionally, the extent to which the job in question is a stereotypically masculine or feminine job role could determine how and to what extent physical attractiveness impacts on a hiring decision. For instance, physical attractiveness which involves strong feminine characteristics

can have negative consequences for female candidates applying for a stereotypically masculine job (Desrumaux et al., 2009). In fact, it could be that femininity and masculinity is automatically associated with physical attractiveness, and so job candidates who fit common ideals of beauty are invariably assumed to be highly feminine or masculine (depending on their gender). Drogosz and Levy (1996) studied the relations among physical attractiveness, gender, evaluation of job performance and masculinity/femininity. In this study participants were given photographs of employees as well as some job performance reviews. Their findings indicate that physically attractive women tend to be perceived as being very feminine and physically attractive men as very masculine. Therefore, when such candidates apply for jobs which are stereotyped as being the 'domain' of the opposite sex (e.g., men applying for a job in nursing, or women applying for a building job), there is the risk of recruiters stereotyping their 'unsuitability' for the job based on their physical appearance and presumed masculinity or femininity.

Previous research does not give a straightforward answer about the role of a recruiter's age and its influence on the

activation of the stereotype that "What is beautiful is good". Based on expertise theory (Foos & Clark, 2011), experience of physical attractiveness increases with age. The theory would lead us to argue that the older a recruiter is, the more faces they have come across, and the wider is their idea of what counts as attractive. Therefore, young recruiters could have a much narrower view of what makes a person physically attractive. Looking from this perspective, young recruiters are at greater risk of expressing a bias towards candidates who are physically attractive in a conventional sense (e.g., based on their youth, weight, clothing style), compared to older recruiters. When it comes to recruiters' age, another important factor that should be considered is the similarity between the recruiter's and the job candidate's age. Recruiters could judge candidates of the same age group as the most attractive (Foos & Clark, 2001) whereas, for older recruiters, attractiveness norms and standards will have changed over time. At the same time, older interviewers could perceive younger candidates as less attractive because of different beauty standards they hold within their own age group. This could be especially important considering the job candidate's 'baby face' features (e.g., face shape, eye size,

jaw line, vocal pitch) and the 'youthfulness' of their clothing and accessories.

In summary, socio-demographic characteristics seem to be significant factors that shape perception and judgment of other individuals and, in turn, shape the activation of the stereotype that "What is beautiful is good" during the selection process.

The role of the recruiters' physical attractiveness in activating "What is beautiful is good" stereotype

In this section of our article, we review the effect on hiring decisions of a similarity between a recruiter's attractiveness and the job candidate's attractiveness. There are at least three possible scenarios during a selection process involving a recruiter and a candidate: a) the candidate is more physically attractive than the recruiter; b) the recruiter is more physically attractive than the candidate; and c) the recruiter's and applicant's physical attractiveness levels are similar.

The stereotype that "What is beautiful is good" involves the belief that physically attractive individuals possess positive characteristics such as confidence, sociability, better communication skills, and charm (Desrumaux et al., 2009;

Langlois et al., 2000). Large contrasts between the recruiter's and candidate's attractiveness levels can make the candidate appear even more attractive. Haas and Gregory's (2005) findings support this idea by showing that less physically attractive women accommodated their behaviour to more attractive ones as they were seen as having more positive characteristics, such as more influence and a higher status.

From another perspective, if the candidate presents scenario a), the recruiter could perceive him or her as a threat. A physically attractive candidate is perceived as being someone who is highly confident and in control of a situation (Andreoletti, Zebrowitz, & Lachman, 2001; Judge, Hurst, & Simon, 2009; Haas & Gregory, 2005; Mobious & Rosenblat, 2006). In the hiring process, the recruiter holds the power of decision-making and so a more physically attractive job candidate presents a threat to the status that a recruiter holds in this situation (Agthe et al., 2011). This perceived threat is a consequence of social comparison: when people compare themselves with more physically attractive people, their own self-perception can be negatively affected (Thornton & Maurice, 1999). That means

that being with more physically attractive individuals can lead to an increase in social anxiety and it could negatively affect self-esteem (Thornton & Maurice, 1999; Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007). Consequently, job candidates who are more physically attractive than the recruiter could be evaluated more negatively because of the threat they present to the recruiter's self-esteem.

It is important to note that gender difference presents a proviso to the above effects. Evidence from Agthe et al. (2011) helps to clarify that we need to consider the role of gender in predicting what is likely to happen in scenario a). Agthe and colleagues found that a recruiter's positive bias towards a physically attractive job candidate emerged only when the candidate was from the opposite sex. When the judgment involved a candidate of the same sex, a more physically attractive candidate was stereotyped as having *negative* characteristics. Agthe and colleagues argue that individuals tend to avoid social connections with more physically attractive people of the same sex because they are perceived as a threat. However, sexual orientation or political beliefs (e.g., feminist attitudes) can produce different sorts of gender

effects when recruiters are judging candidates – however this needs to be explored with further research.

If the scenario in play is scenario b), when the recruiter evaluates him or herself as being more attractive than the candidate, the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype is likely to be activated. As Mulford, Orbell, Shatto, and Stockard (1998) propose, physically attractive individuals tend to cooperate with other physically attractive individuals and evaluate them as possessing more positive characteristics. Therefore, the recruiter is likely to remain confident about his/her own appearance and not perceive the candidate as a threat to self-esteem. This process is likely to be true even in scenario c) when the recruiter/candidate are both high in physical attractiveness.

However, we must note that physical attractiveness runs along a continuum. In general, the bigger the difference in physical attractiveness between two individuals, the stronger is the influence of physical appearance on decision-making (Haas & Gregory, 2005). Therefore, if there is just a slight difference between the recruiter's and applicant's physical attractiveness, a recruiter's physical attractiveness should

not have significant impact on activation of the stereotype “What is beautiful is good”.

Conclusion

The bias towards physically attractive people is well documented within the scientific literature but, until now, little attention has been given to the recruiter’s characteristics. This article is one of the first to systematically review why and how a recruiter’s personal characteristics will influence the activation of the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” during the selection process. Based on the literature discussed and possible relations between phenomena analysed, we draw three main conclusions:

1. Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) are two ideological attitudes related to general prejudice. A recruiter holding strong RWA and/or SDO ideologies are likely to use the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” frequently and more than other recruiters.
2. Recruiters highly open to experience and/or highly agreeable use the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” less than recruiters with different levels of those personality traits.

Recruiters high in extraversion and/or neuroticism are more likely to hold RWA and SDO ideological attitudes than other recruiters, and they are more at risk of using the stereotype “What is beautiful is good”. They tend to judge candidates based on their physical attractiveness more often and to assign negative traits to job candidates low on physical attractiveness. However, the relation between conscientiousness and the activation of the stereotype “What is beautiful is good” remains unclear.

3. The impact of a recruiter’s employment, age, gender experience, and physical attractiveness is complex. A recruiter’s experience in hiring does not necessarily make them immune to the activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype. Age could be influential factor considering the difference between the recruiter’s and the job candidate’s age. Gender can moderate the activation of the stereotype, depending on the difference between a recruiter’s and a candidate’s level of attractiveness. Where a candidate is more physically attractive than the recruiter, gender can influence the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype being applied only

when the candidate is of the opposite sex. Where a recruiter perceives him/herself as high in physical attractiveness, those gender effects tend not to occur. In that instance, the recruiter is likely to apply the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype to evaluate same-sex and opposite-sex job candidates positively and, subsequently, to rate them as being suitable for the job. Conversely, if a recruiter considers his/her own physical attractiveness to be low, a same-sex job candidate can be perceived as a threat to the higher status the recruiter holds within the interaction and therefore associate the candidate’s attractiveness with negative characteristics.

Practical implications for Human Resource specialists

- Recruiters need to be made consciously aware about the social cognition of stereotyping. Awareness of own existing biases can help to reduce the activation of stereotypes when it comes to evaluating others. Therefore, recruiters should be encouraged to reflect on their private beliefs about people who are high or low on physical attractiveness. Recruiters should also be given the opportunity to learn about the role of

their own personal characteristics in determining the cognitive activation of physical attractiveness stereotypes while other characteristics can buffer the stereotype.

- In some countries, job candidates are asked to add a picture to their application or curriculum vitae. In any country, recruiters tend to Google job applicants and, where a photo is available on the candidate’s personal web profile, the photo can form a basis for stereotyping. The activation of the “What is beautiful is good” stereotype can disadvantage candidates from the earliest stages of the selection process, denying them a place in the shortlist. It is seriously important for hiring teams to establish a protocol about the acceptability of Google-searching job candidates at least before they reach the interview shortlist. Even better than that, organizations should make job applicants’ names strictly confidential and unknown to all involved in the recruitment decision-making; held by an independent party. Candidates’ names can be revealed when making the interview stage in the hiring decision. Doing anything to keep physical appearance *out* of the

decision-making process (e.g., using a number to identify applicants) will help recruitment teams make more objective and fair decisions about who to shortlist.

- Finally, we recommend that HR specialists make use of psychometric testing to measure the ideological attitudes of would-be recruiters and their personality traits. Recruiters' high/low scores on certain ideological attitudes and personality traits, unfortunately, could be related to serious risk of expressing bias towards physically attractive job candidates. The solution is, of course, not to exclude such recruiters from the selection process but to use strategies to minimise bias (such as using numbers to identify candidates). It is important that HR specialists should help recruiters understand the risks of stereotyping (see point 1). Further, it is important to consider the composition of recruitment teams, based on the psychometric test scores of recruiters within it, and to ensure there is balance in recruiters' personalities and ideological attitudes. Finally, recruitment teams should be made accountable for their decision-making and there should be an audit

of the correspondence between recruiters' characteristics and their hiring decisions.

References

- Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D., & Sanford, N. (1950). *The authoritarian personality*. New York: Harper.
- Agthe, M., Spörrle, M., & Maner, J. K. (2011). Does being attractive always help? Positive and negative effects of attractiveness on social decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(8), 1042-1054.
- Altemeyer, B. (2004). Highly dominating, highly authoritarian personalities. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144(4), 421-447.
- Anderson, C., John, O. P., Ketner, D., & Kring, A. M. (2001). Who attains social status? effects of personality and physical attractiveness in social groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(1), 116-132.
- Andreoletti, A., Zebrowitz, L. A., & Lachman, M. E. (2001). Physical appearance and control beliefs in young, middle-aged, and older adults. *Personality & Social Psychology Review*, 27 (8), 969-981.
- Asbrock, F., Sibley, C.G., & Duckitt, J. (2010). Right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation and the dimensions of generalised prejudice: a longitudinal test. *European Journal of Personality*, 24, 324-340.
- Berger, E. M. (2010, August). Women's non-cognitive skills and transition to employment after childbirth. Germany: German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) and FreieUniversität Berlin.
- Cohrs, J. C., Kampfe-Hargrave, N., & Riemann, R. (2012). Individual differences in ideological attitudes and prejudice: evidence from peer-report data. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103(2), 343-361.

- Desrumaux, P., Bosscher, S., & Leoni, V. (2009). Effect of facial attractiveness, gender, and competence of applicants on job recruitment. *Swiss Journal of Psychology*, 68(1), 33-42.
- Drogosz, L. M., & Levy, P. E. (1996). Another look at the effects of appearance, gender, and job type on performance-based decisions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20 (3), 437-445.
- Duckitt, J., & Sibley, Ch., G. (2010). Personality ideology, prejudice, and politics: a dual –process motivation model. *Journal of Personality*, 78(6), 1861-1893.
- Ekehammar, B., & Akrami, N. (2007). Personality and prejudice: from big five personality factors to facets. *Journal of Personality*, 75(5), 899-925.
- Ekehammar, B., Akrami, N., Gylje, M., & Zakrisson, I. (2004). What matters most to prejudice: big five personality, social dominance orientation, or right-wing authoritarianism? *European Journal of Personality*, 18, 463-482.
- Feldman, R. S. (1985). *Social psychology. Theories, research, and applications*. New York: McGraw-Hall.
- Fiske, S. T., & Macrae, C. N. (2012). *The SAGE Handbook of social cognition*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Foos, P. W., & Clark. M. C. (2011). Adult age and gender differences in perceptions of facial attractiveness: beauty is in the eye of the older beholder. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 172(2), 162-175.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative “description of personality: the big-five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(6), 1216-1229.
- Gulas, C. S., & McKeage, K. (2000). Extending social comparison: an examination of the unintended consequences of idealized advertising imagery. *Journal of Advertising*, 29(2), 17-28.
- Harper, B. (2000). Beauty, stature and labour market: a British cohort study. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 62, Special Issue, 771-800.
- Haas, A., & Gregory, S.W. (2005). The impact of physical attractiveness on women's social status and interactional power. *Sociological Forum*, 20(3), 449-471.
- Hosoda, M., Stone-Romero, E. F., & Coats, G. (2003). The effect of physical attractiveness on job-related outcomes: a meta-analysis of experimental studies. *Personnel Psychology*, 56(2), 431-462.
- Hodson, G., Hogg, S. M., & MacInnis, C. C. (2009). The role of “dark personality” (Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy), Big Five personality factors, and ideology in explaining prejudice. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 93, 686-690.
- Judge, T. A., Hurst, C., & Simon, L. S. (2009). Does It Pay to Be Smart, Attractive, or Confident (or All Three)? Relationships Among General Mental Ability, Physical Attractiveness, Core Self-Evaluations, and Income. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(3), 742-755.
- Langlois, J. H., Kalakanis, L., Rubenstein, A. J., Larson, A., Hallam, M., & Smoot, M. (2000). Maxims or myth of beauty? A meta-analytic and theoretical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(3), 390-423.
- Lorenzo, G. L., Biesanz, J. C., & Human, L. J. (2010). What is beautiful is good and more accurately understood: Physical attractiveness and accuracy in first impressions of personality. *Psychological Science*, 21(12), 1777-1782.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2008). The Five- Factor theory of personality. In B. O. P. John, R. W. Robins, L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of Personality-Theory and Research* (p. 159- 181). New York/ London: The Guilford press.
- McFarland, S. (2010). Authoritarianism, social dominance, and other roots of

generalized prejudice. *Political Psychology*, 31(3), 453-477.

Marlowe C. M., Schneider S. L., & Nelson C. E. (1996). Gender and attractiveness biases in hiring decisions: are more experienced managers less biased? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(1), 11-21.

Mazeikiene, N., & Sulcaite, I. (2010). Autoritarinių, seksistinių ir homofobinių nuostatų raiškos lyčių skirtumai. *Lyčių Studijos ir Tyrimai*, 8(8), 94-108.

Mobious, M. M., & Rosenblatt, T. S. (2006). Why beauty matters. *The American Economic Review*, 96(1), 225-235.

Mulford, M., Orbell, J., Shatto, C., & Stockard, J. (1998). Physical attractiveness, opportunity, and success in everyday exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(6), 1565-1592.

Senior, C., Thomson, K., Badger, J., & Butler, M. J. R. (2007). Interviewing strategies in the face of beauty a psychophysiological investigation into the job negotiation Process. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1118, 142-162.

Sibley, C. G., & Duckitt, J. (2009). Big-Five personality, social worldviews and ideological attitudes: further tests of a dual process cognitive-motivational model. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 149(5), 545-561.

Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance. An intergroup theory of*

social hierarchy and oppression. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Söderlund, M., & Julander, C. (2009). Physical attractiveness of the service worker in the moment of truth and its effects on customer satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 16(3), 216-226.

Swami, V., Stieger, S., Pietschig, J., Voracek, M., Furnham, A., & Tovee, M. J. (2011). The influence of facial piercings and observer personality on perceptions of physical attractiveness and intelligence. *European Psychologist*, 17(3), 213-221.

Thornton, B., & Maurice, J. K. (1999). Physical attractiveness contrast effect and the moderating influence of self-consciousness. *Sex Role*, 40, 379-392.

Trampe, D., Stapel, D. A., & Siero, F. W. (2007). On models and vases: Body dissatisfaction and proneness to social comparison effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(1), 106-118.

Uysal, S. D., & Pohlmeier, W. (2010). Unemployment duration and personality. *Working paper*, University of Konstanz.

Workman, L., & Reader, W. (2004). *Evolutionary Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Understanding workplace voice and silence

Sarah Brooks

Institute of Work Psychology, Sheffield, UK
s.brooks@sheffield.ac.uk

About the author

Sarah Brooks is an ESRC/SAMS/UKCES Management and Business Development Research Fellow at the Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield. The main focus of her research is on workplace silence and the role of management in shaping how employees and managers can communicate more openly and honestly with each other.

Abstract

It is important for managers to gather feedback from employees in order to make important organizational decisions. However, employees don't always provide open and honest feedback to their managers. Where organizations have a large number of employees who routinely withhold information from management, a culture of silence is said to exist. This article provides a background to the workplace silence literature and highlights the mismatch between employee and management views surrounding the value of feedback in the workplace. Suggestions are also

provided for ways in which managers and employees can communicate more effectively.

Background

Employee voice has been described by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) as “two-way communications, an exchange of information between managers and employees or 'having a say' about what goes on in the organization” (CIPD, 2014). Nowadays, most employees would be familiar with the terms *employee engagement* and *employee voice* which are mechanisms designed to provide employees with the opportunity to be open and honest about their ideas and opinions with regards to situations occurring within the workplace.

Despite the fact that many organizations demand that their employees display *openness* and *honesty*, many employees do not feel that they can be open and honest with their manager (Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). Many organizations advertise openness as a

corporate value to emphasise that they seek to recruit and cultivate employees who have a predisposition to share information willingly. However, not all organizations are successful at promoting openness and honesty and where a lack of openness exists, a climate of silence is said to exist (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

A climate of silence, thought to be collective in nature, has been defined as “widely shared perceptions among employees that speaking up about problems or issues is futile and/or dangerous” (Morrison & Milliken, 2000, p.708). Therefore, silence persists in organizations when a large number of employees choose intentionally to withhold ideas, information and opinions with relevance to improvements in work and work organizations (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). For example, this could be a suggestion by an employee about how to improve customer service, or it could be an employee sharing their feelings with their manager about a recent change initiative. The reasons employees withhold information has received a lot of theoretical and empirical attention, a summary of which is presented in this article.

Why is employee voice important?

One of the reasons employee voice is so valuable to organizations is that it makes available multiple points of view about situations allowing managers to make better decisions (Nemeth, 1997) and it has been shown to improve organizational performance (Enz & Schwenk, 1991). In particular, for organizational change to be successful, it has been found that employees need to feel comfortable speaking up (Edmondson, 2003). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that workplace silence is potentially detrimental to organizational performance and understand how this can be so.

At an individual level, silence has been linked to absenteeism, turnover and poor job satisfaction, indicating that those who do not feel listened to by management feel unfairly treated (Greenberg & Folger, 1983). Furthermore, those who feel dissatisfied and don't get the opportunity to speak up feel less satisfied, less committed and are more likely to leave the organization (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers & Mainous, 1998).

At an organizational level, Nemeth (1997) discussed how by preventing people from talking openly and voicing their opinions, organizations can become resistant to change and reliant on top leadership for

creative ideas, resulting in a lack of innovation and creative solutions to problems at lower levels. Others have highlighted the reduced ability for organizational learning (Argyris, 1977), poor quality of outputs (Oestreich, 1995) and the danger of top management making decisions based on partial information (Detert & Burris, 2007).

There are a number of common ways in which organizations seek feedback from employees and these can be formal or informal. Some examples of formal methods, which may be seen in the workplace include an annual survey seeking employee feedback about particular aspects of the organization or a suggestion box where ideas for improvement are contributed. However, gathering formal feedback can be time-consuming. For example, many employee engagement surveys only happen once a year. Even if they do happen more frequently, it takes time to design the questionnaire, wait for responses and analyse the data. In addition, before the results are released, there is usually a committee meeting at which decisions about how to present the data to the different audiences are made. Therefore, many managers use informal methods as a more direct and speedy

way to gather feedback. Informal methods could include unscheduled meetings, cigarette breaks, conversations in the corridor or grabbing a coffee together. However, employees seem to be uncomfortable taking part in both formal and informal feedback activities which results in the organization and its managers lacking vital information with which to make important decisions about organizational performance.

What prevents employees from speaking up to managers?

The silence research draws on both theory and empirical evidence to help make sense of individual behaviours in the workplace and explain why it's sometimes really hard for employees to say what they want to their managers.

Implicit Employee Beliefs

Individual belief systems have been found to be important for driving levels of silence within an organization. In a study carried out by Detert and Edmondson (2011), it was found that there were five key beliefs that prevented employees from talking openly with their manager:

- Firstly, employees believe that when managers hear feedback on the current situation they perceive

this as criticism of their personal performance;

- No employee should speak to their manager without being armed with facts and figures to avoid losing face when challenged;
- It is wrong to speak directly to a manager's manager for fear of reprisals for bypassing the immediate line manager;
- An employee should never challenge the manager in a group setting because that will embarrass the manager and will attract sanctions;
- Finally, any of the above will impact upon career progression and therefore these activities should never be carried out.

Somewhat surprisingly, Detert and Edmondson (2011) found that the participants were unable to cite any examples of where the actual behaviour of the manager had matched the behaviour the employees feared.

Detert and Edmondson were keen to understand how these beliefs developed and following more investigation, it was suggested that voice and silence behaviours originate outside of the workplace and are brought into the workplace as part of everyday behaviour.

For example, from an early age, individuals are brought up to view older people such as parents, grandparents, teachers and religious leaders as authority figures. Through interactions with these authority figures, beliefs are formed about the effectiveness of voicing opinions and asking for things and these beliefs are then applied during the workplace when interacting with managers. For example, a child who has an attentive parent that provides and cares for them when they express a problem or a concern is more likely to speak up than a child with a parent who only attends to the child when the parent feels it is appropriate; not when the child requests it. Therefore, if an individual's experience has previously been that speaking up never ends in a favourable outcome, then it is unlikely that the individual will act differently in the workplace. In a similar way, if an individual has developed a more positive attitude to speaking up, then they are more likely to adopt that behaviour in a work environment too (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino & Edmondson, 2009).

Fear

It has been shown that beliefs play a fundamental role in shaping levels of silence even though the beliefs are likely

to be formed before individuals enter the workplace. However, one of the key factors underpinning the persistence of beliefs, even though they do not appear to be based on actual managerial behaviour, is a fear of what might happen if the employee spoke up (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003).

In a study conducted to understand what fears people hold about speaking up in the workplace it was found that common fears included:

- Damaging a relationship through loss of trust and respect;
- Fear of retaliation or punishment like losing a job or being overlooked for promotion;
- Fear of being labelled or viewed negatively as a troublemaker or a complainer (Milliken et al., 2003).

In fact, 85% of participants in this study indicated that at some time, they had chosen to keep quiet about a workplace issue rather than speak to their manager about it. This would suggest that the inability to talk about issues with managers is a common experience for many employees and that beliefs endure over time because fear prevents evidence from being gathered to demonstrate otherwise.

Detert and Edmondson (2011) found that individuals were less influenced by the behaviour of their manager than by their initial beliefs about speaking up, which would indicate that although the role of managers is important in encouraging voice, perception of the managers' behaviour may in fact be a more important determinant than actual observed behaviour, further underlining the power of beliefs in shaping silence.

Silence has been found to be a collective concept indicating that individuals are unlikely to speak up unless they know that they have the support of others (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). This *spiral of silence* is thought to be driven by the desire to be accepted by peers so they are keen to avoid the risk of isolation by speaking out about something which is deemed to be inappropriate by others. Therefore, the employee will try to gauge the most popular opinion amongst peers and go along with this opinion. That course of action could be contradictory to the personal beliefs of the employee themselves, such is the strength of their desire to belong to the peer group.

In a group setting, the lack of vocalised opinions from all group members can lead to misleading dominant opinions, formed by the loudest and most

vociferous people (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). This poses a real risk for organizations which practice the mantra “silence is agreement”, meaning that managers treat decisions as unanimous if employees do not speak up to represent the minority opinions. This has a knock-on effect in that managers think that the employees are happy with the course of action when in fact the employees could be unhappy or doing something other than that which the manager thinks they are doing.

It is thought that one of the reasons that people are worried about negative consequences including loss of reputation or being called a troublemaker is the loss of social support networks that might follow from being rejected by colleagues for speaking up (Milliken et al., 2003).

Employees rely on both formal and informal co-operation from colleagues to carry out their role effectively (Milliken et al., 2003). However, one of the problems associated with rejection by peers is that in situations where colleagues prefer not to work with someone because of the way they have behaved, the rejected employee will find their role increasingly difficult to carry out. In turn, this isolation might deepen as colleagues distance themselves from employees who are

subsequently perceived to be underperforming.

No-one wants to deliver bad news

A large number of studies completed by Rosen, Tesser and colleagues confirmed that not only do individuals dislike passing on bad news, but that they will take longer to pass on bad news than good news (Tesser, Rosen & Tesser, 1971). This unwillingness to deliver bad news has become known as the MUM effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). Examples of this behaviour could be an employee not passing on a customer complaint to a manager or an employee failing to tell the manager about a large quantity of defective product.

When considering the status differential that exists between managers and employees in a hierarchical organization, a study about the effects of hierarchy on upward communication found that a lack of trust in the manager was highly correlated with the amount of information withheld or distorted in communications with them (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). Therefore, if an employee trusts their manager, there is more chance that they will share bad news with the manager than if they don't trust them.

Taking into account implicit beliefs, fears and a natural predisposition to avoid delivering bad news, there is a powerful combination of forces which naturally lead employees to be cautious about speaking up. Yet, the difficulty is that organizations rely on employees speaking to managers to tell them what's happening so they can make effective decisions. This would suggest that managers should therefore encourage employees to speak up. However, as will be seen in the next section, this is not always the case.

What role does the manager play in influencing silence?

Many studies have focused on the role of employee silence, but less studies have focused specifically on the way in which managerial behaviour affects levels of employee silence.

A key role of managers within the workplace is to encourage openness in employees, and managers do this by increasing "subordinates' perceptions that their boss listens to them, is interested in their ideas, gives fair consideration to the ideas presented, and at least sometimes takes action to address the matter raised" (Detert & Burris, 2007, p.871).

It has been found that a manager who is perceived to openly encourage feedback and challenge from employees elicits

more feedback than a leader who isn't as encouraging (Detert & Burris, 2007). Furthermore, managers who believe that seeking feedback is indeed important for organizational performance are shown to make more opportunities for employees to provide feedback to them (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

Implicit Managerial Beliefs

In the same way that employees have beliefs that shape the way they view manager behaviours, managers also have beliefs that influence how they view employee behaviour. Morrison and Milliken (2000) presented three beliefs that attempt to explain managerial behaviour that leads to silence:

- Employees are self-interested and untrustworthy and are therefore unlikely to act in the organization's interest without specific instruction and close management;
- Management knows best about most issues of organizational importance therefore employee opinion is not important;
- Unity and agreement are signs of a healthy organization whereas dissent and disagreement are not.

It is thought that these beliefs are reinforced by the focus on rational-

thinking which is promoted in the economics and financial educational backgrounds of many senior managers (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). As a result, organizations where such beliefs are widespread often display a lack of upward feedback mechanisms for employees to pass information to management easily (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

Fear of negative feedback

There is evidence to show that no-one likes negative feedback and that many people will go out of their way to avoid hearing negative feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). This is because it could threaten their self-esteem by providing information which does not support the image that an individual has of themselves. Furthermore, it does not matter if the feedback is about the individual directly or about something with which they identify because both are undesirable (e.g., a change programme which they are leading). However, it is not always possible to avoid hearing negative feedback, and it has been shown that after a manager has received negative feedback from an employee or someone else lower than them in the hierarchy, a manager may discredit the feedback or ignore it completely. However, feedback from those more

senior is taken more seriously because managers have more influence over the employee's career (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979). Managers may therefore prefer employees to be silent so that they don't hear negative information.

So how can employees and managers communicate more effectively?

It would appear that within the workplace both employee and managerial level influences interact with each other to produce varying degrees of silence within individuals; and it is this which leads to different behaviours in different situations. For example, an individual may offer feedback to their manager in a one-to-one setting but amongst a group of peers may remain silent. Although this may appear confusing to the manager, it is nonetheless understandable when viewed from the employee perspective, as fear of peer rejection may be stronger than any fear associated with speaking to a manager. However, for others, in particular those who are more skilled socially, speaking up in a group setting poses less concern because they are confident that they will not be rejected for their views.

One of the great paradoxes highlighted by the voice and silence literature is that management has overall responsibility for

shaping levels of silence within the organization. Management attitudes have been shown to directly affect the number of upward communication channels (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005) yet it is this group of people who are less inclined to welcome feedback from those below them.

The voice and silence literature has not traditionally focused on solutions, but has focused more on understanding the dynamics of why some people speak up and some don't. However, there are a few suggestions based on the literature which could be useful for managers to consider as next steps in increasing information flow between employees and managers.

- Bies (2009) gave an example of a technique used by President Kennedy, acting as a manager, who deliberately stayed away from a meeting with his cabinet members, who were employees, so that they could speak as equals whilst he wasn't present. This allowed the employees to talk freely amongst themselves and think about the type of issues that they wanted to raise to the President, which were then fed back to him directly by a

spokesperson at a later date. This allowed President Kennedy to hear a range of views that he wouldn't have heard had he been there, and it provided a safe opportunity for the employees to share their ideas and opinions.

- High levels of perceived safety, defined as "the individual's judgment about the risks or potential negative outcomes associated with speaking up" helps employees to feel less fearful about the protection of their image and reputation and weigh up the risks of formal sanctions before deciding whether to speak up or not (Morrison, 2011, p.382). Therefore, managers could help employees to develop higher levels of perceived safety through understanding perceived risks and fears and providing reassurance that speaking up would not have a negative outcome.
- As was described earlier, fear was shown to be a strong driver of behaviour and asking an individual to speak up against an already formed opinion usually leads to fear of rejection by the individual (Noelle Neumann, 1974). Bowen and Blackmon (2003)

subsequently highlighted that minority opinions are therefore often lost in group settings. By practising the mantra “silence is not agreement”, managers could remind themselves that every single one of their work group team members deserves the opportunity to speak up and participate in any decisions which require employee feedback. Furthermore, seeking one-to-one feedback may be a more suitable solution than relying on feedback through meetings or group gatherings given the fear of rejection and isolation that is attached to speaking up in a group.

- Detert and Edmondson (2011) demonstrated that employee beliefs drive their behaviour. Therefore, to invite more employee feedback, a manager could gain an understanding of employees’ belief systems. For example, an employee who believes that disagreement with a manager is disrespectful could be engaged more successfully when asked to come up with their own ideas rather than being asked to critique the manager’s already formed

ideas. On the other hand, Detert and Edmondson (2011) also found that employees do not speak up to their manager because they are scared of what might happen. However, there was no evidence to show that if employees did speak up, the manager would act in the same ways that the employees feared. Therefore, employees could be encouraged to speak up to demonstrate that fears do not necessarily come true, therefore allowing employees to gain confidence in speaking up.

- In an extension to the studies of the MUM effect (see page 31), it was found that if the recipient wanted to know the bad news, there was a greater chance that they would hear the bad news than if they did not want to hear it at all (Conlee & Tesser, 1973). Therefore as a manager, being prepared to accept bad news is more likely to shape appropriate manager behaviour and yield more feedback from employees.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that managers are employees also and they themselves have a manager, so this should encourage a level of empathy in

the manager towards the employee. This means that the manager could look at ways in which they themselves would like to be engaged as a guide to how employees might also like to share information with their managers.

In summary, information is required by managers to make decisions but there are influences within the workplace that make the sharing of information between employees and managers difficult. It is therefore important to consider these influences and create opportunities to encourage information flow in order to enhance organizational performance.

If you are interested in hearing more about fostering better working relationships between employees and managers, the EAWOP WorkLab in November 2014 will be addressing this topic. For more details please visit the Worklab [website](#).

References

- Argyris, C. (1977 September-October). Double loop learning in organizations correct errors. *Harvard Business Review*, 115–126.
- Ashford, S. J., & Cummings, L. L. (1983). Feedback as an individual resource: Personal strategies of creating information. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32(3), 370-398.
- Bies, R. (2009). Sounds of silence: identifying new motives and behaviours. In J. Greenberg, & M.S. Edwards. (Eds.), *Voice and silence in organizations*, 151-171. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Bowen, F., & Blackmon, K. (2003). Spirals of Silence: The Dynamic Effects of Diversity on Organizational Voice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1393-1417.
- CIPD, 2014 <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/employee-voice.aspx>
- Conlee, M. C., & Tesser, A. (1973). The effects of recipient desire to hear on news transmission. *Sociometry* (38)4, 588-599.
- Detert, J. R., & Burris, E. R. (2007). Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open? *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), 869-884.
- Detert, J. R., & Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3), 461-488.
- Edmondson, A. C. (2003). Speaking up in the operating room: How team leaders promote learning in interdisciplinary action teams. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1419-1452.
- Enz, C. A., & Schwenk, C. R. (1991). The performance edge: Strategic and value dissensus. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 4(1), 75-85.
- Greenberg, J., & Folger, R. (1983). Procedural justice, participation, and the fair process effect in groups and organizations. *Basic Group Processes*, 235-256.
- Ilgen, D. R., Fisher, C. D., & Taylor, M. S. (1979). Consequences of individual feedback on behavior in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 64(4), 349.

- Kish-Gephart, J. J., Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., & Edmondson, A. C. (2009). Silenced by fear: The nature, sources, and consequences of fear at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 29, 163-193.
- Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W., & Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An Exploratory Study of Employee Silence: Issues that Employees Don't Communicate Upward and Why. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1453-1476.
- Morrison, E.W. (2011). Employee Voice Behavior: Integration and Directions for Future Research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 37-41.
- Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(4), 706-725.
- Nemeth, C. J. (1997). Managing innovation: When less is more. *California Management Review*, 40, 59-74.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). The spiral of silence a theory of public opinion. *Journal of Communication*, 24(2), 43-51.
- Oestrich, D. (1995). Driving fear out of the workplace. *National Association of State Judicial Educators*, 10(3), 1-10.
- Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, K. P. (2001). Employee silence: Quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 20, 331-369.
- Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A. (1974). Failures in upward communication in organizations: Three possible culprits. *Academy of Management Journal*, 17(2), 205-215.
- Rosen, S., & Tesser, A. (1970). On reluctance to communicate undesirable information: The MUM effect. *Sociometry*, 33(3), 253-263.
- Rusbult, C.E., Farrell, D., Rogers, G., & Mainous III A. G. (1998). Impact of Exchange Variables on Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect: An Integrative Model of Responses to Declining Job Satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 31(3), 599-627.
- Tesser, A., Rosen, S., & Tesser, M. (1971). On the reluctance to communicate undesirable messages (the MUM effect): A field study. *Psychological Reports*, 29(2), 651-654.
- Vakola, M., & Bouradas, D. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of organisational silence: an empirical investigation. *Employee Relations*, 27(5), 441-458.
- Van Dyne, L. , Ang, S., & Botero, I. C. (2003). Conceptualizing Employee Silence and Employee Voice as Multidimensional Constructs. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1359-1392.

Improved performance through enhanced communication: Getting bosses and staff to talk

3rd EAWOP WorkLab 2014 - Practitioner Skills Workshop - 13-15 November 2014, Vilnius, Lithuania

THE SESSIONS

Formal and informal communication in the workplace: What works best? - Dr Kathryn Waddington and Dr Angela Carter, United Kingdom

Practical tools and techniques to facilitate manager-employee relationships - Dr Deirdre O'Shea, Ireland and Sarah Brooks, United Kingdom

Interactive facilitated sessions: Applying the learned tools and techniques to delegates' own workplace communication challenges

THE CONCEPT

WorkLab is an event for all European practitioners working in the field of Work and Organizational Psychology. The WorkLab aims to provide a platform for the latest scientific research to be brought to an audience of practitioners, who can thereby develop and enhance their profession and skills.

WorkLab is an interactive, small group workshop event with leading academic and practitioner experts in WOP that provides opportunities to:

- Learn how recent research and theory can be applied in practice;
- Understand modern organizational life and its dynamics better;
- Acquire new skills when working with complex, changing systems;
- Create new methods and approaches in consulting work;
- Network with other practitioners and discuss new ways and methods.

THE VENUE



ARTIS Centrum Hotel

Liejyklos str. 11/23, 01120 Vilnius, Lithuania

Phone: +370 5 266 0366

Email: artis@centrumhotels.com

Fax: +370 5 266 0377

<http://www.artis.centrumhotels.com/en/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.eawop.org/worklab-2014>

The Amsterdam Effect

Report from EAWOP's 2nd WorkLab, 2013

Kieran Duignan

kieran@positivemeasures.co.uk

About the author

Kieran Duignan is a Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, based in Surrey in the UK. The principal of The Positive Measures Partnership, he grapples with practical dilemmas about leadership and conflict, developing interventions to assist leaders and followers and to support workplace safety through every stage of individual and organizational life and all stages of the employment cycle.

Abstract

Sixteen participants attended the 2nd European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology WorkLab in Amsterdam, on the northern coast of the Netherlands, from 14-16 November, 2013. Participants were offered a structure with flexible boundaries for making sense of the practical elements of the WorkLab theme; Leadership and Conflict. Three speakers addressed issues around the

tasks, processes and relationships of leadership, conflict and imbalances of power which they addressed in terms of these themes: social processes of conflict and of mediation interventions; emotional self-regulation and influencing as a leadership accomplishment; and conflicts emerging from insufficiently controlled 'dark' facets of personalities of some leaders. In sum, this was a great opportunity for psychologists to consider ways to reconfigure and recalibrate interventions about leadership and conflict at work.

Introduction

EAWOP organised its 2nd WorkLab at the Lloyd Hotel and Cultural Embassy, in Amsterdam on the theme of '*Leadership and Conflict*'. The 17 participants were Psychologists with two or more years of professional experience and membership of a national professional association of psychologists that are Constituent members of EAWOP. In total,

WorkLab delegates representing some 10 different countries.

In the manner that an excellent musical or theatrical performance the WorkLab is the joint product of considerable skill and effort on the part of an unseen director and production team. The quality, energy and fun of the WorkLab were the outcome of practical ingenuity on the part of members of the WorkLab Programme Committee: Chair, Prof. Angela Carter; and Co-Chairs Dr Diana Rus and Sarah Brooks. The committee was supported by Helen Baron, Treasurer and Practitioner Representative of EAWOP's Executive Committee.

Presentations

Three presentations formed the 'hard' skeleton of the enriching WorkLab:

Professor Dr. Martin Euwema, from the Catholic University of Louvain, spoke on *Conflict and Conflict Mediation at Work* enlarging on a published definition of conflict (van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995): Conflict behaviour is an individual's reaction to the perception that one's own and another party's current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. Martin explained how

conflict behaviour is effective to the extent that it reduces the conflict issues at stake, improves the relationship with the other party or both parties, through attention to task, process and relationship elements of conflicted issues. In distinguishing three levels of conflict (escalation, stalemate, settlement), he noted no less than nine potential levels of escalation. His talk was rich in relation to how a psychologist's mindful interventions (listening, questions, and proposals, in that order) can influence appropriate balances of power in work contexts. He profiled seven different perspectives on conflict mediation: intercultural, systems, rules, social exchange, social identity, social constructionist and psychodynamic. Martin's model of conflict analysis included seven focal points: issues, individuals, interdependence, interaction, implications, institutions and interventions. He discussed these aspects through the use of illustrative examples (one of which included a candid acknowledgement of a non-trivial, serious, personal lapse) and humorous anecdotes. Martin also emphasised the tough cultural challenge to psychologists arising from an apparent inclination of senior

executives in organizations to turn more readily to lawyers and accountants and other professions in preference to psychologists who may actually be better equipped to address the difficulties gripping the executives and the social milieu within their organizations.

Professor Dr. Barbara Wisse, from the University of Groningen, spoke on *The good, the bad and the ugly: Making emotions work for you*. She conducted a deft, elegant and colourful exploration of moods and emotions that contribute to the 'affect' dimension of conflicts in organizations and elsewhere at work, without explicit reference to the conventional icon of 'Emotional Intelligence'. In relation to moods, she touched on PANAS (*Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule*, Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) as a useful measurement tool relevant to recognising and managing one's own emotions. Addressing the social function of emotions with reference to Morris and Keltner (2000), she suggested that they consist in other-directed, intentional (if not always consciously controlled) communicative acts that organise social interactions. In considering

how leaders can use emotions as a tool with reference to Bono and Ilies (2006) and Damen and colleagues (Damen, van Knippenberg, & van Knippenberg, 2008), she drew on experimental evidence referring to 'charisma' and other influences on emotions by leaders. Usefully she addressed group mood contagion by leaders (Sy, Cote & Saavedra, 2005). 'Emotional regulation', she explained, refers to the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them. In this way she differentiated between the concepts of surface acting, deep acting and naturally felt emotions.

Professor Adrian Furnham from University College London spoke on; *The dark side of leadership: Management derailment*. Adrian used striking metaphors to characterise ineffective leaders, with whom he postulated that conflict is associated whether they are its prime movers or not. 'Dark' he observed, is a style that contrasts with the bright side, which is obvious and straightforward while 'derailment' suggests conflict associated with being thrown off

course due to having too much of a potentially productive characteristic and failing to control and balance it appropriately. Several participants were aroused by his recommendation of a psychological measurement tool, the '*Hogan Development Survey*' (HDS, Hogan, 2005), designed to measure the extent of 'personality disorders' to which leaders are prone and which incline to derail them. A 'spectrum' trait theory of personality underpins Adrian's model of 'derailment' behaviour and the associated prognosis for troublesome and troubled leaders. This seem possibly unduly cut-and-dried, when contrasted with the views of an authority on therapeutic treatment of personality disorders using the '*Structural Analysis of Social Behaviour*' diagnostic instrument (Benjamin, 1996) that applies a circumflex model of personality with three tiers (intrapersonal, interpersonal and reflexive). It became clear that access to studies comparing tools of assessment and associated interventions by skilled psychologists, would be useful to Work and Organizational Psychologists (WOP) who intervene in the delicate domain of conflict handling. Further, it would

be useful to examine social psychology studies that have been designed to test behaviours expressing personality disorder correlates of alternate conflict management strategies. This could possibly indicate the stages of conflicts when particular forms of personality disorder are likely to prove acute sources of vulnerability; and the social conditions in which some of them may be advantageous (provided individuals were paired with co-workers willing and able to moderate any adverse effects).

Tools for practical applications

Each of the speakers indicated, through exercises or monodrama, how conflict handling entails cognitive and affective experiences, dual concerns (concerns of one's own and that of another party) as well as conflict behaviour around an issue of issues. Their different contributions addressed an attribute of conflict behaviour sometimes labelled 'conglomerate'; that is to say where conflict is handled by a conglomeration of behavioral components characterised by a pattern of occurrence and covariation of its components, epitomised in movements, in diverse directions at

different paces. This is described by the Conflict Management Grid (CMG, Van de Vliert, 1997) presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Conflict Management Grid (CMG)

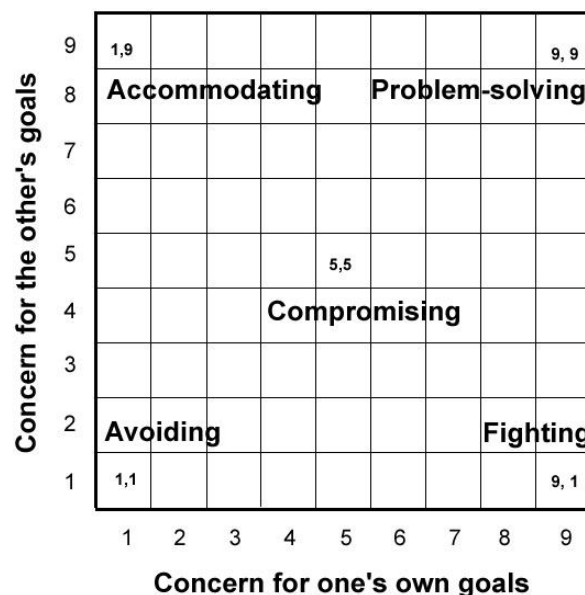


Fig.1.1. Conflict management grid
(van de Vliert, 1997 - after Blake and Mouton, 1970)

The CMG, an adaptation of the 'Management Grid' (Blake & Mouton, 1970) has emerged as a framework of analysis commonly used within the conflict management research community to examine structures and characteristics of conflicts as well as and the structure and options that permit and encourage resolution. As the CMG co-ordinates behavioural data within five categories, it has also been used to design and develop several instruments measuring styles of conflict handling (see validity studies

quoted in van de Vliert, 1996). The CMG can be useful to practitioner WOPs who wish to facilitate individuals or groups to take stock of their primary and secondary styles of negotiation, during their daily whirl of efforts to achieve. A practical example might be the use of the CMG in a coaching conversation with a team leader to consider their options in defusing complaints of favouritism of team members absent or late for work. Such work can stimulate the team leader take stock of the unintended costs of

‘fighting’, by considering options such as detailed rules or distribution of responsibilities these options can be considered alongside risks of potentially tarnishing individual or group commitment or misdirecting management time and attention. These options contrast those of problem-solving within the team to encourage task achievement through negotiated forms of co-operative task delivery, training for job enlargement and greater flexitime without abdicating sanctions. Another example may arise where the Operations function feels harassed by a safety specialist pressing for improved levels of compliance where the CMG can be used to lead to a negotiated problem-solving approach to collaboratively work out a new set of procedures that gather data on both safe behaviours and on error levels that can harmonise goals for both parties.

In the professional practice of WOPs, while ‘leadership’ may be relatively apparent in many settings, ‘conflict’ can surface in diverse forms and guises. Here Martin’s definition highlights how conflict is not necessarily pathological and conflict behaviour initiated by a skilful, self-

aware leader with integrity and humility may well be necessary in conditions where boredom, lethargy or burnout have allowed habitual underachievement and drifting to take root. To the extent that this flip side of what some organizational cultures frame as ‘negative’ behaviour becomes a door to more fruitful, well-crafted interventions about conflict by participants in due course may identify this WorkLab as a point of new departure in psychological poise and momentum amongst practitioner members of the EAWOP.

To all participants, the WorkLab offered an occasion of socialisation into language and concepts that WOP uses to represent elusive facets of conflict in relation to leadership and followership. For some of them, it may turn out to be like those rare, unexpected moments in supportive conversations which inspire them to start learning a musical instrument that would gradually transform the texture of the rest of their lives in ways they couldn’t foresee when they first handled it. If any areas of leadership and conflict behaviour were left untouched by the speakers, the scope of unscheduled conversations between

participants included exchanges of information and insights about methodologies and tools associated with interventions focused on leadership and conflict.

Fit-for-purpose design and fulfilment

If there were perhaps any intermittent shoots of discord amongst participants on occasions, the craft of the organisers went a long way to contain, direct and deepen the benevolent dispositions brought by participants. The organisers did so by orchestrating interactions between the ingredients of the WorkLab design and by monitoring them well, yet unobtrusively:

- Seed money from the EAWOP that subsidised the fees payable by individual participants willing to risk investing in an innovative experience;
- Advance publicity that presented feasible WorkLab objectives aligned to a tantalisingly ambiguous theme;
- Balanced diversity of national backgrounds and ages in a relatively small group of participants;
- Timely and informative advance briefings by email;
- Energising and friendly speakers who modelled courtesy and clarity in applying research during face-to-face interactions;
- Spacious and smart but non-luxurious accommodation;
- Bountiful catering that respected a variety of tastes and dietary requirements;
- A wisely paced timetable of alternating activities, mealtime and informal breaks within the WorkLab schedule;
- An immediate external neighbourhood (that included, in front of the hotel, a supermarket, a bar restaurant, a children's playground and a quay with ships moored alongside, and, to the rear, a tram station with radiating lines);
- And a location close to railway and airport connections with frequent links to other European countries.

In sum, the EAWOP WorkLab 2013 delivered the rejuvenating impact of a gently forceful 'bootcamp' experience that youthful spirits of all ages could enjoy and benefit from. To the extent that similar design-savviness is applied to the EAWOP 2014 WorkLab, it will be no surprise if available places are booked out early.

References

- Benjamin, L.S. (1996). *Interpersonal Diagnosis and Treatment of Personality Disorders*. The Guilford Press
- Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1970). The Fifth Achievement. In *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. Vol. 6. No. 4. 413-426
- Bono, J. E., & Ilies, R. (2006). Charisma, positive emotions and mood contagion. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 317-334.
- Damen, F., van Knippenberg, D., & van Knippenberg, B. (2008) Leader Affective Displays and Attributions of Charisma: The Role of Arousal. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(10). 2594-2614.
- Hogan, R. (2005) *Personality and the Fate of Organizations*. Erlbaum Publishers
- Morris, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2000) How Emotions Work: the Social Functions of Emotional Expression in Negotiations. In *Research in Organizational Behaviour*. 22. 1-50.
- Sy, T., Cote, S., & Saavedra, R. (2005). The Contagious Leader: Impact of the leader's mood on the mood of group members, group affective tone and group processes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(2), 295-305.
- van de Vliert, E., Euwema, M. C., & Huisman, S E. (1995). Managing Conflict with a Subordinate or a Superior: Effectiveness of Conglomerated Behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80(2) 271-281.
- van de Vliert, E. (1997). *Complex Interpersonal Conflict Behaviour. Theoretical Frontiers*. Psychology Press.
- Watson, D., Clark, L.A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063-1070.

Building employee resilience: The impact of a workplace training seminar series designed to enhance positive psychological capabilities

Martha Knox-Haly

The Workplace Research Centre, The School of Business,
The University of Sydney, Australia

Timothy C. Bednall

The School of Management, The University of New South Wales, Australia

Fay Walker

The Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney, Australia

martha@mkarisk.com.au

Information about the authors

Martha Knox-Haly is a Research Affiliate and Fay Walker is an Associate of the Workplace Research Centre, University of Sydney. Tim Bednall is a Senior Lecturer with the School of Management, University of NSW.

Abstract

Psychological resilience refers to the ability to respond adaptively. Although originally studied in the context of childhood trauma, resilience also appears to have benefits for employees. We investigate the impact of a structured workplace training programme building positive psychological capabilities

(mindfulness, psychological flexibility, social support, time management, courage, optimism and mental toughness) believed to be associated with resilience. Forty-three local government employees participated in a seven-week seminar programme. Resilience was measured before, during and after the seminar series. Following the seminar series, resilience, mindfulness, and psychological flexibility increased. We conclude that employees could benefit through relatively short, inexpensive resource-based interventions around psychological resilience.

Introduction

Psychological resilience refers to the ability to respond adaptively to adversity (Stajkovic, 2006). The resilience literature has mainly focused on childhood post-trauma adaptation, although recent studies have investigated adult resilience in occupational contexts (Hourani, Council, Hubal, & Strange, 2011). Research has suggested that resilience mitigates the impact of stress and burnout on employees (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009), although few studies have evaluated the effectiveness of organizational programmes designed to enhance resilience. This study considers the application of a structured occupational resilience programme designed to enhance positive psychological capabilities. The advantages of a structured programme lie in the capacity for future replication and evaluation by multiple trainers across other organizational contexts.

In the positive psychology literature, resilience has been viewed both as a *component* of a set of positive psychological resources and as an *accumulation* of resources. The former perspective is typified by the model of

Psychological Capital (Avey et al., 2009), which proposes that an individual's state of development consists of four positive resources: resilience, hope, optimism and general self-efficacy (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Conversely, the latter perspective is reflected in the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001), which proposes that resilience is based on the availability of positive resources (e.g., hope/optimism, cognitive flexibility and social support), and that stress occurs when these resources become depleted. Both perspectives are similar, however, in assuming that resilience and other positive psychological resources are interrelated. Given their presumed association, building resilience may be possible through a broad-based intervention designed to enhance a set of positive psychological capabilities.

Despite the ostensible benefits of resilience, little is known about how organizations can help employees to become more resilient. One potentially effective approach to building employee resilience involves the provision of *structured training* in workshops. Structured or manualised

training, which is now used frequently in clinical and counseling psychology training programmes, refers to instruction that is informed by a set of guidelines provided to the trainer. The guidelines will typically provide session outlines, suggested activities, worksheets and handouts, and advice for dealing with different client groups. The structured training approach has the advantages of standardising the quality of training and providing a theoretical basis for an intervention (Beutler, 1999). However, several concerns about the approach have been raised, including lack of flexibility in addressing client needs, reduction in therapist empathy and sensitivity, and the failure to accommodate new research evidence or innovations (Beutler, 1999; Henry, Strupp, Butler, Schacht, & Binder, 1993; Marshall, 2009). In an organizational context with a non-clinical population, the effectiveness of structured occupational resilience training is unknown.

It was felt that this programme would be particularly beneficial to local government employees, as public sector employees report higher levels of psychological injury claims and

exposure to stressful interactions with the general public (Dias, 1997). A similar picture emerges for European workers who were employed in public administration, and other sectors with high level of public contact (Milczarek, Schneider & González, 2009). As is the case with Britain, mental injury claims are the most expensive of all work injury categories with the longest period of absenteeism (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007, Workcover SA, 2009). In Australia the average direct claim costs of \$29, 901 AU (20, 272 EUR), with a mean period of twenty weeks absenteeism (Workcover SA, 2009). The most recent Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (2010) indicates that Australian public sector workplaces report frequent organizational restructuring, employment insecurity, productivity intensification and higher levels of stress claims (WRC, 2012). Again a similar picture of organizational restructuring and intensification is evident in the British and European public sector (Bach & Stroleny, 2013, EMCC, 2013).

In this study, we evaluate the effectiveness of a structured training programme in increasing resilience.

The programme was designed to enhance a range of positive psychological capabilities believed to be associated with resilience, including mindfulness, psychological flexibility, social support, time management, courage, mental toughness and optimism. Workplace climate was also measured, to clarify whether the programme effects could be differentiated from the potentially confounding effects of work environment, including supervisory support and peer cohesion. Total project costs were approximately \$22,000 AU (14,918 EUR), covering seminar presenters, programme development, weekly coaching sessions for all managers and supervisors as well as programme evaluation and measures. The programme was available to approximately sixty-five staff and ran over eight weeks. The project costs equated to approximately \$338.50 per staff member.

Method

Brief description of the programme

The programme consisted of seven, one-and-half-hour seminars which were attended by all employees,

including workplace managers. Seminar topics included mindfulness, psychological flexibility, occupational social support, occupational time management, courage (or overcoming avoidance), mental toughness (or persistence) and optimism (or happiness). In addition to the seminars, workplace managers were also provided with short coaching sessions following each seminar topic. These coaching sessions address how managers were going to reinforce employees' practice of seminar techniques.

Programme Design

The researcher conducted detailed interviews with ten workplace supervisors, managers and employees about the history, work organization, workplace climate and social relationships within the directorate. These interviews provided examples and material for customising programme delivery, language and content for specific resilience topics. The training programme was specifically designed for this cohort.

Training programme participants then completed the Resilience at Work Scales (RAW, Winwood, Colon &

McEwen, 2013) two weeks before the seminars commenced, three weeks after commencement, five weeks after commencement, and two weeks post-programme completion. The Moos Work Environment Scale (MWE, Insel, Moos & Press, 1974) was administered two weeks before programme commencement and two weeks after its completion. Utilisation surveys were provided at the beginning of each seminar to provide baseline data, and were re-administered at the beginning of subsequent seminars. Post-utilisation data were collected two weeks after programme completion. As well as being part of the training cohort, all ten workplace managers received weekly coaching in team goal-setting to facilitate practice of the range of techniques taught in each seminar.

Each seminar was based on a topic concept with three objectives. The topic content was delivered through a twenty minute lecture, facilitated group discussion and a small group exercise around workplace practice. All seminars included short reviews of previous seminars, followed by the introduction of new topics. Seminars were approximately one-and-a-half

hours in length, and were conducted onsite in staff training facilities. *Mindfulness* was the first seminar topic, and was based on the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes & Pierson, 2005). Seminar objectives included learning about mindfulness techniques for self-regulating affect and cognition, working mindfully, and focusing on the five senses.

Psychological flexibility was the second topic, and was based on principles of rational-emotive behavioral therapy (Ellis, 2011). Seminar objectives included education about the contribution of psychological flexibility to self-efficacy, and learning how to apply psychological flexibility to real life problems (e.g., acceptance, focusing on evidence, developing multiple perspectives and managing behavioral responses).

Occupational social support was the third topic. Seminar objectives included education about the contribution of social support to well-being, and identifying and overcoming barriers to social support (Cacioppo, Reis, & Zautra, 2011; Knox-Haly, 2009). *Occupational time management* was the fourth topic.

Objectives included education about the distinction between what can and cannot be controlled, using personal values to determine priorities, and strategies for protecting these priorities.

Courage (or the cognitive appraisal of fear and reduction of avoidance) was the fifth topic. Objectives included education about the relationship between fear and avoidance, helping participants to increase their approach behaviours and reduce avoidance (Avey et al., 2009). *Mental toughness (and persistence)* was the sixth topic. This topic corresponded to Avey et al.'s (2009) definition of hope: "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal directedness) and pathways (planning to meet goals)" (p. 681). Objectives included educating participants about personal sources of mental toughness (i.e., action and effort), developing strategies for persistence, and overcoming procrastination and pessimism.

Optimism (and happiness) was the topic of the seventh seminar. Objectives included education about the components of optimism and

happiness, and strategies for building optimism. These strategies were based on Schneider's (2001) research, which highlighted the importance of self-forgiveness, appreciation for the present (gratitude), and recognising opportunities for the future (in terms of self-efficacy for one's abilities).

Participants

The initial sample consisted of 43 respondents from a community services directorate of a local government authority. All employees from the community services directorate were invited to attend on a voluntary basis. Approximately two-thirds of the workforce participated in the programme, and reasons for non-participation included conflicts with part-time work, clashes with rostered days off or annual leave, as well as the need to maintain minimum staffing levels. This directorate was selected as it had experienced a number of significant changes in management and organizational structure. Employees in this directorate had also requested access to a programme which would build their mental health and well-being. This request arose in the context of staff needing to deal

with challenging behaviour from customers.

Participants were employed as community librarians, welfare officers, youth workers and arts project workers. These respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 65, with 34 female respondents and seven male respondents. Unfortunately the analysis could not consider gender differences due to the small number of male respondents. Twenty-five respondents held Bachelor degrees or higher university qualifications, whilst the remainder possessed vocational level qualifications. The post-intervention sample consisted of 30 respondents (twenty-six female respondents and four male respondents) with complete data. There was partial data for an additional 24 respondents who joined the programme at different points after the programme had started. This resulted in an unusual situation of more participants joining the programme as it progressed. Unfortunately the incomplete nature of data for these respondents meant that this data could not be used. There were no significant demographic differences between those that completed the programme

and those that did not. Data was not systematically collected on why participants chose to join the programme, but several participants volunteered that they were able to join the programme because they had returned from leave, or had heard positive feedback about the programme content. Ten supervisors and managers attended weekly individual coaching sessions around goal-setting to promote daily practice of seminar concepts in the workplace. These managers were also seminar participants.

Measures

Resilience was assessed using the RAW (Winwood et al., 2013). The RAW is 45-item scale which measures use of resilience building behaviours and attitudes. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have demonstrated the conceptual adequacy of the RAW, and Australian norms based on 510 Australian workers from a range of occupations have been developed for this scale (Winwood et al., 2013). The RAW demonstrates moderate correlations with scales measuring recovery from Occupational Fatigue Exhaustion and Recovery Scale, the General Health

Questionnaire and the Utrecht Engagement Scale (McEwen & Winwood, 2001). The RAW uses a seven point Likert scale (responses scored from 0 to 6) with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items of the RAW include: a) “I have important core values that I hold fast to in my worklife”; b) “I am able to change my mood at work when I need to”; and c) “I know my personal strengths and make sure I use them regularly in my work”.

Respondents were also asked to complete utilisation surveys for the capabilities being discussed in seminar topics. For example, participants were asked how often they applied the practice of mindfulness. Each utilisation questionnaire asked participants to rate how frequently they used each resource or resilience building behaviours. Utilisation data for resilience behaviours to be covered in the seminar began to be collected immediately prior to delivery of the relevant utilisation data and continued to be collected for each subsequent week of the programme. This enabled the researchers to collect evidence on pre-intervention levels of resilience

building practices, and collate weekly frequencies based on reports of daily usage. Workplace climate (i.e., supervisor support and peer cohesion) was measured using the Moos Work Environment scale (Insel, Moos, & Press, 1974). The MWE (Insel et al., 1974) measures supervisory support, peer cohesion (closeness with work colleagues), opportunity for autonomous decision-making in one’s role, opportunity for control over one’s role, work pressures, clarity about one’s role and task orientation (concentration on work tasks to the exclusion of workplace relationships). The MWE was included to help the researchers determine whether changes in resilience could be attributed to programme practices, and that shifts in resilience levels were not an artifact of changes in the work climate.

Data analysis

Changes in each capability were assessed using latent growth modeling (LGM). LGM is a longitudinal data analysis technique, which can be used to analyse datasets with three or more repeated assessments. For each individual, LGM estimates a growth curve comprising a latent intercept and

slope, representing the individual's initial standing on the first assessment and rate of change over time. Mean intercepts and slopes are then calculated across the sample. LGM has several advantages: a) it is flexible; b) can model both linear and non-linear change over time; c) can estimate the relationship between people's initial standing and their rate of change on each dimension; and d) is robust enough to cope with missing data points in estimating individual growth trajectories.

An initial LGM was tested for utilisation data for each seminar topic this included the intercept (or how often participants were using a particular resilience building practice before receiving any formal training) and a linear slope (this measured the increase or decrease in a particular resilience practice after the participant had received training). A quadratic slope was introduced if the initial model fitted poorly (as was the case with mindfulness). For each model, the intercept was located at the first point of data collection (e.g., for psychological flexibility, the intercept was fixed at Week 3 of the measurement period). The utilisation

data collected immediately before participants attended a seminar on a given topic represented a pre-intervention measure, and became the first point in the latent function curve. The linear and quadratic slope variables were scaled in terms of weeks. For variables with only two assessments (including optimism, supervisor support and peer cohesion), repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess changes in practice levels following participation in the training programme.

LGM analyses were conducted in Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012), using the Bayes estimator. Model fit was assessed by inspecting the 95% credible interval for the difference between the observed and replicated chi-square values. For each analysis, the confidence interval included zero and the posterior predictive p-value was non-significant, indicating each model provided a good fit to the data.

Results

The means and standard deviations of each variable are presented in Table 1. Examination of these means for the RAW resilience scores and utilisation

rates for resilience building practices revealed that over the duration of the training, resilience, mindfulness and psychological flexibility increased, as indicated by the significant positive latent slope means. However, the quadratic slope mean for mindfulness was both negative and significant, indicating that the rate of growth slowed over time.

Table 2 shows slopes were non-significant for social support, time management, courage and mental toughness, indicating these characteristics did not change substantially over the course of the programme. Optimism did not change significantly from baseline, $F < 1$. The latent intercept and slope for each variable were negatively correlated, suggesting that the programme was more beneficial for people who were low on each variable at the beginning. The results of each LGM, including the latent intercepts and slopes, are presented in Table 2.

With respect to the workplace climate measures, supervisor support remained largely unchanged from pre- to post-intervention, $F(1, 20) = 1.95$, $p > .10$, whereas peer cohesion decreased, $F(1, 20) = 6.74$, $p < .05$.

This suggests that participants increased their use of mindfulness and psychological flexibility techniques, and that this was associated with increased levels of resilience. The lack of change in the workplace climate measures indicates that improved resilience levels were not a result of changes in leadership, job autonomy, work pressure, opportunities for control over one's work or changes in job clarity.

Table 1: Mean scores (and standard deviations) for RAW scores and utilisation of resilience practice across the weeks of the programme

	Two weeks pre- seminars	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Two weeks post- seminars
<u>Positive resources</u>								
Resilience (RAW scores)	83.2 (13.2)	n/a	86.0 (11.4)	n/a	84.7 (10.7)	n/a	n/a	89.5 (10.4)
Mindfulness	4.8 (6.2)	6.0 (5.7)	7.2 (5.7)	8.4 (5.8)	8.1 (5.4)	9.3 (5.5)	9.5 (7.1)	9.2 (6.1)
Psychological flexibility	n/a	9.3 (6.0)	7.3 (4.8)	8.5 (5.2)	8.5 (5.3)	9.3 (5.2)	9.1 (5.8)	9.1 (6.3)
Social support	n/a	n/a	7.1 (4.2)	6.9 (5.1)	5.9 (3.8)	6.2 (4.0)	7.0 (4.7)	4.9 (3.1)
Time management	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.6 (7.0)	8.7 (4.7)	10.9 (6.0)	9.2 (5.3)	10.9 (6.0)
Courage	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.8 (3.6)	5.0 (2.8)	7.6 (5.1)	6.4 (4.4)
Mental toughness	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.2 (4.0)	8.2 (4.7)	8.5 (4.0)
Optimism	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.8 (0.7)	9.7 (0.9)
<u>Workplace climate</u>								
Supervisor support	52.8 (15.8)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	56.6 (8.6)
Peer cohesion	60.1 (10.4)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	57.4 (5.5)

Table 2: Results for practice levels of resilience capabilities

	Latent Variable Means			Correlation s
	Intercept	Linear slope	Quadratic slope	Intercept and linear slope
Resilience	82.96***	0.71**	n/a	-.70**
Mindfulness ^a	4.91***	1.42**	-0.11*	-.62**
Psychological flexibility	7.74***	0.26*	n/a	-.28
Social support	6.71***	-0.22	n/a	-.65*
Time management	10.98***	-0.12	n/a	-.52
Courage	5.09***	0.37	n/a	-.01
Mental toughness	7.29***	0.31	n/a	-.70*

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a For mindfulness, the correlation between the intercept and quadratic slope was .54 ($p < .05$), and the correlation between the linear and quadratic slopes was -.97 ($p < .001$).

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to evaluate a structured training programme to build occupational resilience. The results indicated that resilience levels did increase over the course of the training. Moreover, we found that the training increased levels of mindfulness and psychological flexibility. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that targeted improvement in particular psychological capabilities or resources through structured training leads to

increased employee resilience, and that a focus on mindfulness and psychological flexibility may be especially promising. Training in these areas may provide individuals with greater skill in cognitively anchoring attention and emotional reactions through mindfulness, and in reframing perceptions of objective circumstances into more helpful cognitions. These strategies may also alleviate entrenched negative automatic thoughts and affect states, thereby

helping employees to become more resilient to adversity.

While resilience ultimately increased over the seminar series, we found that the training had a differential impact on each capability. We found that social support, time management, courage, mental toughness and optimism did not change substantially from baseline levels. It is possible that these factors are less amenable to training, because they are more constrained by each employee's circumstances.

For example, social support may depend on colleagues' willingness to provide assistance, time management and autonomy depends on workload, courage and mental toughness depend on the availability of opportunities to face fears and apply persistence. Interestingly the levels of peer cohesion decreased over the course of the programme. There is a well established literature associating social support seeking with emotion focused coping, as well as reduced occupational stress (Knox-Haly, 2009). One possible explanation for decreased peer cohesion is that increased use of mindfulness and psychological flexibility were helping to tackle distressing emotions at 'the

source'. This might mean that there are less drivers for emotion-focused coping such as social support seeking and peer cohesion.

There may be several reasons for the limited change in some capabilities or resources with training. In this sample, optimism was relatively high when first measured, and so may not have increased substantially following the training. In addition, given the relatively short length of the study, there may not have been sufficient time for the capabilities taught in the later seminars to change substantially. Further, as previously mentioned training in mindfulness and psychological flexibility may have reduced the need for using external coping strategies, such as turning to social support.

However, resilience appeared to increase alongside both mindfulness and psychological flexibility and as such, it is possible that both capabilities underlie high resilience. However, with the present dataset, it was not possible to determine causal relations among the variables. While our study revealed a clear pattern of growth among these three variables following training, the conclusions of this study could be strengthened

through a research design that included a non-intervention (control) group. Such a study would also need to incorporate a longitudinal design that tracked individuals through different developmental studies. Masten's (2001) Project Competence is an excellent example of the time length that is required for properly understanding the development of resilience. This study followed a cohort of 250 participants over twenty years. This time scale enabled researchers to monitor how participants' resilience was maintained in the face of adverse life events. Further studies could also investigate the extent to which employees' evaluations of the training quality influence their participation and subsequent use of the techniques taught in the seminars. Moreover, long-term employee outcomes could be examined, such as job performance, satisfaction, organizational commitment, absenteeism, turnover, as well as the sustainability of increased resilience.

In addition, given that the study involved a non-clinical population of workers in stable employment, these people may already possess many of the capabilities that were taught in the

seminars. It should be noted that the seminar attendees were self-selected, and may therefore have represented a group who wished to improve already strong capabilities. Good levels of resilience and insight might also have contributed to the cohorts' initial request for this training programme. Future attempts to replicate this study using a more diverse sample of employees drawn from several organizations would be useful, and monitoring behavioural change over a longer time scale would be useful. Future studies could also employ an organizational-wide assessment of psychological capabilities before the training, to determine how a wider range of capabilities may be influenced by training.

In conclusion, this exploratory project suggests that employee resilience can be increased via structured training around a set of positive psychological capabilities. In particular, mindfulness and psychological flexibility show commensurate increases with resilience. Mindfulness and psychological flexibility are 'self-generated strategies', and their use is not dependent on external circumstances such as changed

leadership, job characteristics or peer cohesion. This is not to advocate mindfulness or psychological flexibility as a substitute for tangible action in the workplace, rather that these are helpful strategies in maintaining psychological well-being where there is limited opportunity for control

available to employees (i.e., job insecurity, organisational change or changes in one's direct supervisor or work colleagues). Finally at an estimated cost of \$338.50 per staff member, this is considerably cheaper than the average direct costs associated with a stress claims.

References

- Avey, J. B., Luthans, F., & Jensen, S. M. (2009). Psychological capital: A positive resource for combating employee stress and turnover. *Human Resource Management*, 48, 677-693.
- Bach, S. & Stroleny, A. (2013). Public Service Employment Restructuring in the Crisis in UK and Ireland: Social Partnership in Retreat. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, October 22, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0959680113505036
- Beutler, L. E. (1999). Manualizing flexibility: The training of eclectic therapists. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 55, 399-404.
- Blaug, R., Kenyon, A. & Lekhi, R. (2007). *Stress at Work*. London: The Work Foundation.
- Cacioppo, J. T., Reis, H. T., & Zautra, A. J. (2011). Social resilience: The value of social fitness with an application to the military. *American Psychologist*, 66, 43-51.
- Dias, S. (1997). *Analysis of mental disorder claims: Workers compensation statistics NSW*. Sydney: WorkCover NSW.
- Ellis, A. (2011). Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy. In R. J. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current Psychotherapies* (9th Ed., p. 196-234). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- EMCC (2013). *Restructuring Events Fact Sheet Database*. European Monitoring Centre on Change. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/erm/index.php/searchfactsheets> (accessed 26th November 2013).
- Foran, H. M., Adler, A. B., McGurk, D., & Bliese, P. D. (2012). Soldiers' perceptions of resilience training and postdeployment adjustment: Validation of a measure of resilience training content and training process. *Psychological Services*, 9, 390-403.
- Hayes, S., & Pierson, H. (2005). Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Encyclopedia of cognitive behavior therapy*, 1-4.
- Henry, W. P., Strupp, H. H., Butler, S. F., Schacht, T. E., & Binder, J. L. (1993). Effects of training in time-limited dynamic psychotherapy: Changes in therapist behavior. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 434-440.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing Conservation of Resources Theory. *Applied Psychology*, 50, 337-421.
- Hourani, L. L., Council, C. L., Hubal, R. C., & Strange, L. B. (2011). Approaches to the primary prevention of posttraumatic stress disorder in the military: A review of

- the stress control literature. *Military Medicine*, 176, 721-730.
- Insel, P. M., Moos, R. H., & Press, C. P. (1974). *Work environment scale*: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Knox-Haly, M. (2009). A review of contemporary research on the relationship between occupational stress and social support: Where are we now? *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Organisational Psychology*, 2, 44-63.
- Luthans, F., & Youssef, C. M. (2004). Human, social, and now positive psychological capital management: Investing in people for competitive advantage. *Organizational Dynamics*, 33, 143-160.
- Marshall, W. L. (2009). Manualization: A blessing or a curse? *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 15, 109-120.
- Masten, A.S. (2001). Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development. *American Psychologist*, 56, 227 - 238.
- Milczarek, M., Schneider, E. & González, E.R. (2009). OSH in Figures: Stress at Work- Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: European Agency for Health and Safety at Work.
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2012). Mplus Version 7.0. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Schneider, S. L. (2001). In search of realistic optimism: Meaning, knowledge, and warm fuzziness. *American Psychologist*, 56, 250-263.
- Stajkovic, A. D. (2006). Development of a core confidence-higher order construct. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 1208
- Winwood, P., Colon, R. & McEwen, K. (2013) Developing the RAW Scale, *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 55 (10), 1205 - 1212. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0b013e3182a2a60a
- Workcover, SA (2009). *Statistical Review 2008-2009*. Adelaide, Government of South Australia.
- WRC (2012). *Australia at Work*. Sydney: Workplace Research Centre.

Slovenian Psychologists' Association: A new EAWOP Constituent Member

Matic Kadliček
matic.kadlicek@hotmail.com

Information about the author

Matic Kadliček is current President of Work and Organizational Psychology Division in the Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA, for contact details see the end of this article). He is employed by Trgotur, Human Resources Outsourcing, Ltd. where his main roles are employee selection, psychological assessment, coaching, working environment analyses and performance training for client companies.

The Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA)

The last EAWOP General Assembly on May 23rd in Münster, Germany accepted Slovenia as a Constituent Member of EAWOP. Slovenia is represented by the Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (DWOP) of the Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA).

SPA was established in 1976 and is currently the only psychologists' association in Slovenia, thus standing

as a national association that links psychologists over the entire country and across all fields. SPA used to have around 600 full members; but this dropped quite significantly in a "silent period" following 2006 when the clinical psychologists established their own association. The number of members has steadily been growing since and currently there are more than 200 members in the association.

SPA full members hold at least a university degree in Psychology and may be members of one or more of the following Divisions:

- Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (the largest Division);
- Division of Psychologists working in Social Care;
- Division for Sports Psychology;
- Division of Educational Psychology;
- Division for Occupational Medicine, Traffic and Sports Medicine;

- Division for Psychotherapy and Psychological Counseling;
- Ethical Committee;
- Awards Committee;
- Court of Honor;
- Committee for Psycho-diagnostic Tools;
- National Committee for granting the EuroPsy Certificate.

SPA's vision is to have an active role connecting psychologists from the various fields with the aim of: a) building recognition for the profession and improving competencies; and b) ensuring mutual professional support, education and sharing of information. As a whole, the association draws its rules and statutes from similar organizations (EFPA and EAWOP). SPA Divisions, which are grouped similarly to most Psychology departments of universities, provide and facilitate strong links between academia and applied psychology through the exchange of best practice and up-to-date knowledge. This is

achieved through workshops or training sessions, lectures, annual professional meetings (Psychologists' Days) and quadrennial conferences (the latter are currently paused due to the recession and wider financial difficulties being experienced in our country) (Pictures 1-4).

For example, at the end of April 2013, SPA hosted the EFPA Board of Ethics in Ljubljana (link: <http://ethics.efpa.eu/meetings-/april-2013-ljubljana>) where host professors were representing their countries in the area of ethics in Psychology. One of the aims of the meeting was the development of a joint model (a Model Code). The first version of it is currently under the discussion of all EFPA members and was given substantial attention at the last General Assembly of EFPA in Stockholm 2013 (Pictures 5-6).

Pictures 1-4. Psychologists' Days



Pictures 5-6



The Association publishes a scientific journal called Horizons of Psychology, dedicated to psychological matters, with four issues being available each year. The Association also co-publishes Anthropos; an interdisciplinary journal covering topics in psychology, philosophy, sociology and other humanistic fields. In addition, our member services are able to support a number of international mobility and knowledge exchange projects between professionals across the EU (being funded for the second year running by the Leonardo da Vinci exchange programme). SPA is striving to open the Association outwards and achieve a greater public presence. This is being done by issuing statements about topics that demand professional opinion, sponsoring or endorsing events (e.g., descriptions of specific training programmes, coaching conferences) and by publishing short articles (known as digests) that are available on-line for the general public.

We have also been awarding the EuroPsy certificate for those SPA members that meet the criteria. In this way the EuroPsy provides a much needed common professional framework, that, sadly, our national

legislation at present lacks. We have been pushing for a law, defining the work of psychologists since 1994, but have so far been unsuccessful in our efforts.

SPA as a whole is currently focusing its attention towards promoting the work of psychologists to a wider audience and thus opening our Association and profession outwards. In this effort, our Facebook profile with digests of interesting psychology papers strive towards greater media exposure. To date this approach has proven effective since the Facebook page amassed 895 followers (to date of this publication) and psychologists are being invited to public debates and interviews more often. Even more importantly, the result is the strengthening of co-operation with an increasing number of other institutions and profiles; like the Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster, Agency for Traffic Safety, Institute of intergenerational cooperation (Ypsilon) and co-operation with psychology students' associations, rehabilitation programmes and Sports Psychology Day with our National Olympic Committee and other sports associations.

Picture 8 SPA General Assembly 2012



The Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (DWOP)

DWOP currently has 313 members and is growing, making it the largest section in our Association. DWOP connects psychologists working in the various fields of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) such as Human Resource departments in companies and public offices, the Employment Service of Slovenia, consultancies and educational companies, coaches and researchers of WOP.

Besides providing members of the Division with important events regarding their professional development (training sessions,

courses and exchanges) DWOP also organises two visits per year to successful Slovenian companies. The aim of these visits being the exchange and learning of best practice and networking amongst DWOP members. In these exchanges we cover topics such as: talent management; work motivation; creativity and innovation; organizational culture; career counseling; and leadership development.

Picture 6 Teambuilding workshops



Picture 7 Newly graduated psychology students (2012) pledge to abide to ethical and professional standards.



Current events and future plans

DWOP is currently spearheading a project of connecting experienced psychologists with their young colleagues through establishing a mentoring network. This is quickly becoming an association-wide endeavour and we are now in negotiations with a company to provide an on-line platform to encourage experienced professionals to share

their knowledge with younger experts-to-be. The next phase of this project will include setting ethical standards for such semi-formal mentoring pairs and enabling a distinction to be made between developmental mentoring with young people and supervisory mentoring within the EuroPsy framework.

In addition to the above, SPA is addressing several tough issues in WOP. Currently these are: a) Preventing the unauthorised use of psychological assessment tools amongst non-Psychologists; b) Combating the use of non-Psychologists to teach Psychology in high schools (implemented to support our country's austerity measures); c) Setting standards for Psychologists who provide judicial expert opinions; and d) Addressing expertise dilemmas in the execution of national rehabilitation programmes for car drivers found driving under the influence of alcohol.

Motivation for joining EAWOP

Since the mission of EAWOP is to promote and support the development and application of WOP and to facilitate links between scientists and practitioners working in this field; this

perfectly overlaps with the mission of DWOP. Joining a Europe-wide community of WOP professionals thus provides our Association with up-to-date resources through easier access to journals (EJWOP, OPR, EAWOP In-Practice), congresses, summer schools and WorkLabs (practitioner skills workshops). A more important benefit we wish to share with EAWOP would be reaching out to policy makers as a community; being much stronger than separate initiatives. It is becoming ever clearer that sharing a common European economy requires an ever increasingly multicultural approach, where EAWOP could contribute irreplaceable knowledge to us.

Contact information:

Slovenian Psychologists' Association

Linhartova 13 (room 117)

1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-mail: psy@guest.arnes.si

Phone/fax: +386 (01) 282 10 86
(during office hours, Tuesdays from 17.00 to 19.00)

Current president: Dr. Vlasta Zabukovec (vlasta.zabukovec@ff.uni-lj.si)

The Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS)

Despoina Xanthopoulou
School of Psychology
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki



Ioannis Nikolaou
Dept. of Management Science &
Technology, Athens University of
Economics and Business

During EAWOP'S 2013 General Assembly in Münster, Greece has been accepted as a Constituent Member of EAWOP; represented by the Division of Organizational Psychology of the Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS).

The HPS was established in 1990, and currently numbers more than 600 members. Full members of the HPS hold a PhD in Psychology and are primarily affiliated to universities and research institutes.

The main aims of HPS are: a) to support and promote research and teaching of Psychology in Greece; b) to maintain and develop collaboration among Greek psychologists, both academics and practitioners; c) to create and strengthen the social relations among psychologists, and d) to disseminate scientific knowledge in practice in order to promote public health.

HPS strives to be socially present and to advance the science of Psychology, particularly through the organization of the bi-annual conference of Psychological Research in Greece with national and international participation, the representation at national and international scientific organizations, as well as through issuing "Psychology/ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ", the journal of the society that publishes academic papers in Greek and English. HPS is a member of the International Union of Psychological Science.

The Division of Organizational Psychology is one of the 12 Divisions of HPS, and currently counts 19 active members. The Division consists of faculty members in Greece and abroad, practitioners who are also PhD holders, and PhD students in Work & Organizational Psychology. The Organizational Psychology Division aims to make a significant contribution to the development of work and organizational

psychology in Greece. To this end, two conferences have been organised so far in Athens (in 2010 and 2012) with international keynote speakers. These conferences focused on theory-based research and evidence-based practice; with attendance exceeding 100 participants each time.

At the latest conference, Prof. Arnold B. Bakker (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Prof. Evangelia Demerouti (Eindhoven University of Technology) gave keynote

lectures entitled “The Spill over-Cross over model” and “Job Demands and Job Resources: Given and Crafted”, respectively. Also, Prof. Aristotelis Kantas was awarded for his contribution to the establishment and advancement of Organizational Psychology in Greece. The remaining programme focused on topics, such as work-family conflict, motivation at work, burnout and work engagement, as well as organizational identification, perceived organizational support and emotional intelligence.

Picture 1. Prof. Evangelia Demerouti presenting at the Division of Organizational Psychology 2012 conference



More pictures of the event may be found at: <http://greekworkpsychology2012.wordpress.com/>. The next conference will be held in Athens in the spring 2014.

In addition, the Division organises invited symposia in “Organizational Psychology” at the bi-annual Conferences of HPS. In the past Conference (May, 2013), two symposia were organised concerning ‘Career and Personnel Selection Issues in Organizational Psychology’, and ‘Work-Related Well-being: Measurement and Underlying Psychological Processes’. Furthermore, the members of the Division participate actively in International Conferences, such as the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) Conference, the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) Conference, the Academy of Management Conference (AoM) and the European Association of

Occupational Health Psychology Conference –to name a few. Finally, members are active in Editorial Boards of international, peer-reviewed journals in the area of work and organizational psychology.

The main aims of the Division of Organizational Psychology of the HPS for the years to come are to facilitate and promote the visibility of research conducted by its members to Greece and abroad, and to disseminate organizational psychology research to teaching and practice in order to broaden the impact of Organizational Psychology in Greece. To this end, the Division of Organizational Psychology of HPS will take full advantage of the support and opportunities provided by EAWOP. We are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with the EAWOP Executive Committee and the other Constituent Members with the outmost purpose to empower each member, as well as the organization as a whole.



e a w o p

European Association of Work
and Organizational Psychology

EWOP.ΣPRACTICE

European Work and Organizational Psychology In Practice