

Focus on IAG's work

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Study of leading indicators for trust – building blocks of a culture of prevention

Problem

The world of work is becoming increasingly complex, and it is now more important than ever that we retain our ability to act even under uncertain circumstances. For assurance of this ability, trust is a significant factor in safety and health at work.

In an international study, the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), the IAG and WissensImpuls have developed leading indicators for trust that are suitable for identifying and measuring the potential for promoting safety, health and well-being in an organization or department. This promotes a culture of prevention, a new paradigm for the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases.

Activities

Based on a multi-level model of organizational culture and an integrative model of trust, the international research team developed a common perspective for an analysis and measurement strategy. The following activities were carried out:

- **Literature review:** a literature review referencing 48 sources in English, Korean and German identified 247 trust practices.
- **Development of a factor model:** the trust practices first generated a comprehensive question pool. The questions were answered by 807 workers in seven Korean companies.



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An exploratory factor analysis was used to identify a factor model for trust with reference to safety and health. The model's reliability and validity were tested with a confirmatory factor analysis. The factors of competence, justice, care and cooperation were shown to be statistically significant for trust in a work context.

- **Development of leading indicators:** based on this, leading indicators for trust with reference to safety, health and well-being at work were developed and trialed in a multi-stage process. The process included a short questionnaire, one-to-one interviews and a workshop.

During the trial, 40 safety and health experts from Europe and other regions of the world completed the questionnaire. Of these, nine participated in one-to-one interviews lasting between one and two hours.

The outcomes of the interviews were analysed by means of a qualitative content analysis. A total of 200 propositions were classified with the aid of a coding guide and scaled. In an interactive workshop, three leading indicators for trust with a particularly beneficial effect upon a culture of prevention were formulated and validated jointly with the participants. These were: (1) Caring for oneself and others in the institution/ company, (2) Making clear what a person or organization stands for, (3) Making a difference in one's own sphere of activity.

Results and Application

Based on the results of the international study, management personnel and prevention experts now have access to an assessment with which they can analyse trust practices in an organization or department and thus optimize the culture of prevention. The trust assessment contains the following components:

1. A **short questionnaire** comprising 20 propositions on specific trust practices. Half of the propositions can be grouped under interpersonal trust, the other half under institutional trust. For each question, respondents contrast their current work situation with their desired work situation. The interpretation compares these two aspects with each other (gap analysis). The questions exhibiting the greatest difference will be followed up in one-to-one interviews and a workshop.

2. **One-to-one interviews** are used to analyse the cultural dynamics giving rise to the gaps. For this purpose, compensating and reinforcing mechanisms for trust in practice at the workplace are to be formulated jointly by those involved, with reference to specific examples.
3. Based on the results of the interviews, an **interactive workshop** is to be held with all interviewees. The purpose in this case is to reveal the convictions underlying the mechanisms and thus initiate a cultural change.

Factsheets on the leading indicators, containing simple measuring instruments, are available for performance of the trust assessment. The factsheets follow the structure of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) factsheet system for proactive indicators for the measurement and control of safety, health and well-being at work. The methods used are described in a **manual**.

Area of Application

Accident insurance institutions, companies, public institutions

Expert Assistance

IAG, International Cooperation Unit