Grit Tanner, Eva Bamberg, Carolin Baur, Marlies Schümann*

Workplace Health Promotion Inspired by Corporate Social Responsibility – Interactions Within Supply Chains and Networks**

Abstract

Workplace health promotion (WHP), which is supported by networks and business partners, is an important issue of corporate social responsibility. In an interview-study with enterprise and industry representatives, we analyzed whether WHP as one aspect of CSR is already realized within the supply chain and how interactions within the supply chain and networks can be described in terms of WHP. The results showed that issues of occupational safety are relevant within business relationships, but WHP in general is found to be less so. Networks outside the supply chain are often used to support WHP. The most-mentioned practice to ensure occupational health in supply chains is the control of suppliers (e.g., through audits). Collaborations (e.g., joint projects) were somewhat less stated. In conclusion, enterprises need to establish internal structures to conduct successful WHP within their supply chain. Future research should investigate factors that foster or hinder the process of establishing WHP within supply chains.

Keywords: workplace health promotion, corporate social responsibility, supply chain, networks, collaboration
(JEL: M14, K32, D90)

In industrialized countries, there is a long tradition of workplace health promotion (WHP). This includes methods and strategies to reduce injuries and illness at work, to improve working conditions and to enhance health in working life. However, the conditions of health promotion in organizations are quite different. Some enterprises are equipped with a well-developed system; they have the requisite structures and resources for health promotion, while others do not. The restrictions of such enterprises may be reduced through sharing of resources, such as concepts and/or experi-

* Grit Tanner (corresponding author): University of Hamburg, Work and Organizational Psychology, Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 Hamburg, Germany. E-Mail: grit.tanner@uni-hamburg.de
Eva Bamberg, University of Hamburg, Work and Organizational Psychology, Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 Hamburg, Germany. E-Mail: bamberg@uni-hamburg.de
Carolin Baur, University of Hamburg, Work and Organizational Psychology, Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 Hamburg, Germany. E-Mail: carolin.baur@uni-hamburg.de
Marlies Schümann, University of Hamburg, Work and Organizational Psychology, Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 Hamburg, Germany. E-Mail: marlies.gude@uni-hamburg.de

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ences. To realize such a resource sharing, health networks and health promotion within the supply chain might be used. Both are elements of a WHP, which is inspired by an organization's social responsibility. In this article, we discuss whether health-related networks and health promotion within the supply chain are key elements of WHP. We qualitatively examine how the cooperation within these networks can be described.

The CSR-inspired Approach to Health Promotion at Work

According to the European Commission, corporate social responsibility (CSR) describes "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, 2011, p. 6). Respect for applicable legislation and for collective agreements between social partners is a prerequisite for meeting the responsibility of corporations. As the definition of the European Commission shows, CSR is characterized by a broad field of action. In comparison, WHP deals with the restricted field of occupational safety and psychosocial factors of work and well-being.

However, there are several ways how CSR and WHP are linked. Work-related diseases and accidents have negative effects for employees and their families. They also impose high costs on the economy. Therefore, WHP is an important field of CSR. CSR offers a suitable basis for the integration of WHP into a broader framework (Larrieta-Rubín de Celis, Fernández de Bobadilla-Güémez, Alonso-Almeida, & Velasco-Balmased 2017). A socially responsible orientation that is incorporated in strategic human resource management can contribute to the achievement of employees' wellbeing (Dežmar-Krainz, 2015). Moreover, WHP contributes to the performance of CSR (Zwetsloot & Starren, 2004). High-quality WHP is more than occupational safety. Whereas occupational safety focuses on the reduction of the risk of injuries at work and occupational diseases, WHP comprises a resource-oriented approach and aims to enhance the potential for the promotion of health in the workforce and to maintain a process of continuous improvement that combines individual-directed and environment-directed measures (Beck, Lenhardt, Schmitt, & Sommer, 2015; Cox, 1997; Hammer, Liebherr, Kersten, & Haas, 2015). Therefore, the quality of WHP influences the quality of CSR and vice versa.

The link between WHP and CSR is only partly addressed by the instruments of CSR and of WHP. Jain, Ripa, and Herrero (2014) conclude that psychosocial factors related to job content (such as lack of variety, fragmented or meaningless work, under-use of skills) and issues related to the role in the organization (such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and responsibility for people) are rarely covered by CSR instruments (Jain, Ripa, & Herrero, 2014, pp. 237f; Jain, Leka, & Zwetsloot, 2011). Jain et al. (2011, 2014) propose a CSR-inspired approach to the management of psychosocial issues at work. This means, that psychosocial issues are fully integrated

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into organizational strategies and processes, and partnerships and dialogue between stakeholders are strengthened.

The effectiveness of health promotion differs in relation to the fields of intervention (Sockoll, Kramer, & Bödeker, 2013). Only some companies – especially large organizations – conduct WHP of high quality (e.g., Beck et al., 2015; McCoy, Stinson, Scott, Tenney, & Newman, 2014). Typically, health protection is institutionalized within such companies; special experts are employed for health protection and social services, and they have distinct budgets for health promotion. Many large companies integrate human resource development, job design, and health promotion. Activities in such companies are diverse, address the physical as well as the psychosocial aspects of health and are based on problem analyzes and data that have been obtained through a health surveillance and reporting system. Other companies are not able to ensure the quality of WHP (Beck et al., 2015). In such enterprises – especially small and medium-sized companies – health promotion does usually not exist in an institutionalized form. Often, there is no contact person for health issues within the company. Specific expertise is lacking with regard to the importance of work for health, the legal obligations of the employer, and the instruments of health promotion (Legg, Olsen, Laird, & Hasle, 2015; McCoy et al., 2014).

The Importance of Networking

The cooperation of different organizations might be an approach to compensate that WHP with high quality is low spread. Networks across various organizations can enable the participating organizations to exchange experience, learn from each other, share resources, and conduct projects together. Organizations within a supply chain can also assemble such networks. In this case, stakeholders (organizations, groups or individuals, which can affect or be affected by (other) organizations; Freeman, 1984) are part of the network (Auvinen, Kohtamäki, & Ilvesmäki, 2012). Along these lines, Zink (2014, p. 128) recommends "a systemic and holistic approach regarding whole value creation chains including all working conditions along the value creation".

The reasons and motivations for building a WHP-oriented network are quite diverse (Auvinen et al., 2012). Frequently, the participants only want to inform themselves, for example about the psychosocial risks at work. In such cases, the exchange of information is given priority. In other cases, the participants seek the use of special instruments or methods. For example, when enterprises start to conduct risk management, the use of external expertise may be helpful in learning about the usability of instruments and tools (Beck et al., 2015). Networks, supply chain management and, generally, the cooperation between different organizations, are new for WHP, which in the past has mostly focused on single organizations. However, the cooperation with other organizations is a common strategy of CSR. According to Freeman (1984), CSR includes the integration of the interests of all stakeholders.

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Therefore, including stakeholders, WHP networks, and the connection between WHP and supply chain management are appropriate possibilities in the realization of a CSR-inspired approach to WHP. In summary, it can be stated that networks enable the exchange of information, of experience, and enable mutual support on health-related issues in the workplace. Networks are useful to spread the concepts, the instruments, and strategies of WHP. Therefore, networks put the link between CSR and WHP into practice if such networks include the supply chain and the stakeholders.

A prerequisite for supply chain networks is that the enterprises feel responsible for the WHP of the other organizations within their supply chain. However, there is little information on the use of networks with regard to WHP within the supply chain. Furthermore, there is scarce data on WHP as an issue in supply chain management. Therefore, in our explorative study we are interested in the following questions:

(1) a) Is WHP an important issue within the supply chain?

b) Is there responsibility on the part of the business partners with regard to WHP?

(2) Are networks a commonly used tool in the support of WHP?

However, it is obvious that it is not networks in general that support the process of WHP. An important question is how the partners can interact and cooperate within such networks and within a supply chain, how they can create "a favorable context, allowing deep commitment of all the partners in a climate of trust" (Ming, Garbot, & Houé, 2014, p. 56). As in other networks, the quality of the relationship differs among partners within a WHP network. With respect to supply chain partners, in addition to the so-called arm's-length relationship (Arabe, 2003), Ming et al. (2014) distinguish among cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. Whereas an arm's-length relationship means limited interaction with low commitment and trust, coordination refers to the reconciliation of action, which is only possible with high commitment and trust.

Previous research has investigated various factors that influence the quality of the relationships in WHP networks. Ming et al. (2014) emphasize trust and power/dependence as the two main relevant dimensions. Auvinen et al. (2012) consider power and interest. In a study on risk management in four European countries, Janetzke and Ertel (2017) found the following key success factors: consensus building on approaches and methods among the players, a participation culture, and a focus on operational activities from initiation to the implementation of measures. Locke, Amengual, and Mangla (2009) distinguish between the traditional compliance approach and the commitment approach. The compliance model is preferred by most global brands and NGOs to redress poor working conditions in supply chains. The central assumption of this model holds that global brands enforce the

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compliance of suppliers with codes of conduct. Rules and standards (for example on occupational safety) are prescribed, repeated audits are conducted, and pressures from above and negative incentives are used. Locke et al. (2009) argue that a more commitment-oriented approach is useful to improve work standards and complement the compliance approach:

> Rather than simply employing factory audits and the threat of sanctions […] the commitment approach uses this same information and the frequent presence of auditors in the factories to engage in a process of root-cause analysis, joint problem solving, information sharing, and the diffusion of best practices that is in the mutual self-interest of the suppliers, the auditors, and the global corporations for which they work (p. 321).

Applying the compliance-commitment framework to WHP networks leads to the central question of whether there is a balance of power between network members and whether they have similar influence. For example: Are WHP standards developed in an equitable process? Do network members have the option to choose the instruments and methods that are applied in their organization? These questions concern the abovementioned relevance of the power of network members. A further central issue concerns the quality of participation of network members. According to Dachler and Wilpert's (1978) conceptualization, participation has different levels: (1) employees are informed about the decisions that are to be made; (2) employees can give their opinion, (3) employees' opinions are taken into account, (4) employees have a veto and (5) the decision is completely in the hands of organization members.

Dachler and Wilpert (1978) developed their conceptualization with respect to employee participation within enterprises. Information on participation within WHP networks is still missing. It remains an open question whether the model of Dachler and Wilpert can be applied to networks of organizations and whether there are different levels of participation. Thus, in our study we are interested in the following questions:

(3) How can interactions within the supply chain and networks be described? Is there evidence for the participation of the network members?

Methods

Sample and Procedure

This explorative study aimed to identify cooperation practices in supply chains or networks in terms of WHP. The study is part of a larger research project on the conjunction of WHP and CSR.[1] We conducted interviews with experts from various enterprises and industries to identify the best practices in both WHP and CSR. In addition to identifying cooperation practices in supply chains, we sought to clar-

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ify the practicability of WHP initiatives along the supply chain in greater detail. Hence, we conducted a group interview with additional health managers of various German enterprises and also a focus group discussion that concerned the results of the individual interviews. By using these group methods, we aimed to enhance a more active discourse on the topic, which would provide further insights.

Individual Interviews

The interviews were conducted by two of the authors and occurred either face-to-face or by phone. For the enterprise representatives, the interviews lasted 63 minutes on average, and for the industry representatives, the interviews lasted 45 minutes on average. We used semi-structured interview guides and asked questions about the implementation of WHP and/or CSR, cooperation and business partners, and the conjunction of WHP and CSR. In this study, we focused on questions about the premises of business relationships, interactions with business partners and external consultants or institutions, and the perceived responsibility of enterprises for business partners.

Enterprise representatives

To recruit the enterprise representatives, nominated enterprises and award recipients of health and CSR awards in Germany were contacted. In particular, we invited health and/or CSR managers to participate in an interview. Overall, we interviewed twelve health managers and five CSR managers of 15 German enterprises that range from small to large-scale. In two enterprises, we were able to interview both the health manager and the CSR manager. The enterprises included the following industries: chemical [n=4], textile [n=1], traffic and logistics [n=2], financial service [n=1], energy [n=1], electronics [n=2], craft [n=1], metal working [n=1], retail [n=1], and the mail order business [n=1]. Seven of the enterprise representatives were female and ten were male. The majority of representatives were at least 5 years employed in their jobs.

Industry representatives

We conducted ten interviews with German representatives of different industries. To recruit the interviewees, we contacted persons who worked for occupational insurance associations, unions, chambers, or key societies, and who were responsible for issues of health and safety. The interviewees represented the following industries: chemical [n=2], healthcare [n=2], foodstuff [n=2], craft [n=1], construction [n=1], textile [n=1], and telecommunication [n=1]. Four of the interviewees were female and six were male. All representatives were at least 5 years employed in their jobs.

Group interview

The group interview was conducted by two of the authors and occurred face-to-face. To recruit the participants, we contacted a network of additional health man-

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agers associated with our research project. We invited the health managers to participate in a group interview concerning the practicability of cooperation with business partners in terms of WHP. Six health managers (four women and two men) of various German enterprises decided to participate in the group interview. With one exception, all health managers were employed in their jobs less than 5 years. The interview lasted 139 minutes. Again, we used a semi-structured interview guide and asked questions about the implementation of WHP, interactions with business partners, and the assumed requirements for such interactions.

Focus group discussion

Following the individual interviews, we conducted a focus group discussion to discuss the practicability of WHP initiatives along the supply chain with the interviewees from the individual interviews on basis of their previous descriptions. Furthermore, to gain new perspectives, we invited additional experts in occupational health and corporate responsibility (e.g., health managers, consultants), which were associated with our research project. In sum, ten interviewees and seven experts participated in the focus group discussion. Using the world café method (Brown & Isaacs, 2005), we discussed the practicability of interactions with business partners, which were identified from the individual interviews, with three different groups. The results of each iteration of discussion were registered by two of the authors, and thus group 2 and group 3 were able to build their discussion based on previous ideas. Each iteration of discussion lasted 15 minutes.

Analysis

The data analysis of the individual interviews and the group interview followed Mayring's (2015) approach to content analysis. In accordance with our semi-structured interview guide, we deductively coded the interview data. The interview data were coded by three members of the project staff. To ensure a high reliability of codings, the codings were discussed by the three coders in an iterative process and codings were adjusted, as appropriated. The deductive coding was performed with MAXQDA. Subsequently, we inductively assessed the data of the categories that were relevant for interactions with other organizations to identify how interaction is conducted by the enterprises in terms of WHP and, in terms of the group interview, how practicable interactions are estimated. In this paper, quotations are translated from German into English.

Findings

Individual interviews

In the interview data of the health and CSR managers, 150 codes were relevant for interactions with other organizations; in the interview data of the industry representatives, 57 codes were identified as relevant.

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Research question 1a – The importance of healthy working conditions

To clarify the importance of occupational health and safety for the enterprises of the interviewed managers, we asked whether healthy working conditions is a premise for the enterprises' business relationships with other enterprises. The most-mentioned premises for business relationships were costs and quality. In terms of working conditions, occupational safety, fair wages, and no child labor appear to be the most relevant. In the event of an infringement, the managers referred to sanctions that are designated. For that reason, opportunities for control (e.g., through audits) and contractual commitments are seen as important tools to act as a responsible enterprise. WHP in general is not relevant for business relationships. The industry representatives highlighted that financial dependency leads to a focus on costs, and, in turn, to the neglect of occupational safety within the supply chain. In particular, various representatives assume that accepting responsibility for business partners would be a burden, especially small businesses:

> [In terms of occupational health and safety,] enterprises assume that suppliers adhere to legal requirements […] and, thus, they don't have to take care of it. *(industry representative, foodstuff)*

In the view of the industry representatives, occupational safety is an important premise for relationships with business partners. In the foodstuff industry, hygiene was also mentioned as a central premise. However, in the chemical, textile, and foodstuff industries, high pressure in terms of productivity is seen to reduce the focus on a healthy workplace.

The consideration of health and safety is seen by industry representatives to often be based on customer wishes and enterprises' worries about image damage. Along these lines, some enterprise representatives have stated that one aim of conducting collaborative activities within the supply chain is to ensure an enterprise's reputation. Issues of occupational safety and environment protection are the primary focus when conducting collaborative practices.

Research question 1b – Responsibility for business partners

In large-scale enterprises, the responsibility for business partners might be divided between the parent company and subsidiaries, and, as a result, occupational health and safety cannot be guaranteed for the whole supply chain:

> I am not able to appraise this [occupational health as a criterion for business relationships], because it is not operated by our local subsidiary. These kinds of things are managed by our parent company. At our warehouse, we receive products in their final condition, and we can only vouch for what we are able to influence, namely, the European supply chain. *(enterprise representative, electronics)*

Moreover, the industry representatives see variations in the auditability of supply chains in Europe and global supply chains. The supply chains in Europe are seen as being easier to audit than global supply chains, particularly in the textile industry.

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Overall, the responsibility towards business partners is understood quite differently by the managers. The managers feel mainly responsible for issues of occupational safety. Beyond this, the rule "we come first" appears to be applied in most of the interviewed enterprises. However, some enterprises, particularly in the retail and chemical industries, are interested in long-term relationships with business partners and the joint development of health and safety at work. Transparency is seen as a requirement for constructive collaboration. Additionally, individual parent companies determine the responsibility towards contractors to their subsidiaries to accept responsibility for the potentially dangerous operations that are conducted by contractors.

Research question 2 and 3 – Interactions with business partners

The different types of interaction with business partners that were mentioned by the enterprise representatives are illustrated in Table 1. Audits appear to be the most-often used tool for interactions within supply chains. In particular, for the chemical industry, audits that concern occupational safety are widely used. Audits are conducted quite differently by the enterprises. Some managers described in detail a dynamic approach of audits (audit – feedback – re-audit), whereas others described audits as being rather static (no feedback loop). Furthermore, many enterprises use networks and online tools for their audits; nevertheless, on-site inspections are seen as the most useful. Usually, bad audit results are accompanied by sanctions of the customer enterprise. However, single enterprises hire external experts for their audits, and the external experts consult the audited enterprise to improve its occupational safety. In traffic and logistics enterprises, audits appear to be rather unusual.

Codes of conduct are the second most-named practice by the interviewed enterprises to ensure values within the supply chain. As with the abovementioned audits, code breaches are accompanied by sanctions. Single managers mentioned that their enterprise's responsibility for their first-tier supplier should be extended to the second-tier supplier to guarantee a more sustainable promotion of health and safety. This opinion is shared by the industry representatives. Audits are seen as partly insufficient because of their sole focus on first-tier suppliers. The experts mainly mentioned codes of conduct and certificates as common ways to implement health and safety along the supply chain in the chemical, textile, and foodstuff industries.

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Table 1. Interactions of enterprises within supply chains.

Type of interaction	Frequency of enterprises	Industries
Audits (static or dynamic)	9	chemical industry [e08, e22,e29], textile industry [e30], electronics [e03,e31], metal working [e32], retail [e39], and mail order business [e36]
Codes of Conduct	7	chemical industry [e22,e29], financial service industry [e40], energy [e06], electronics [e03], retail [e39], and mail order business [e36]
Certificates	5	chemical industry [e22], traffic and logistics [e13], metal working [e32], retail [e39], and mail order business [e36]
Informal Exchange (e.g., get and/or give feedback)	5	chemical industry [e38], textile industry [e30], traffic and logistics [e01], energy [e06], and mail order business [e36]
Contractor Management	2	energy [e06] and metal working [e32]
Corrective Action Plans	2	textile industry [e30] and retail [e39]
Best-Practice Sharing	1	chemical industry [e29]
Providing WHP tools for others	1	chemical industry [e08]
Carrying out projects together	2	chemical industry [e22,e29]
Adjusting own work processes in relation to partner's work load	1	retail [e39]

Note. Overview is based on the sample of enterprise representatives (N=17). Assignment of enterprises is presented in square brackets.

Additional ways to manage collaboration with business partners are contractor management and corrective action plans. Again, the enterprises appear to appreciate different advantages of these practices: data management (e.g., of accident rates) versus opportunity to periodically exchange mutual information (e.g., types of best-practice sharing). One difficulty in contractor management is seen in collaboration with small businesses, because small businesses do not have the capacity to fulfill the same standards as large-scale enterprises:

> [...] this is always that kind of discussion we have with our colleagues who are operating with [business partners]. We say: When choosing suppliers, you cannot apply the criteria that are designed to manage a large-scale company to a small company that employs ten people [...]. However, this does not mean that such small businesses don't have things implemented that are beneficial to employees' health. It's just slightly harder to assess, because things are less structured and not reported in some glossy brochure and so on. *(enterprise representative, energy)*

In terms of mutual information exchange, managers initially perceive a need for improvement in exchanges across their own business group. Mutual information exchange along the supply chain is mainly conducted informally. Moreover, the interviewed enterprise representatives rarely use their suppliers' feedback to improve their own WHP. Only one enterprise representative explicitly mentioned the use of

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best-practice sharing. Within the supply chain, one manager challenged the meaning of information exchange (or gathering feedback) in terms of good working conditions because business partners operate often on a different level.

In general, small businesses appear to use exclusively informal exchanges. In the view of industry representatives, large-scale enterprises are perceived as having more resources to consider health and safety along their supply chain than small businesses and public organizations. The reasons for that are seen in the financial resources of large-scale enterprises to have themselves certified; and they are also more independent from specific suppliers or customers.

Two enterprises carried out projects together with their business partners. These projects support local programs of the partner's community. Both managers emphasized that shared values are an important requirement to conduct this type of collaboration. Additionally, the support of NGOs is useful. Another approach that is conducted by one enterprise provides the opportunity for the business partners to purchase their developed WHP-tools. In contrast, one manager mentioned that enterprises must consider the individual circumstances of their suppliers:

> You cannot simply impose your concepts on them, but you have to engage in a continuous dialogue. *(enterprise representative, textile industry)*

For that reason, it is seen as a necessity to initiate a permanent dialogue and to adjust one's own work processes as a result of root-cause analyses.

Research question 2 and 3 – Networking beyond supply chains

The majority of enterprise representatives mentioned that they participate in networking. Most of them engage in networks within their sector and/or between competitors:

> Competition doesn't mean that you can't exchange views on certain issues. Especially in terms of workplace health promotion, we are well networked. Thus, we contact each other once in a while: Do you have experience with this topic? Or: How do you handle that issue? *(enterprise representative, electronics)*

The establishment of networks within a sector and/or between competitors is seen as an important way to exchange information. In particular, networks are most common in the chemical industry. In terms of representatives of occupational insurance associations, various networks and best practices sharing within the specific sector are initiated by these associations. However, other enterprise representatives mentioned that activities of occupational insurance associations are not present in daily business and that mainly small businesses use their offers.

External support by consultants or institutions is mostly used for issues that pertain to one's own enterprise and WHP activities. However, support that is provided by NGOs is focused on activities within supply chains. Using offers by occupational insurance associations was not mentioned by the enterprise representatives, al-

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though some enterprises participate in occupational insurance associations' competitions. In addition to the managers' view, various industry representatives see the support of health insurance funds as an important factor across all industries. However, in terms of best-practice sharing strategies, health insurance funds should improve their activities, especially for small businesses. Overall, the industry representatives assume that networking and best-practice sharing is an important and requested factor for enterprises.

Group Interview

In the data of the group interview, 41 codes were identified as being relevant to clarify the practicability of interactions with business partners in terms of occupational health and in order to provide further insights on research question 2 and 3. In summary, the advantages of cooperation along the supply chain, in particular information exchange and the common development of WHP, are recognized; however, the realizability is contested. Some managers mentioned that international operating enterprises already take care of the WHP activities of suppliers, e.g., through audits, whereas in public administration that is not possible because of bureaucratic structures. In the view of the interviewees, WHP is still not ideal from the intra-organizational perspective, especially in small and medium-sized companies. For this reason, the acceptance of activities along the supply chain by an enterprise's employees is contested by the interviewees, because employees might perceive themselves to be less important than suppliers or suppliers' employees. However, if enterprises were to ensure that suppliers engage in WHP, their authenticity with regard to WHP would be strengthened and thus intra-organizational WHP would be more effective.

In general, the use of legal obligations to ensure the WHP of suppliers is seen as a risk for WHP motivation in any regard, because WHP would be perceived as burden. Additionally, imposing obligations on suppliers might inhibit an adequate individualization of WHP and thus reduce its effectiveness. However, obligations in terms of minimum standards of workplace health and safety are seen as a useful tool that can be easily used by large-scale companies. In the view of the interviewees, certificates or seals are an appropriate way to increase the motivation of large-scale enterprises to consider WHP in supply chains. The interviewees mentioned two approaches to ensure WHP in supply chains: first, practicing control and, second, exchanging information. In terms of practicing control, the interviewees contested whether the existing structures provide adequate opportunities for control or sanction. However, control is seen as an important factor for WHP in supply chains because enterprises are motivated to fulfill their legal obligations. Instead of control, a more valuable approach is seen in the exchange of information through workshops. However, the interviewees anticipate difficulties in terms of financial and personnel resources to implement such an exchange, in particular for small and medium-sized companies. One manager mentioned that a common business objective is needed to

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participate in shared WHP activities. Thus, cooperation with service partners is seen as not being worthwhile. Overall, the interviewees see a higher practicability in networking outside of the supply chain.

Focus Group Discussion

With respect to research question 3, the central results of the focus group discussion concern the importance of the current market situation and the power of the client. During the discussion, the participants highlighted that only high-power enterprises are able to affect business partners in both negative and positive ways. The idea of WHP within the supply chain was perceived as a long process; however, the participants see a crucial potential in already-existing collaborative concepts for occupational safety that can be extended to WHP step by step. Moreover, it was noted that certifications and key figures as requirements for business relationships must be applicable for different types of enterprises; individual characteristics must be considered.

Subsequent to audits or other control activities, the participants argued in support of an ongoing dialogue that results in sustainable improvement. One crucial factor for an enterprise's participation in WHP within the supply chain is seen in anchoring sustainability in an enterprise's values and culture, whereas the costs of fulfilling obligations are seen as a hindrance. Further, the open question of liability in cases of collaborations may also be an obstacle. However, the participants referred also to the responsibility of the government to create supportive political conditions. To support the implementation of WHP along the supply chain, the participants mentioned that enterprises should use already-existing networks more intensively. Moreover, a common standard per industry was seen as a useful tool. However, the participants highlighted the importance of defined responsible persons within the enterprises. In general, the participants see the main advantages of WHP along the supply chain in high-quality business relationships and in obtaining a competitive edge in terms of sustainability, which is especially important for enterprises that are confronted with corresponding customer needs.

Discussion

This study aimed to clarify whether WHP is an important issue within the supply chain and how the cooperation within the supply chain or networks in terms of WHP can be described. The interview data showed that issues of occupational safety are the most relevant within business relationships, whereas WHP in general is not relevant (research question 1). Along these lines, a sense of responsibility is mostly restricted to occupational safety. Additionally, an enterprise's reputation is a primary reason for considering issues of health and safety within the supply chain. Nearly all of the enterprise representatives mentioned that they practice networking in terms of WHP outside supply chains, the importance of which is supported by

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the data from the industry representatives and the participants in the group interview (research question 2). A full collaboration between business partners in terms of WHP is currently contested, both by the participants in the group interview and by the participants of the focus group discussion. However, full-scale collaboration activities are most common if enterprises are interested in long-term relationships with business partners. These collaborative activities are accompanied by a high transparency in operation (research question 3). The most-mentioned practice to ensure occupational health in supply chains was the controlling of suppliers (e.g., through audits, codes of conduct), whereas practices in terms of collaboration within the supply chain (e.g., mutual information exchange, joint projects) were rather less stated.

The importance of safety at work and WHP are ambiguous: Occupational safety appears to be a criterion for business relationships. However, in large enterprises, which are divided into various subsidiaries, occupational safety can hardly be guaranteed for the whole supply chain. Furthermore, the expectations of the partners may be a burden for small businesses in particular. Last but not least, the focus on costs and the pressure on productivity that is generated by enterprises conflicts with WHP. Thus, with regard to the relevance of WHP within the relationship between enterprises, corporate social responsibility is not yet (fully) realized. However, as the group interview shows, it is seen as a prospect for the future.

Enterprises' engagement in WHP within the supply chain is seen as a supportive factor that enhances enterprise's authenticity with regard to the importance of occupational health. This, in turn, might be beneficial for the acceptance of intra-organizational WHP because authenticity crucially affects the perception of enterprises' behaviors (McShane & Cunningham, 2012). However, in the case of insufficient intra-organizational WHP, employees may be negatively affected by enterprises' engagement in the supply chain because of injustice perceptions by employees (cf. Greenberg, 2010). Hence, intra-organizational WHP and WHP within the supply chain should be given equal importance in how they are managed. In accordance with Locke et al. (2009), and Dachler and Wilpert's (1978) types of participation, different qualities of interaction between business partners can be distinguished (see Figure 1). Our study shows that the compliance approach is realized in the first line. Audits, codes of conducts, and certificates are the most often-used tools. There is rarely evidence for participation on a higher level. This fact may support the assumption that sanctions are required to fulfill norms (cf. Gröneweg & Matiaske, in press). Nevertheless, generalizing the concept of Locke et al. (2009) with respect to WHP, the commitment approach should be more effective than the compliance approach. Overall, the equality of business partners appears to be a central basis that is required to facilitate constructive collaboration and reduce the perception of surveillance. However, in most cases these requirements have not yet been realized.

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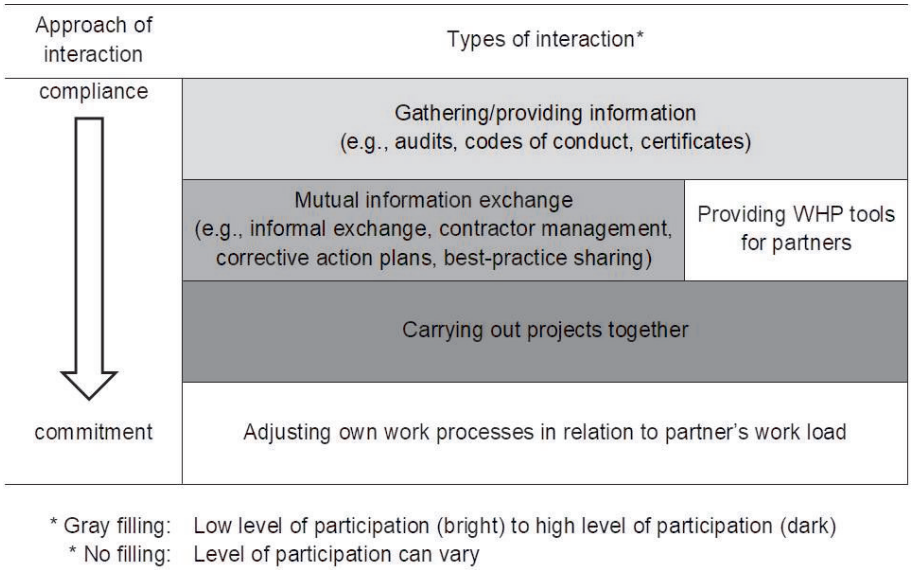

Figure 1. Typology of interactions between business partners.

The interview data refer to different opportunities for large-scale enterprises and small (and medium-sized) enterprises to engage in WHP within the supply chain. There are various reasons why large-scale enterprises can be more engaged in activities along the supply chain than small enterprises. These circumstances might affect the way how WHP within supply chains should be realized. Large-scale companies have more personal resources to implement structures for collaborative activities. However, in addition to having sufficient personnel capacity, the convincement and motivation of the responsible persons appear to be crucial. Small companies implement intra-organizational WHP activities quite differently than large-scale enterprises do. This is because there are different communication channels, the roles of supervisors and employees appear to be different, and mostly rather small heterogeneous groups participate in the WHP interventions of small companies. For these reasons, the criteria to evaluate WHP cannot be the same for large-scale enterprises and small companies. Moreover, the criteria cannot be same for WHP within the supply chain. Thus, the criteria for the management of WHP within the supply chain must consider the individual characteristics of the participating companies. Additionally, for WHP networks within supply chains, individual consideration and the possibilities of adapting WHP methods should be given high priority. Furthermore, large-scale enterprises participate more in certification processes because of sufficient financial resources. Hence, a higher use of certifications, as well as legal obligations, to guarantee WHP within the supply chain might cause disadvantages to small and medium-sized companies due to their lack of financial resources. Consequently, although managers in the group interview mentioned legal obligations in

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particular to motivate companies to conduct WHP within the supply chain, the fulfillment of these obligations might be a major obstacle for small enterprises, and potential sanctions might damage those businesses.

To summarize, WHP in general is perceived to be rather less important within the supply chain, whereas the specific aspect of occupational safety is more often considered. In particular, inter-organizational practices appear to be widespread in the chemical industry. Rather little cooperation in terms of WHP is implemented within the supply chain; however, WHP networks outside of the supply chain seem to be quite common. WHP within the supply chain is mostly realized through the controlling of suppliers. Nevertheless, the initial steps of collaborative activities on a higher level of participation have been taken and, moreover, the advantages of such collaborative activities are recognized. To realize CSR-inspired health promotion, these first approaches must be pursued, and the different conditions and characteristics of the participating companies must be considered.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

Our study's methodical strength is its use of various data sources (enterprise representatives and industry representatives; interviews, a group interview, and a focus group discussion) that enable more holistic conclusions about the circumstance of WHP within supply chains. One shortcoming of our study is its focus on best practices by contacting only enterprises that have been nominated for and/or received health and CSR awards. Additionally, participants of the group interview and the experts participating in the focus group discussion are at least very open for advancements within WHP. Thus, conclusions for enterprises with less well-established intra-organizational WHP could not be generalized. However, we added the interviews with industry representatives to compensate this bias and to improve the generalizability of our findings. Furthermore, our data included various industries that enable an adequate overview across different developments with regard to WHP. With respect to this, it should be pointed out that enterprises from the chemical industry are strongest represented in the individual interviews. This could be due to the fact that occupational safety is a major issue in chemical industry and thus, enterprises of this industry are more engaged and interested in advancements of WHP. However, although chemical industry is more strongly represented than other industries, the level of interactions within supply chain varies across single enterprises of this industry. Thus, a bias by a single enterprise could be ruled out.

In our interview guide for the enterprise representatives, we focused on the customer perspective to reduce the complexity and length of the interview. Thus, we asked managers about their interactions with suppliers, but rather less about the enterprises' role as a supplier for other companies. For that reason, we were not able to compare the enterprises' practices as a supplier with its practices as a customer; although Ming et al. (2014) showed that the perception of business relationships –

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perception of audits, certifications, or performance assessments – depends on the enterprise's perspective (customer versus supplier). Nevertheless, this limitation can be overcome in future research by examining both the supplier and the customer roles of enterprises, especially in terms of using feedback and providing information. Moreover, Ming et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of power. Future research should investigate how an enterprise's power compared with other partners' power may influence the cooperation within WHP networks, within and outside of the supply chain.

Practical Implications

In comparison with previous research (e.g., Locke et al. 2009), the statements of the interviewees provide some implications to support WHP within supply chains. The findings from managers who conduct collaborative practices on a high level of participation indicated that internal structures are necessary to conduct successful WHP networks within the supply chain. In addition to personnel resources, an effective collaboration of intra-organizational departments (e.g., WHP, CSR, supply chain management) is important to guarantee a successful inter-organizational collaboration. Furthermore, political conditions must be created that provide resources so that small and medium-sized enterprises can participate in WHP along the supply chain, including subsidies for certifications or providing consultations on how to realize WHP within supply chains. Along these lines, offers by occupational insurance associations should also concern WHP in supply chains and enable networking within supply chains. Moreover, a collaboration of public associations with NGOs could be useful to facilitate WHP networks among different countries. For networking within the supply chain, business partners must build mutual trust (e.g., through transparency in terms of values and goals, through long-term business relationships) because through trust it is possible to level the distance of power (Ming et al., 2014).

In conclusion, WHP is more than occupational safety, and there is still much required to implement WHP within supply chains. The establishing of networks is a beneficial first step and useful in spreading the idea of WHP and connecting WHP and CSR.

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