Collaborative innovation process and its antecedents in social and health care

Introduction
Social and health care services are facing several economical challenges in Finland. At the same time organizational structures are developed thoroughly.

In organizational changes it’s a challenge, how to create innovative work methods and processes. Organizational changes create quite often time pressures and uncertainty. It has also been shown that co-operation becomes more difficult and workers’ readiness to create new ideas decrease in organizational changes as workers cope to stress and assure their positions in organization.

However, changes in organizations also give possibilities for new and innovative solutions concerning organizing the work and can give individuals in organization possibilities to organize their own work. Might be that these kind of possibilities are depending on the organizations culture and the personnel’s capabilities to organize their own work.

This paper aims to explore how stress, organizational factors and social factors are related to innovative organizational culture in social and health care. Particularly it will be discussed, how collaborative innovation process is experienced concrete at work places.

Methods
This paper is based on a data from personnel surveys (N=1700) in 6 social and health care organizations. All organizations had undergone large organizational changes. Of the workers 1318 reported that their organization had undergone large-scale organizational changes (supervisors and managers were excluded from the data).

The survey is a part of a larger Osuva-study where action studies and this survey are combined in a multimethodcenter study. The aim of the larger study is to search new methods to manage and lead the collaborative innovation process, which enable more participation of personnel, clients and service providers.

Factors studied in this paper are autonomy of workers, organizational justice (fair decision making procedures, including correct information behind the decisions, similar rules for everyone and listening to workers views), team work (shared goals, participative safety, support for innovation and task orientation), time pressure and trust on supervisor and top management.

This paper presents the first results of the survey relating to the effects of organizational changes. Employees were asked whether the large-scale organizational change they had undergone had positive or negative effects on their work.

The effects of the organizational changes were explained using variance analyses. In the first analysis autonomy, organizational justice, time pressure and shared goals were treated as explaining variables. In the second analysis questions on trust on supervisor and top management were added to the model.

The results showed that organizational changes were experienced mostly as negative and they were seen as disturbing work processes (48% of workers). Only 23% of workers found changes having positive effects.

The first variance analysis (Figure 1) showed that all the variables had a significant effect on organizational changes.

The results showed that experiences of organizational changes were strongest. Autonomy of workers, fair management and well-functioning teams all had positive effects on organizational changes.

The negative effect of time pressure on experiences of organizational changes was strongest. Autonomy of workers, fair management and well-functioning teams all had positive effects on organizational changes.

In the second analysis, where the two questions on trust were added, some changes occurred. Trust on top management appeared to be the most significant explaining variable, whereas organizational justice no more had any effect.

Conclusions
Large-scale organizational changes may be strenuous for employees and have positive outcomes take time. Changes made in Finnish social and health services were experienced rather negatively in this survey. But the experiences differed and several factors relating to work, organization and leadership had significant effects.

Positive experiences were more probable when time pressure was low or reasonable. Also, as employees had autonomy, eg. possibilities to plan their own work and make decisions, changes were experienced more positive. Also fair management (fair decision making procedures) can lead to positive outcomes.

Trust on supervisors and especially on top management was proved to be most important. Organizational justice seems to be important factor creating trust.

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