

Constructs and Theoretical Connections of Disability Management Policies, Managerial Behaviours, and Return-To-Work Outcomes

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The workplace reintegration of employees that have recovered from longer-term injury or illness is usually legally required and often challenging to complete. This article pertains to disability management policies, managerial behaviours, and return-to-work outcomes of such reintegration activities. Previous research has neglected the intermediary role of managers in the return-to-work process. To remedy this gap, descriptions and categorizations of pertinent disability management policies, manager behaviours, and outcomes, as well as theoretical explanations for the connections between these constructs, are presented. The central nature of managerial behaviours is noted. Consequently, the article provides structure to support additional research on the relationship between policies, behaviours, and outcomes. Further, the presented logical model offers pathway guidance for diagnostic and initiative actions for the reintegration of employees to the workplace.

Keywords: disability, disability management, return-to-work, human resources management, employment policies, management

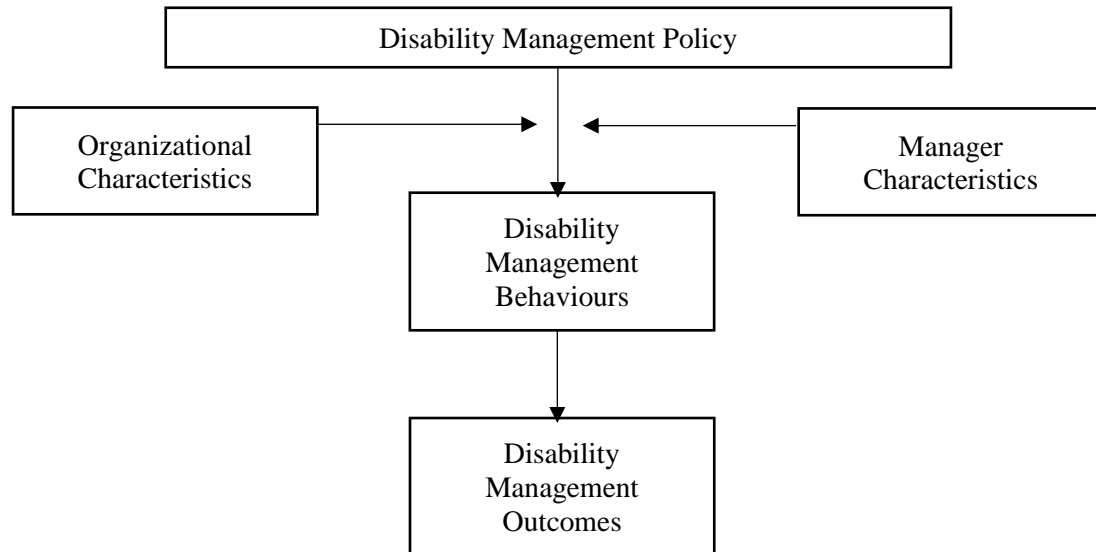
INTRODUCTION

Missing in the literature is a purposeful discussion and full understanding of the role of managers in enacting the provisions of disability management programs (Withey, Gellatly & Annett, 2022). This is a critical concern as managers have front-line contact and interaction with the employee through ongoing supervisory relations. In addition, they can be responsible for reorganizing the employee's work to achieve the needed accommodations and influencing the social dynamics of the work unit to create a work environment that is conducive to the employee's return to work. (Colella & Varma, 2001; Friesen, Yassi & Cooper, 2001; Larsson & Gard, 2003). It is fair to say that managers have an important role in helping employees return to work. Direct influence only influences the overall success of employees' reintegration to the workplace, but also that there is little attention given to the performance of these responsibilities. Consequently, although disability management programs may detail provisions for a balanced approach to disability issues, there is limited understanding of whether managers enact those provisions and their behaviours' impact on disability management outcomes.

Before the relationship between policies, behaviours, and outcomes can be examined it is pertinent to establish theoretical groundings and descriptions of these concepts. It is unlikely that managers unilaterally enact the provisions of policies but act in consideration of personal factors or corporate supports. Subsequently, this paper provides grounded elaborations on the constructs considered most germane to

understanding the generalized paths and connections within disability management (See Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
MODEL OF CONSTRUCTS AND CONNECTIONS



The state of the literature is such that the work environment is recognized as an important factor in the success of employee returns to work but the role of manager in creating that environment through both social and procedural measures is not well substantiated. The paper's results contribute to the literature as a clear grounding of the management or supervisor-level constructs involved in disability management.

POLICY - BEHAVIOUR - OUTCOME RELATIONSHIPS

Policies and procedures are common ways that organizations formally direct the behaviours of managers and employees (Daft, 2006). Although disability management policies and programs have been shown to directly affect disability outcomes (Dyck, 2006; Habeck, Hunt, & VanTol, 1998; King, 1998), the relation between policies and outcomes is mediated by managerial behaviours. To thoroughly examine this point of view, a discussion of policies and behaviours in the literature is reviewed, and grounds for relations between variables using theoretical premises and management concepts are explained. These relations are discussed in six parts: (1) policies in the literature, (2) mapping the behavioural domain, (3) policies as antecedents of manager behaviours, (4) outcomes as consequences of manager behaviours, (5) manager behaviours as mediators of policy – outcome relations, and (6) personal and organizational characteristics as moderators of policy – behaviour relations.

Policies in the Literature

The disability management literature is paradoxically full and empty of information about policies and procedures. The content of disability management policies and procedures is a highly discussed subject. This body of 'best practice' information supports practitioners in making decisions for implementing and administrating a disability management program (Dyck, 2006; King, 1998; National Institute of Disability Management and Research, 2003). However, there is very little discussion of guiding frameworks or structures to support a taxonomy of disability management practices. Presently, policies are discussed in the round and generally without reference to whether they fall under a rubric of employee or other stakeholder relations, work accommodations, medical support, etc. For example, Westmorland, Williams, Amick III, Shannon & Rashead (2005) identify systemic differences between policies across workplaces

but do not comment on why the differences exist or reasons for implementing some policies over others. Consequently, it is difficult to discern the strategic or even sometimes practical differences of policy statements across organizations or to identify gaps in the policy directions within an organization.

It is possible to identify some simple differences between the policies. Some policies have an orientation towards the social and psychological issues associated with employee reintegration and return to work. These types of policies encourage relationship-orientation among the stakeholders in the processes of disability management. Examples of such policies are the expectation that the manager will be friendly or empathetic with the employee and the requirement that managers be open to ideas and suggestions from other stakeholders (e.g., union representatives). Alternatively, some of the policies are oriented towards the administrative processes related to the organization's disability management program. For example, such policies direct managers to revise the employee's job description for the required accommodations, conduct performance assessments on the employee's progress and ability to perform the required work duties, and report to organizational leaders on costs and outcomes, etc.

Although relational and administrative orientations can be identified, the disability management literature and practitioner texts do not yet discuss policies with explicit demarcation for strategic or practical intent. The recommended policies are bundled into 'best practice' models for implementation as a general and universal package. For example, the importance of attending to employee relationships is equally emphasized to providing a graduated return to work (work hardening) program for employees. Consequently, as disability management is presently understood and practiced according to non-differentiated policies in the general literature I also do not differentiate between the intent or content of the disability management policies in the following discussions of expected relations.

Mapping the Behavioural Domain

In a disability management context, behaviours refer to those observable acts performed directly by managers and contribute to the achievement of employee reintegration and return to work outcomes. Despite broad discussion and examination of manager behaviour in the past 90 years (Borman & Brush, 1993) it appears that theories of behaviour have not yet been applied to the context of disability management. This is surprising because managers play an important role in managing and reintegrating employees with disabilities (Dyck, 2006). Consequently, while it is generally understood that manager behaviours have an important role there is little explanation of what managers do and how those behaviours influence employee return to work outcomes. Thus, the first step is to identify the behaviours managers perform as part of employee returns to work. This begins with looking at the broader behavioural domain and identifying general patterns of activities that help describe manager behaviours in disability management. Then, based on these general patterns, several clusters are suggested to help organize the wide range of responsibilities that managers attend to.

A comprehensive review helped identify behaviours relevant to employee reintegration and return to work. This process included reviewing past research on general patterns manager behaviours and drawing lists of recommended disability management behaviours from expert sources. A review of 108 dimensions of behaviours reported in the literature (Tett, Guterman, Bleier, & Murphy, 2000) suggests two primary (and broad) categories of management activities. The first category includes behaviours that pertain to administrative/technical aspects of management. These behaviours include budgeting, planning, policy development, financial analysis and written communication. The second broad category includes behaviours that cover the range of interpersonal activities, such as exhibiting leadership, verbal communication, team building, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving. This understanding of managerial behaviour is consistent with other research suggesting that the management domain consists of technical and contextual activities (Gellatly & Irving, 2001).

Extending this understanding of general managerial activities to the specific domain of reintegration and return to work behaviours is reasonable. Thus, I sought examples of manager behaviours in disability management along these general lines from practitioner texts and disability management experts. More than fifty distinct behaviours were identified through this investigative exercise, and six logical groups help to organize the range of behaviours (See Table 1). The first three groups focus most directly on supporting the

technical aspects of employee reintegration and return to work, and the remaining three groups attend more to relational aspects. Each of the groups is outlined below.

TABLE 1
TYPES OF MANAGER BEHAVIORS IN DISABILITY MANAGEMENT

Behaviour Category	Examples
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify return to work options • Coordinate internal resources to support the employee’s return to work
Day to Day Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain work group productivity • Provide training and development opportunities
Process Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the employee’s progress • Report outcomes to executive stakeholders
Demonstrating Active Concern and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make early contact with the employee • Assist the employee in regaining a sense of belonging and control
Facilitating Participation and Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the employee in decision making • Share information and resources with external stakeholders
Creating a Supportive Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model positive working relationships • Create a foundation of respect and teamwork

First, planning-type behaviours require the manager to prepare for the integration of the person with disability. This often includes budgeting for training needs, reviewing job functions for possible accommodation, and considering alternative work options for the employee. Second, managers engage in day-to-day (routine) behaviours that consist of supervisory-type activities, such as providing cross-training, monitoring the employee performance, and striving to maintain the productivity of the work unit. Third, process management behaviours keep the reintegration process relevant to the employee’s needs and abilities. Examples of this behaviour include reporting disability management outcomes to executive stakeholders, and monitoring the employee’s progress through the program. These behaviour clusters could be thought of as stages in administering a disability management program – getting ready, dealing with the issue, and reporting on outcomes.

The remaining three clusters focus more on building relationships and attending to the psychological and social needs of the employee. The fourth behaviour cluster, demonstrating active concern and support, means building and maintaining trust, helping the employee regain a sense of belonging and personal control, and engaging in regular contact with the employee. Fifth, facilitating participation and involvement entails sharing information freely and appropriately, involving other stakeholders, and seeking external input to the resolution of the disability issue. Sixth, creating a supportive work context requires activities aimed at creating an environment that is supportive, flexible, and beneficial to the person with a disability. Examples of behaviours that enhance the work environment are role modeling positive working relationships and creating a foundation of respect and teamwork. By performing these types of behaviours, managers can help to create a positive social environment for the employee’s return to work.

Although there are differences in the nature of the various behaviours, they are understood here as a general suite of acts that managers perform when helping employees return to work. While managers may engage in some behaviours more readily or frequently than others, this study assumes that both behaviours are important for managing employee disabilities and achieving effective reintegration and return of employees to work. Consequently, in my research, I examine the impact of performing all these behaviours on outcomes, not the relative impacts of one type of behaviour versus another.

Policies as Antecedents of Manager Behaviours

A classical view of the organization is a coalition of individuals drawn together by a shared purpose and organized into a hierarchy of decision-makers and staff (Cyert & March, 1963). In this context, policies

and procedures reflect the organization's leaders' goal orientation and outcome values (Hambrick & Brandon, 1988) and clarify the mechanisms and methods sanctioned in achieving the organization's preferred outcomes. Given that policies and procedures can be understood as the organization's preferred routes to desirable outcomes (Mintzberg, 1983), manager behaviours can be similarly and simply understood as contributing or not contributing to those preferred states.

In a continuous vein, it is reasonable to expect that policies and procedures for disability management in an organization represent clear messages to managers about the importance, value, and method of managing issues of employee disability. That is, these policies and procedures "reflect [senior] management's attitude regarding disability management [and] establish the parameters for the disability management practice" (Dyck, 2006: 46). The general expectation is that manager behaviours are aligned with disability management policies when the behaviours serve to enact and carry out the directions of the policies. For example, if an organization has a policy for monitoring the performance of returning employees, manager behaviours would be in alignment if they performed a related process (e.g., conducting performance assessments) and not in alignment if they did not perform a related process (e.g., not conducting performance assessments). Thus, it should be possible to understand differences in disability management behaviours across groups of managers according to the presence or absence of disability management policies in their respective organizations.

Outcomes as Consequences of Manager Behaviours

Research into employee–employer relations indicates positive consequences associated with more involved and engaged supervisors (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986). Two theories relevant to the relationship between manager behaviours and outcomes are organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986;) and organizational justice theory (Greenberg, 1987). Although conceptually related, these theories are distinct in their explanation of how manager behaviours may help produce disability management outcomes. They also explain employee responses to manager behaviours and potentially why there are differences in outcomes within an organization. Understanding disability management with a theoretical lens that explains employee behaviour is appropriate as the manager's role is to facilitate workplace processes that create a positive context for the employee's return to work. The manager cannot force the employee to effectively reintegrate and return to work, they can only create conditions that support the employee's return. In the following pages each of these theories is described and their relevance for understanding how managerial behaviours affect disability outcomes is discussed.

Organization Support Theory

Fundamental to organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) are the notions of social exchange (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). The basic idea is that when an employee sees a manager demonstrating genuine concern, care and support, the employee will feel an obligation to reciprocate this goodwill through pro-organizational attitudes (e.g., commitment) and behaviours (e.g., citizenship, attendance, performance) (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In essence, organizational support theory suggests that employees adjust their attitudes and behaviours to match the level of social and economic support they perceive from their manager. Numerous tests of organizational support theory have confirmed these reciprocal relations (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

It is reasonable to expect that employees will reciprocate supportive behaviours by managers during return-to-work processes. That is, managers who behave in a way that conveys genuine care and concern for the well-being of the employee will help motivate the employee to respond in kind with enhanced affective commitment (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch & Rhoades, 2001) and greater desire to remain with the organization (Witt, 1991). The influence of perceived organizational support may even be strengthened during disability management because employees who are returning from injury or illness can have high socio-emotional needs (Jeppsson-Grassman, 1992), and often feel uncertainty regarding their place or capacity to work in the organization (Stansfeld, Rael, & Head, 1997). Gard and Larsson (2003) provide a clear example of organizational support in disability management. They indicate that a manager's

willingness to involve employees in key decisions (i.e., fairness), show concern (i.e., supervisor support), and mentor or coach the returning employee (i.e., organizational rewards and job conditions) are related to both better employment relationships between the employee and manager, and faster rates of employees returning to work. Thus, while organizational support theory has yet to be empirically tested in a disability management context, there are strong reasons to explore the relationship between behaviours that generally increase employee perceptions of support and disability management outcomes.

Organizational Justice

Theories of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1987) are rooted in subjective perceptions of fairness. The literature often makes a broad distinction between two forms of justice: distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice is concerned with the perceived fairness of outcome allocations (e.g., rewards), and is most closely associated with traditional equity theory (Adams, 1965). Procedural justice, on the other hand, is concerned with the perceived fairness of the process used to determine outcome distributions (Leventhal, 1980). Leventhal (1976; 1980) indicates six determinants of fairness in policies and procedures. In brief, procedurally just decisions/actions are (a) consistent, (b) free of bias, (c) based on accurate information, (d) changeable if shown flawed, (e) ethical, and (f) considerate of other perspectives. In essence, the idea is that “if employees believe that they are treated fairly, they will be more likely to hold positive attitudes about their work, their work outcomes, and their supervisors” (Moorman, Blakely & Niehoff, 1998: 845). Additionally, if an employee perceives that a decision/action is not procedurally just, they may withhold effort to ‘balance’ the situation (Adams, 1965). Consequently, organizational justice theories help explain why employees react positively or negatively to management decision processes (procedural justice), and why employees choose to expend or withhold effort about management decision outcomes (distributive justice).

In a meta-analytic review of organizational justice research, Colquitt et al (2001) identified several key consequences of employee perceptions of organizational justice. In particular, they found strong support for a relationship between justice perceptions and employee attitudes and behaviours. For example, procedural and distributive justice are strongly related to employee commitment and outcome satisfaction. Further, support was found between both types of justice and reduced negative reactions (retaliatory behaviours, theft), and procedural justice predicted reduced withdrawal (absence, turnover, neglect). This means that employees generally respond to fair treatment with positive behaviours, but withdraw or retaliate when they perceive unfair treatment.

Applied to disability management procedural justice helps explain the association between manager behaviours and reintegration and return to work outcomes. Most directly, the manager’s ability to achieve procedural justice in the decision-making process is likely to reduce employee withdrawal behaviour (e.g., resistance to returning to work). Folger (1985) indicates that a key part of procedural justice is providing the employee with a voice in decision-making. Thus, managerial behaviours that include the employee in addressing disability management issues (e.g., planning job accommodations) may lead to improved return to work rates because the employee is more accepting of the manager’s decision authority (Bies & Shapiro, 1988) and satisfied with the return-to-work arrangement (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Further, as noted above, Leventhal describes six elements of procedurally just processes.

Consequently, assessing the supervisor’s handling of the disability management process against those elements may inform employee perceptions of (in)justice. For example, incorrect paperwork, case-by-case variance in administrative procedures, and an inability to get ‘straight’ policy/procedure answers, may contribute to perceptions of unfair treatment by the manager or the disability management system. In this light, the ability of the supervisor to engage effectively in both the procedural and relational aspects of disability management becomes quite important to helping minimize employee dissatisfaction and perhaps retaliatory behaviours (i.e., rehabilitation to rule, extending the rehabilitation period). Thus, while theories of organizational justice have yet to be fully applied to issues of disability management, it is reasonable to explore a linkage between manager behaviours that encourage fairness in reintegration and return to work issues and disability management outcomes.

Manager Behaviours as Mediators of Policy – Outcome Relations

Evidence for a positive relation between disability management policies and favorable outcomes such as reduced work days lost to employee illness or injury is reported by Amick and colleagues (e.g., Amick III et al., 2000; Westmorland, Williams, Amick III, Shannon, & Rasheed, 2005). However, these findings do not tell the full story as the statistical models tend to explain a relatively low variance in the outcomes. For example, Habeck, Hunt, & VanTol (1998) found that policies explained 16% of the outcome variable ‘work days lost’. Additionally, these authors note that they have difficulty explaining an important finding of their study – that two policy models yield substantially different outcome results even though the policy statements in the models are highly correlated ($r = .74$). This finding suggests that another variable(s) is also influencing the outcome measure and that it differs from situation to situation. As a cumulative result, the present work on policy–outcome relations helps us understand that policies and procedures matter to disability management outcomes, but also leave us without a strong explanation of variance, and presents new questions about other potential explanatory variables.

A fundamental and untested assumption is that policies have their effects on disability management outcomes by regulating the way managers respond in a given situation. Said another way, the role of the manager is to ‘translate and enact’ the intent of an organization in such a way to influence outcomes. The argument that manager behaviour mediates the influence of policies and procedures on outcomes is simple: in themselves, policies and procedures do nothing. Policies and procedures only have an effect to the extent that they can express intentions and motivate role behaviours. In short, they require an actor or enabler. As an example, Williams (2004) identifies that the tone of manager behaviours and attitudes during disability management activities (rather than the explicit policies) is associated with the likelihood of the process being taken to arbitration. Managerial behaviours, from this perspective, can be viewed as the conduit through which policies influence outcomes.

Given what is generally accepted about the structure of organizations and the role of managers in organizations (e.g., implementation and coordination) (e.g., Mintzberg, 1991) it is very likely that manager behaviour is a direct link between the organization’s disability management policies and procedures and the disability management outcomes.

Personal and Organizational Characteristics as Moderators of Policy – Behaviour Relationship

The antecedents of behaviours have received much attention in past decades. As a result, several theories have emerged that help explain why managers act in the ways they do. Two general explanations of behaviours are that they are responses to (a) personal characteristics (e.g., personality), and (b) organizational characteristics (e.g., culture) (Annett, 2005, Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986;). In the following discussion several personal and organizational characteristics are discussed as they may interact with the organization’s disability management policies to influence how these policies are interpreted and enacted as manager behaviours.

Personal Characteristics

As a subject group, managers are relatively ignored in the disability management literature. Their role is regularly constructed in broad terms and little effort is taken to identify or distinguish characteristics that may impede, facilitate, or explain their decisions and behaviours. To illustrate, some research studies ask students to assume the role of manager in order to make various assessments of finely-tuned variances in employee disabilities but give no consideration to the manager’s background, experiences, or preferences in those decisions (Colella, DeNisi, & Varma, 1998). And, other research studies make only passing or minor mentions even when the research question directly concerns management decisions (Colella, Paetzold, Belliveau, & Hollenbeck, 2004;). In short, for most disability management studies, managers are assumed to be the same – an untenable assumption that does not reflect the reality of individual differences and the effect of these differences on expressed behaviour.

When the organizational direction is unclear, or objectives are in conflict, managerial actions can be partly explained by individual characteristics such as knowledge, preferences, and expectations (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990). Thus, the general omission of the manager’s characteristics in the disability

management literature is an important shortcoming. To partly resolve the gap in the literature, four characteristics (age, conscientiousness, tenure, and disability management experience) that may have significance for manager behaviours and their adherence to organizational directives in disability management are presented and discussed.

The first characteristic is age. Prior research suggests that as part of becoming older, employee flexibility decreases, rigidity increases and resistance to change increases (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Further, while age is often associated with wisdom and experience, it has also shown that older workers are less able to integrate new information (Taylor, 1975), are more likely to avoid risky decisions (Vroom & Pahl, 1971) and have less confidence in their decisions (Taylor, 1975). As a result, the behaviour of older managers may be less likely to deviate from the policy and procedure provisions of the organization that are familiar to them or more established in the organization.

The second characteristic is conscientiousness. Staw & Ross (1985) direct that personality characteristics have an important influence on individuals' behaviours. Although there is much debate in the psychology literature regarding dimensions of personality, a considerable body of literature has emerged to support the Five Factor Model of Personality (Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). One of these dimensions, conscientiousness (e.g., dependable, thorough, and organized) may indicate a predilection for following the policies and procedures of the organization. Managers with higher scores for conscientiousness are more likely to strictly adhere to disability management policies and procedures than managers with lower scores.

The third characteristic is tenure. Tenure may relate to managerial behaviour because of the reinforcing nature of mental structures that people develop with experience in order to organize and simplify the world (Russo & Schoemaker, 1989). Tenure refers to the manager's length of experience in given context. Therefore managers with (a) longer service in a particular organization (organizational tenure) or (b) career history as a manager (role tenure) may be more likely to integrate policies and procedures into their framing biases and behave accordingly. Further, managers with longer organizational tenure have more familiarity with the organization's standing operating procedures, people, and culture (Kanter, 1977), probably have greater commitment to the existing systems and the status quo (Hambrick, Geletkanycz, & Fredrickson, 1993) and are biased to general conformity (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990). Because of this they are more likely to follow the policies and procedures of the organization.

The fourth characteristic is disability management experience. Having some experience in disability management may encourage a manager to disregard or work outside of the organization's policies and procedures. That is, experience in managing disability management issues may result in understanding what to do, when to do it, and how to best accomplish desired outcomes that are different from the generalized direction given by disability management policies and procedures. This perspective is generally left unmentioned in discussions of managers' experiences with disability issues. More often, such discussions suggest that through experience, managers break down stereotypes or learn to appreciate the abilities of persons with disabilities (Colella, DeNisi, & Varma, 1997; Colella, Paetzold, Belliveau, & Hollenbeck, 2004; Florey & Harrison, 2000; West & Cardy, 1997) rather than a willingness to work outside of the system. However, despite little discussion in the disability management literature, I suggest that managers interpret the prescriptions of the policies and procedures and engage in behaviours that they perceive as most effective given their day-to-day operational environment.

In summary, the behaviours of managers – and the degree to which those behaviours are aligned with directives of the organization, may be due to the unique characteristics of each manager. As suggested by Peyreffite, Fadil, and Thomas (2002: 495) “two managers facing identical environments and heading organizations with identical resource profiles can make different choices because of their personal characteristics and experiences.” Consequently, it is relevant to see if a relationship between policies and behaviours is moderated by managers' personal characteristics.

Organizational Characteristics

A manager's behavior in a given situation can be partly explained by his or her perception of the organizational context (Barnard, 1938; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939; Simon, 1945). Bowen and Ostroff

(2004) also indicate that factors such as the prominence, visibility, or reinforcement of organizational messages (i.e., policies) positively relate to the alignment of employee actions to those messages. Subsequently, it follows that the alignment of manager behaviours with policies may be influenced by contextual features of the organization and the perceived importance or relevance of disability management policies. In the following discussion, corporate disability management supports (e.g., training and development) and organizational culture are presented as examples of organizational characteristics that can moderate policy – behaviour relations.

The first characteristic is disability management supports provided by the organization. Some many potential corporate resources or supports can influence the performance of disability management behaviours. Some examples include placing accountabilities in job descriptions or performance plans, requiring regular reporting on disability management outcomes, and celebrating successful employee returns to work. One of the more commonly recommended supports in professional texts is the provision of training and development for disability management issues. Thus, in the following discussion of corporate disability management supports training and development activities are expounded to help explain how these supports may moderate manager behaviours.

Training and development generally refers to organizations assisting their employees to gain new or improved skills and abilities. The main purpose of training and development is often to develop employee skills and abilities to become or remain competitive with other organizations. In recent years, efforts to improve the capacity of employees extends well beyond the traditional classroom training, with new approaches capitalizing on real-life and real-time learning experiences such as coaching, mentoring, and post-situation analysis. The effectiveness of these practices in shaping employee behaviours and work performance is predicated upon a number of factors, not the least of which is the organization's ability to clearly communicate the expectation to employees that the training should be implemented (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

In addition to the actual implementation of disability management policies in organizations, the amount of importance or support given to managers through training and development likely affects the discretionary behaviour freedom felt by managers. As organizations often provide training only for activities deemed significant (Wexley & Latham, 2000), it is reasonable to expect that such training would underscore the importance of enacting disability management policies. Further, as there are many technical (or non-abstract) skills required in disability management (e.g., interpersonal communications, job redesign, legal and financial compliance matters), it is also possible to observe or measure the transfer of training and development concepts into practice. Consequently, organization-sanctioned activities in disability management training and development are likely an important factor in the performance of disability management behaviours.

The second characteristic is organizational culture / psychological climate. A primary role of an organization's culture is to help translate corporate strategy into desired outcomes (Chatman & Cha, 2003). Although the influence of culture is most felt in the absence of rules and procedures, it remains an important influence on disability management because of the way policies and procedures are formulated to reinforce group-desired behaviours (Chatman & Cha, 2003). Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders (1990) suggest that it is through organizational practices that some norms and values become known. That is, values and beliefs become codified into organizational systems and structures. For example, through policies requiring early contact behaviours by managers, group members may identify and express the value of caring for each other (Schein, 1990). Additionally, a study of disability management behaviours found that an organizational culture promoting a safety orientation had a direct relationship with a decrease in poor safety behaviours (Hofmann & Stetzer, 1996). Subsequently, the organization's culture may create a normative basis for performing disability management behaviours in addition to prescriptive policy requirements.

Shared perceptions of norms (i.e., behaviour guidelines) and values (i.e., enduring preferences) form the basis of organizational culture (Rousseau, 1990). However, it is important to recognize that while often discussed a single concept, it usually consists of multiple dimensions (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990). For example, Muchinsky's (1977) scale describes six dimensions of interpersonal milieu, standards, affective tone toward management/organization, organizational structure and procedures, responsibility,

and organizational identification. The interpersonal milieu indicates the interpersonal relations environment that prevails in the organization. The dimension of standards describes the feeling that the organization has established performance standards. General affective tone toward management/organization identifies the perceived image of management and relations between managers and subordinate staff. Organizational structure and procedure identify the feelings people have related to processes and things done in the organization. Responsibility indicates feelings concerning the assignment of accountability for accomplishing a task. Finally, organizational identification describes the feelings of being a part of the organization. Together, these dimensions of culture may explain differences in manager behaviours. A manager working in a culture of high levels of personal relationships with staff may be likelier to perform more expressive or interpersonal behaviours. Or, a manager's meticulous enactment of policies may reflect the culture's valuation of structure, rule following, and managerial accountability.

While culture helps to explain group behaviour, it is important to note that individual behaviour may also be influenced by their unique perceptions of the organization's culture (psychological climate). That is, managers understand their work environment based on personal assessments of the work context (e.g., culture, size, structure) and each manager's behaviour is then attuned to that climate (Burke, Borucki, & Hurley, 1992). Although technically different, culture and climate can be evaluated on the same dimensions. The primary difference is that climate measures the individual manager's understanding of workplace norms and values, and culture represents the aggregation of those understandings into a group construct (Parker et al., 2003). In the context of this discussion, culture and climate are used interchangeably to refer to a cognitive determination of appropriate action or behaviour based on norms and values.

As a manager's behaviour may be informally directed or guided by their psychological climate, the enactment of policies may be influenced by the manager's understanding of the norms and values in the organization.

To review, the behaviours of managers may be influenced by the work environment that they operate within. The degree of organizational support or resources given to disability management may accentuate or hinder the performance of disability management behaviours. Also, the nature of relations between staff and perceptions of norms and values in the organization may influence managers' interest or willingness to carry out the organization's policies. Consequently, it is relevant to see if a relationship between policies and behaviours is moderated by organizational characteristics.

SUMMARY

The behaviours managers perform in disability management and the impact of those behaviours is not clear. Based on a review of the general management behaviour literature and the knowledge of disability management experts, I identified six categories of behaviours in disability management. These categories are presented as components of a complete suite of disability management behaviours. The relation of these behaviours to disability management outcomes is supported by two social exchange theories. First, organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore, Barksdale, & Shore, 1995) directs that manager behaviours send messages of support and care to employees which are reciprocated with positive employee attitudes and behaviours. Applied to disability management, disability management behaviours may demonstrate support and care to employees which is reciprocated with better employee engagement in the return to work process. Second, organizational justice (Greenberg, 1987) directs that manager behaviours influence employee perceptions of distributed and procedural justice, and that employees react based on their fairness perceptions. In terms of disability management, behaviours that support perceptions of justice in return-to-work processes and may encourage better reintegration efforts by employees and minimize retaliations.

The role of manager behaviours as mediators of policies and procedures on disability management outcomes is also suggested. The performance of behaviours may be related to the provisions of disability management policies and may also be influenced by the manager's characteristics and the characteristics of the organization.

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