Original Research Paper

Organizational Well-Being in a Public Research Agency: The Point of View of Administrative Staff and Researchers

Elisa Colì and Antonella Rissotto

Institute of Cognitive Science and Technology, Italian National Research Council, Rome, Italy

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to investigate organizational well-being in a Public Research Agency, exploring the point of view of two different categories of workers, administrative staff and researchers, employed in the same organization. We hypothesized that, in a complex organization, the kind of work performed, along with other factors, could influence the representation of organizational well-being. The study involved 37 administrative staff and 24 researchers of the Italian National Research Council (CNR), the largest Public Research Agency in Italy. According to different key areas of organizational well-being in CNR, seven focus groups were carried out and collected data was analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo9. Results of this study seem to confirm the authors' hypothesis. In effect, even though the framework of organizational well-being is the same for the two categories of employees considered, there are differences in meaning and in importance given by stakeholders to each dimension of the construct. As a whole, the specificity of the points of view might be explained by considering not only the different working conditions and the different kind of work performed, but also the different cultural values of the Research Institutes and of the Central Administration. These aspects should be taken into account in the predisposition of tools for evaluation of organizational well-being, above all in complex organizations, in order to have at the organization's disposal research tools able to be representative of the entire population. A set of recommendations for improving organizational well-being in complex organizations are provided.

Keywords: Organizational Well-Being, Administrative Staff, Researchers, Exploratory Study, Research Agency

Introduction

Over the last few years, interest in the topic of organizational well-being has increased not only in a national context, but also in an international context, becoming the subject of several theoretical and empirical studies (Schaufeli, 2004; Horn *et al.*, 2004).

This construct has been studied in relation with the construct of psychological well-being, showing that feeling good at work has benefits for both the person and the organization (Avallone and Paplomatas, 2005; Diener and Seligman, 2004). Indeed, in a healthy organization employees feel well, take delight in work and make a commitment to their organization. At the same time, if employees are physically and psychologically well, they bring passion, motivation and volition to their working environment, contributing to improve efficiency and productivity of the entire organization. According to this perspective, developed in the context of functional psychology (Rispoli, 2001), personal and corporate well-being are not opposed, but are mutually reinforcing. In support of this perspective, recent research focused on the link between job performance, psychological well-being and organizational commitment, underlining that the absence of organizational well-being can cause a decrease of productivity, a high absenteeism rate, poor working motivation, poor availability to take on work, lack of

trust (Meyer *et al*., 2002; Wright and Hobfoll, 2004; Mowday *et al*., 2013).

Therefore, one of the interests in organizational well-being is due to practical consequences for the life and functioning of the entire organization. One of the biggest difficulties associated with the study of organizational well-being is related to the definition and conceptualization of this construct. In effect, it is a multidimensional (Donald *et al*., 2005; Wilson *et al*., 2004) and dynamic construct, consisting of several interdependent levels and influenced by the context. Some authors have defined this construct as the overall health of an organization comprised of many constructs including organizational climate (i.e., the overall ambiance of an organizational system, what it feels like to be at work; Steele and Jenks, 1977), social climate (i.e., perceived social support and morale among employees; Stokols *et al*., 2002), employee productivity, performance, turnover and absenteeism. Others have written about organizational well-being as:

> *"the whole of the cultural nucleus, processes and organizational practice that animate coexistence in the working context, promoting, maintaining and improving the quality of life and the physical, social and psychological well-being of working communities"* (Avallone and Bonaretti, 2003, p. 42).

These characteristics have made difficult not only a shared conceptualization of the construct, but also the construction of survey instruments for evaluation of organizational well-being. The Italian Public Administrations (PA) had to deal with this problem after the introduction of Legislative Decree 150/2009, which motivated them to develop research projects aimed at evaluating and promoting organizational well-being. This represented a key moment for Italian organizations, above all for the possibility to turn a legal obligation into a real opportunity to provide public administrations with tools for organizational analysis and employee feedback. Many Italian PAs decided to evaluate their organizational health through the Magellano project, sponsored by the Department of Public Administration, by using as a research tool the Multidimensional Organizational Health Questionnaire (Avallone and Bonaretti, 2003). Adhesions to this project were, above all, by local authorities, health services and schools, whereas only 4.56% were by universities and 1.30% were by research agencies. Other organizations, above all research agencies such as the Italian National Research Council (CNR), decided to involve their employees in the definition of areas and dimensions of organizational well-being and developed original assessment tools able to take into account the multidimensionality of the construct and the

specificity of the context (Colì and Rissotto, 2013). One of the problems that need to be faced when dealing with complex organizations is related to the coexistence of different categories of workers for which organizational well-being could have different meaning. In the CNR case, we are in the largest Public Research Agency in Italy, in which 7996 employees work, 60% of whom are researchers and 40% of whom are administrative staff. What makes the CNR a complex organization and a shared definition of organizational well-being difficult are these characteristics and others, such as the articulation of the Agency in the Central Administration and research network, the deployment of researchers in more than 100 Research Institutes located nationally, the numerous external collaborations with other public administrations, universities and industries, the multidisciplinary nature of studies performed and the different theoretical background of the employees.

Starting from these considerations, we hypothesized that not only the roles (Colì and Rissotto, 2014a), but also the kind of work performed, could influence the representation of organizational well-being. In particular, we explored and compared points of view of CNR administrative staff and researchers, taking into account the key areas of organizational well-being in this Agency as identified in a previous study (Colì and Rissotto, 2013).

Materials and Methods

Qualitative research design was chosen because we wanted an in-depth understanding of employees' points of view, exploring the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee. Coherently with this approach, we made knowledge claims by adopting a constructivist perspective, generating meanings from the data collected in the field (Creswell, 2013). Taking into account the assertion that the professional profile of the employees is a variable that could influence organizational well-being, we made use of purposive and quota sampling, which are suitable for our study. Two sub-groups belonging to different professional profiles, those of administrative staff and researchers, were identified and participants were extracted from a list of CNR employees, proportionally for each group. Sixty-one employees of CNR, 24 of whom with administrative profiles and 37 of whom with researches profiles, were involved in 7 focus groups. This qualitative research tool was chosen because it is suited to explore social processes and to promote the emergence of shared meanings (Corrao, 2000). The main aim of the focus groups was to explore the representation of organizational well-being that these two different categories of workers have, identifying, for each area, the key factors of organizational well-being in the Agency.

Table 1. Focus groups and sample characteristics

N° focus groups	N° participants	Profile	Unit of affiliation
3	24	Administrative staff	Central administration
4	37	Researchers	Research
Institutes			
Total			
7	61		

Overall, as shown in Table 1 and 3 of the 7 focus groups were carried out with administrative profiles of the Central Administration, while 4 of the 7 focus groups were carried out with researchers. Among the participants, 57% were male and 43% were female. Their age, in 77% of cases, exceeded 45 years. The focus groups followed a semi-structured interview-guide, which was open and flexible in line with the research method chosen. The focus groups, taped and transcribed, lasted about 1 h and 30 m. Using qualitative data analysis software NVivo9 (Coppola, 2011), interview transcripts were categorized and coded according to different key areas of organizational well-being in CNR. Through a process of attribution of meaning to the text based on a review of the interview data, dimensions of organizational well-being were identified and distinguished based on the two different categories of workers, administrative staff and researchers. An interpretive content analysis was also performed and the extracts of participants' phrases are quoted in italics, between quotation marks.

Results

Tomorrow Area

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the "Tomorrow" area, but dedicated attention to different dimensions supporting organizational well-being. In particular, researchers gave prominence to the "Future outlook" dimension, whereas administrative staff gave prominence to the "Innovation" one (Table 2).

Future Outlook

Administrative staff spoke about the importance of developing a new clear and shared vision of the direction that the Agency should take:

> *"It seems to me that the Agency is the mirror of our country. […] Let us sit down and try to figure out where we want to go. We know where we come from, but where do we want to go?"*

This point of view was also shared by researchers, who underlined the absence of expectation related to their working future and the sensation of uncertainty, typical of temporary workers, as well as the consequent frustration and lack of work motivation (Table 3):

> *"Researchers are frustrated because they cannot see the way forward, where to go. There is no motivation, we all feel adrift. We stay here and we try to survive."*

Innovation

Administrative staff spoke also about the importance of technological innovation, aimed at sharing information between administrative staff and between administrative staff and researchers. They referred the presence of punitive attitudes towards innovation in general, which thwarted the introduction of changes that could improve daily work (Table 3):

> *"We need to be braver. […] This punitive attitude is maniacal and stops us from working effectively. As time goes on it gets worse. There was a period in which they told us to be more enterprising and we had the courage to introduce some innovations, but, in actual fact, now it's become something that is unsustainable."*

Staff Management Area

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the "Staff management" area, but dedicated attention to different dimensions supporting organizational well-being. In particular, administrative staff spoke about the three dimensions of this area, that is "Recruitment and staff turnover", "Staff appraisal and professional growth" and "Evaluation", with slightly more prominence given to the second one. Also researchers spoke about these three dimensions, giving instead greater prominence to "Evaluation" (Table 4).

Recruitment and Staff Turnover

Administrative staff spoke about the absence of a culture of Human Resources Management (HRM) as a whole, from recruitment planning to staff replacement, from staff turnover to work continuity. For them, these aspects had different consequences that prevented organizational well-being, such as the loss of knowledge and competences:

> *"Knowledge is tied to people, when a person leaves, knowledge leaves, we lose documents, we lose procedures. […] We lose something important, skills."*

Table 2. Tomorrow area- importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Future outlook	38%	Administrative staff
	62%	Researchers
Innovation	100%	Administrative staff

Table 3. Tomorrow area-meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Future outlook	Agency vision	Administrative staff Researchers
	Working future	Researchers
Innovation	Technological	Administrative staff
	Punitive attitudes	Administrative staff

Table 4. Staff management area-importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Recruitment and staff turnover	66%	Administrative staff
	34%	Researchers
Staff appraisal and professional growth	77%	Administrative staff
	23%	Researchers
Evaluation	27%	Administrative staff
	73%	Researchers

Table 5. Staff management area-meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Recruitment and staff turnover	HRM	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Management of temporary workers	Researchers
	Management of people with disabilities	Researchers
	Turnover of managers	Researchers
Staff appraisal and professional growth	HRM and staff	Administrative staff
	Appraisal	Researchers
	Economic tools for HRM	Administrative staff
	No economic tools for HRM	Researchers
Evaluation	Employees	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Criteria	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Purpose	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Consequences	Administrative staff
	Agency	Researchers
	Research Institutes	Researchers
	Research results	Researchers

Also researchers spoke about the absence of a plan for new staff recruitment and for the management of temporary workers. They referred the lack of policies for recruitment and management of people with disabilities, but also the excessive turnover of managers and related negative consequences, such as the loss of the continuity of the leadership's vision (Table 5):

> *"The Agency has changed four presidents in five years, each one with his own perspective. [...] There's a general disorientation and it's difficult to give staff the continuity of an Agency vision."*

Staff Appraisal and Professional Growth

Administrative staff and researchers focused on human resources management able to value each employee and to promote their professional growth. To support the management of human resources in this way, administrative staff mostly proposed the use of non-economic incentives, such as participation in training courses, appreciation and promotion ("*In my opinion, economic incentives will never be a reality in the Italian Public Administration, but there are other interesting incentive schemes that can be applied.*"), whereas researchers mostly proposed the use of economic incentives according to their productivity (Table 5:

"If we fail in differentiating salaries, nothing will change. I have very capable and productive researchers, but why they receive the same salary as the others? So, if we want to make this Agency really productive, we need to differentiate salaries."

Evaluation

Administrative staff spoke about a psychological evaluation of the entire staff, above all, for people with mental health disease:

"We need a psychologist that periodically evaluates the employees. He should evaluate all the staff, particularly people with mental fragility, who can create not only problems in the workplace, but can also represent a risk."

They discussed two different kinds of evaluation, the evaluation of the person and of the entire working group and evaluation criteria, such as the need to be objective. Evaluation could have different purposes, such as the purpose to pick out employees who do not want to work and employees who overwork, to define the way to allocate economic benefits or rewards or to identify bad working conditions, for example, those characterized by the absence of adequate work facilities. Evaluation could also have negative effects, for example, it could generate hostility or competition between employees:

"The fact that there is no evaluation is good for all of us because, let's face it, this situation ensures we all get the essential. So it generates neither conflict, nor competition."

Also researchers discussed evaluation, but they pointed out different aspects. They focused on evaluation of the entire Agency and of the Research Institutes and they spoke about a past evaluation of the Institutes that did not produce any changes at all:

"Let's remember that we went through an evaluation of the Research Institutes that lasted many years, which cost a lot of money and of which we don't know anything, in the sense that no change has happened. [...] The evaluation was intended to make a screening for how to use funds, but this didn't happen."

Furthermore, they spoke about the evaluation of research results and the criteria used for this process. In regard to this last aspect, the debate focused on the criteria of impact factor, which seemed to favor some fields of research and to penalize others and on the necessity to find more complex criteria able to take into account different aspects, such as the applicability of the research results:

"The evaluation of research activities is rather complicated, because there are niche sectors with low coefficients of impact even if the research is still valid."

"Other aspects, such as the applicability of the research, should be taken into account. [...] If the impact factor remains the only evaluation criterion, it is clear that some sectors will be favored over others."

Evaluation was also associated with not very transparent criteria used in public competitions, both in the case of recruitment of new staff and in the case of career advancement. As well as administrative staff, researchers spoke about the evaluation of employees, in respect to which they proposed a working group evaluation rather than an individual one. Also in their opinion, evaluation could be a useful tool to combat work inefficiency (Table 5).

Inside and Outside Area

Administrative staff and researchers gave prominence to different dimensions in the "Inside and outside" area. The main difference between these two professional profiles concerned the "Communication and sharing" dimension and the "Sense of belonging" one. In particular, researchers gave more prominence to the second. On the other hand, for administrative staff the first dimension was more important. There were no significant differences regarding the prominence given by administrative staff and researchers to the dimension related to "Relationships and integration" (Table 6).

Table 6. Inside and outside area-importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Communication	97%	Administrative staff
and sharing	3%	Researchers
Relationships/	55%	Administrative staff
integration	45%	Researchers
Sense of	35%	Administrative staff
belonging	65%	Researchers

Communication and Sharing

Administrative staff spoke about the importance to share knowledge and information and to look for formal and informal communication channels or spaces that could facilitate this process, such as periodic institutional meetings or unofficial debates in the Agency canteen or café. Also a direct and constant communication with managers could, for them, sometimes simplify the flow of information between different hierarchical levels. They also underlined the importance of sharing knowledge not only with newcomers, but also with employees of the same office, in order to increase the intellectual capital of the Agency without waste existing knowledge:

"The need for exchange is really felt by all of us. I saw that many times without exchanging views and without meeting, we did the same work. No-one knew what other coworkers were doing. There is a waste of energy and resources. We don't converge on the same goal."

Researchers focused on the possibility to share not only knowledge, but also equipment and research tools with other research groups. They also referred the importance of the territorial proximity of the Research Institutes, which could promote information exchanges and collaboration between different groups (Table 7):

"Proximity allows us to know what a coworker is doing, perhaps by chatting at lunch, without necessarily searching for his publications. We end up collaborating more."

Relationship and Integration

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the importance of mutual collaboration, aimed at sharing and integrating respective knowledge and expertise. Administrative staff focused, above all, on integration among coworkers and between managers and employees and on the importance of a good company climate:

"There is no contact with our supervisors. [...] If you meet your manager a few times a year it is already quite something. My manager hardly knows me, hardly knows the staff."

"I think it is important, when you go to work, to find a person you can talk to, laugh and joke with, because you have to stay 8 hours in a room together. At least a person you get on with, go for a coffee with, rather than go

alone. This aspect is psychologically fundamental I think."

Researchers underlined the need for integration between working groups, aimed at developing shared projects and between Research Institutes and Departments (Table 7):

"An important aspect is integration between colleagues. [...] We are competing within our Institution. We should unite and present ourselves as one Institute rather than as an inexistent critical mass. We're missing this, to be united, especially in European projects in which a critical mass is required. This is the case for the individual researcher, but also at the department level. I remember that, five years ago, there was an attempt to coordinate departments, but nothing came of it."

Sense of Belonging

Both administrative staff and researchers focused on the sense of belonging. The former referred especially to a sense of belonging to the entire organization (*"We are enthusiastic about working in this institution, we really love the CNR."*), the latter referred especially to a sense of belonging to their working group and to their work, which they continue to perform with great passion despite different kinds of difficulty (Table 7):

"Research is work that, if you do seriously, really involves you. Therefore you do it regardless of your salary, regardless of whether you have a laboratory at your disposal, regardless of whether you have to deal with administrative staff or with a manager."

Resources Area

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about three dimensions in this area, which were "Financial", "Human" and "Space". The first group focused more on "Human" resources and "Space", the second group focused above all on "Financial" resources (Table 8).

Financial

Administrative staff focused on the economic crisis that produced staff cuts and reduction of internal training opportunities:

"With the cuts to the Public Administration, we have had problems with both staff and training, two things that right now are quite lacking."

Table 7. Inside and outside area - meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Communication and sharing	Sharing of knowledge and information	Administrative staff Researchers
	Formal/informal communication spaces	Administrative staff
	Communication with managers	Administrative staff
	Equipment and research tools	Researchers
	Territorial proximity	Researchers
Relationships/ integration	Administrative staff and researchers	Administrative staff Researchers
	Coworkers	Administrative staff
	Managers and employees	Administrative staff
	Working groups	Researchers
	Research Institutes and Departments	Researchers
Sense of belonging	Organization	Administrative staff
	Working group and work	Researchers

Table 8. Resources area-importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Financial	10%	Administrative staff
	90%	Researchers
Human	55%	Administrative staff
	45%	Researchers
Space	51%	Administrative staff
	49%	Researchers

Researchers focused especially on the importance of economic resources, needed to perform research activities without continuously looking for funds outside the CNR through the acquisition of new research projects:

"Researchers should work in a peaceful environment, free from worries. However, since they can't count on Agency funds to carry out research, much of their working time is dedicated to the drafting of research projects and to the seeking out of external funds. [...] Then, there's no guarantee that if you draft a project you'll get the funding, so there is a huge waste of energy."

These economic resources were also necessary to guarantee the contractual continuity of temporary workers and to avoid the loss of skills and expertise (Table 9).

Human

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the necessity to have at their disposal not only economic resources, but also human resources, that is skills and expertise. Researchers also spoke about the importance of having administrative skills at their disposal and of using them as support for research activities:

"One aspect that creates a lot of inconvenience is when researchers don't find in administrative staff adequate support for bureaucratic matters that become more and more burdensome every day. [...] This has an impact on the mood of the researcher that sometimes is forced to perform alone the administrative aspects of a research project."

Administrative staff spoke about the possibility of creating an archive of CNR employees' expertise, in order to share and use, in the best way, the skills in the agency (Table 9):

"You could build an archive of all the skills available in the Agency, an archive of all the qualifications, of all specializations, but also of other skills not necessarily directly related to CNR activities. [...] It can be helpful to know that, if, for example, I need help on a technical aspect, there's a person in another office I can ask, that has this expertise."

Space

Both administrative staff and researchers referred to the importance of work spaces, which needed to be suited to the number of people and to be adequate to the kind of working activities. Spaces were also important for promoting good social relationships between coworkers (Table 9):

"We are three people in a small room. There's not even room to move around and this, in my opinion, affects a lot organizational well-being. [...] Even if you get on with colleagues, when you have to share desks, cabinets and everything else, you end up annoying each other. [...] In a room you should have a little space, I think."

Table 9. Resources area-meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Financial	Staff cuts	Administrative staff
	Training opportunities	Administrative staff
	Research continuity	Researchers
	Temporary workers continuity	Researchers
Human	Skills and expertise	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Administrative skills	Researchers
	Archive of CNR expertise	Administrative staff
Space	Suited to number of people	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Adequate to working activities	Administrative staff
		Researchers

Table 10. Work area-importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Job satisfaction	34%	Administrative staff
	66%	Researchers
Working methods	68%	Administrative staff
	32%	Researchers
Roles	46%	Administrative staff
	54%	Researchers

Work Area

Administrative staff and researchers gave prominence to different dimensions of the "Work" area that support organizational well-being. In particular, the first group gave more attention to "Working methods", whereas the second focused mostly on "Job satisfaction" (Table 10).

Job Satisfaction

Administrative staff spoke about job dissatisfaction, which could be reduced through, for example, a more comfortable working environment or a better management of daily work activities:

> *"If you take a tour of the corridors of CNR, you'll realize that everybody's complaining that things aren't going well. [...] Personally, I think that, right now, I'm not doing the best I can do and so I feel unsatisfied. Once, together with another manager, I was responsible for all the administration and my day was full and satisfying. Now it's not like that anymore."*

Researchers referred to different aspects of their job that contribute to improve job satisfaction, such as working autonomy, flexible use of working hours, creativity inherent in research activities, relations with other researchers of the national and international context and the possibility of continuous training (Table 11):

> *"The CNR allowed me to continue studying and carry out activities I like. I feel lucky for this and other aspects, such as the working autonomy, research freedom, international contacts and the world-wide reach of what we do."*

Working Methods

Administrative staff spoke about the need for an appropriate distribution of workload and for planning able to avoid periods of overwork or periods of lack of work. To plan work objectives with coworkers and to have a working method emphasizing teamwork and cooperation were important too:

> *"We have lost the ability to plan our work in relation to urgencies. In some periods we work at an intense pace and this is the cause of great agitation, confusion, fatigue to achieve work goals. [...] Then there are some months in which there's nothing to do in terms of work activities."*

Researchers focused on the need for a working method able to take into account working priorities. In particular, they referred the problem of time spent writing new research projects, time taken away from other important activities, such as the writing of scientific articles. This generated other difficulties, related, for example, to the continuity of their research themes. They also underlined the importance of a

flexible use of working time in improving their productivity (Table 11):

> *"Self-management of my time leads me to work more than I would if I were chained to my chair eight hours a day. The trust they put in me makes my work time productive. I don't know how to express it, but it is like that, it makes me feel empowered and has positive effects on my satisfaction in work."*

Roles

Administrative staff focused on the absence of well-defined and recognized roles that, in some cases, could obstruct the flow of work activities. The continuous changes in the Agency, such as those of the statute, made the distinction between roles and between functions more difficult:

> *"I think the important thing is recognition of role within the organization. Meaning to recognize, in some way, the person who has a specific role, who participates in work activities and who contributes to the achievement of those results."*

Also researchers spoke about the importance of well-defined and recognized roles, referring in particular to administrative staff and researchers and to the importance of their collaboration in the implementation of research projects. They also spoke about the importance of appreciation of their role both in the Agency and in society (Table 11):

> *"I sometimes have the feeling that society actually doesn't perceive our work as useful, in terms of the training offered and of contribution to the development of society and the economy."*

Participation and Accountability Area

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the "Participation and accountability" area, giving respectively attention to different dimensions supporting organizational well-being. In particular, administrative staff spoke about all three dimensions of this area, "Decisions", "Accountability" and "Risk and prevention", with more attention given to the third. Researchers, on the other hand, spoke about the first two dimensions, giving more attention to "Decisions" (Table 12).

Decisions

Administrative staff spoke about the importance of a person, in the organization, able to take decisions in a short time in order not to impede daily work. Participation of employees in decision-making process was important too, especially if decisions could have consequences on workers:

> *"A very critical aspect is, in my opinion, the absence of decisions. No-one makes decisions and in this way an organization cannot operate. [...] There are important decisions to make and they continue to get postponed."*

Table 11. Work area-meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Job satisfaction	Work satisfaction	Administrative staff
		Researchers
Working methods	Distribution of workload	Administrative staff
	Planning of work	Administrative staff
	Working goals	Administrative staff
	Teamwork	Administrative staff
	Working priorities	Researchers
	Use of time	Researchers
Roles	Recognized roles	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Appreciation of role	Researchers

Table 12. Participation and accountability area-importance

Dimensions	Importance	Stakeholders
Decisions	30%	Administrative staff
	70%	Researchers
Accountability	80%	Administrative staff
	20%	Researchers
Risk and prevention	100%	Administrative staff

Table 13. Participation and accountability area-meanings

Dimensions	Meanings	Stakeholders
Decisions	Take decisions quickly	Administrative staff
	Participation in decision making	Administrative staff
		Researchers
	Criteria used in decision making	Researchers
Accountability	Assumption	Administrative staff
		Researchers
Risk and prevention	People with mental health problems	Administrative staff

Also researchers spoke about decisions and participation as real involvement in decision-making. They also focused on criteria of a decisional process that needs to be transparent, explicit and shared (Table 13):

> "It doesn't seem me we belong to anything. [...] When I go to a meeting of the Institute, we talk and talk, but is all useless, because everything we decide at the meeting has already been decided before."

Accountability

Both administrative staff and researchers spoke about the attribution of accountability according to different roles and positions:

> "There are people that if you gave them a job for which they were truly responsible, right from the person who makes photocopies, they would stay longer in the job, they would be happier, organizational well-being would increase."

Researchers focused in particular on the need to distinguish and make explicit the accountability of administrative staff and researchers as a way to improve collaboration and productivity (Table 13).

Risk and Prevention

Administrative staff spoke about the risk represented by the presence, in the working environment, of people with mental health problems. They underlined the necessity of preventive intervention by the head of security in order to avoid damage to workers (Table 13):

> "First of all, there is the need to identify situations before happen. [...] For people who have mental fragility and difficulty relating with colleagues and that can not only create problems, but also pose a risk in the workplace, thus for the protection of ourselves and of the institution. But nothing is done."

Discussion

Results of this study highlight that the framework of the construct of organizational well-being is the same for different categories of employees working in the same organization. Even though the structure of organizational well-being is the same, differences emerged in this study relating to representations of the construct. In particular, these differences were seen in the importance given by the two groups of stakeholders to each dimension of organizational well-being and in different contents and meanings.

Regarding the different importance given to dimensions by these two categories of workers, we can suggest explanations for each area of organizational well-being. For the "Tomorrow area", the prominence given by researchers to the "Future outlook" dimension could be explained by taking into account that temporary workers, for which there is little certainty of future employment, are more numerous among researchers rather than among administrative staff. The importance of job future in promoting organizational well-being has also been underlined in literature. A number of studies (e.g., Ashford et al., 1989; Barling and Kelloway, 1996; Hellgren et al., 1999) have found that job insecurity was associated with negative perceptions of physical and mental health, as well as lowered job satisfaction and higher levels of turnover intention. A perceived insecurity concerning one's future role in the organization appeared to make employees less inclined to remain with the organization (Arnold and Feldman, 1982; Dekker and Schaufeli, 1995). The prominence given by the administrative staff to the "Innovation" dimension could be due to the need for flexibility in the Central Administration, a structure where a bureaucratic and rigid culture prevails. For the "Staff management" area, the prominence given by the researchers to the dimension of "Evaluation" might be explained by taking into account that evaluation is an important and much discussed theme in academic communities (Kaukomen, 1997) and that the evaluation process could have repercussions not only on researchers and their work, but also on the Research Institutes and on the entire Agency. Evaluation results are increasingly used as inputs in research management (Van Steen and Eijffinger, 1998), but evaluation is also used to decide funding following

performance assessments of researchers, projects, programs, departments and institutions (Geuna and Martin, 2003). The prominence given by the administrative staff to the "Staff appraisal and professional growth" dimension could be explained by taking into account the scarcity of internal rewards that are instead more present in research activities. In the literature, rewards are one of the variables that improve organizational well-being. In particular, regarding non-monetary rewards, research has shown that people are moved by incentives other than wage, such as social approval, fairness and other non-monetary aspects of their jobs (Gächter and Falk, 2002). For the "Inside and outside" area, the prominence given by the researchers to the "Sense of belonging" dimension could probably be explained by taking into account that sense of belonging is strictly related to the kind of work, which is more engaging and fascinating in the case of research work rather than in administrative work. A sense of belonging to something beyond oneself is not only an important element of employee engagement and of the promotion of organizational well-being, but also a basic human need (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). The administrative staff gave instead prominence to the dimension of "Communication and sharing", probably because aspects related to circulation of information are more problematic in the Central Administration, where those that have important information tend to keep it to themselves because it can help them maintain a position of power. Strategies that involve open communication (DeJoy et al., 1995; Schurman and Israel, 1995) and broad-based participation (Vandenberg et al., 1999) have been shown to be important for promoting organizational well-being. On the contrary, deficiencies in communication can result in maldistribution of knowledge and, as a consequence, thwart organizational well-being (Kivimäki and Elovainio, 1995). For the "Resources" area, the prominence given by researchers to the "Financial" dimension is probably due to consequences that the lack of economic resources have not only on their daily work, but also on their long term work, thus orienting their research themes (Massy, 1996). For the "Work" area, aspects related to "Job satisfaction" were more important for the researchers, probably because of the kind of work and working context, bearing in mind that, in Italy, researchers are not well-paid and the Agency does not offer them incentives, for example, in terms of career advancement or even verbal recognition. Therefore, intrinsic motivation becomes an important aspect able to promote organizational well-being (Gächter and Falk, 2002). The correlation between job satisfaction and both economic and non-economic incentives, has been shown in literature (Locke, 1976). The prominence

given by administrative staff to "Working method" could probably be explained by the need, in the Central Administration, to have an efficient organization of working activities. In effect, in the Central Administration there is a strict organizational structure, characterized by not very flexible use of working time and not very permissive working methods. For the "Participation and accountability" area, the prominence given by researchers to the "Decisions" dimension is probably due to their lack of involvement in decision-making processes. The employees' involvement in the decisions that affect them has been underlined in literature (Harter et al., 2003) as important for promoting organizational well-being. In particular, this dimension is strictly related to the sense of belonging and impact on workers levels of interest and ownership in organizational outcomes (Wrzesniewski et al., 1977). The importance given by administrative staff to the "Risk and prevention" dimension is probably due to the rigid structure of the Central Administration and the consequent need to bring all processes under control, for example in order to prevent any problems that people with mental health disease can cause. Organizational culture has been shown to be an important element affecting the work experiences of employees who are different from the majority (Spataro, 2005). In particular, CNR would seem to belong to the culture of differentiation, in which disability is not recognized as a value for the organization (Colì and Rissotto, 2014b).

With respect to different meanings given by these two categories of workers, the main differences were related, for example, to the "Future outlook" dimension, seen by administrative staff as the general vision of the Agency and by researchers in terms of the future of work for employees. Other differences were related to the "Recruitment and staff turnover" dimension, seen by the administrative staff in terms of general human resources management and by the researchers in terms of the management of a weak class of workers, such as temporary workers and employees with disabilities. The point of views of the administrative staff and the researchers also differed in the "Communication and sharing" dimension, in respect of which administrative staff spoke about information and knowledge, while researchers also spoke about equipment and research tools. Regarding "Relationship and integration", administrative staff spoke about this dimension in terms of integration between colleagues and between managers and employees, whereas researchers spoke about this dimension in terms of integration between working groups and between research Institutes and Departments. Other differences are related to the "Working methods" dimension, seen in terms of the distribution of workload and planning of work by the administrative staff and in terms of use of time by researchers.

To sum up, this study highlighted differences in the way in which administrative staff and researchers represented organizational well-being, both in terms of importance given to each dimension and in terms of content and meaning attributed to the dimensions themselves. This study shows similarities with other studies performed in the same field, in particular with regard to the aspects promoting organizational well-being. However, in literature, there are no other similar studies investigating differences in points of view of different categories of workers of the same organization.

As a whole, the specificity of the points of view of these two categories of workers considered in our study might be explained by considering not only the different working conditions and the different kind of work performed, but also the different cultural values of the Research Institutes and of the Central Administration. The specificity of the points of view should be taken into account in the evaluation of the organizational health state, above all in complex organizations where different categories of workers, performing different kind of work, could have different representations of the construct of organizational well-being. Different points of view should be equally represented and integrated into the predisposition of research tools for evaluation. Different tools for different main categories of workers should also be considered, as well as the integration of quantitative research tools with qualitative ones.

Conclusion

On the basis of the main results of this study, we provide a set of recommendations that could be applied to improving organizational well-being in the CNR and in other similar complex organizations:

- Transmit to employees a clear vision of the Agency, also in terms of future working outlook
- Promote communication and collaboration, not only between different categories of workers, such as administrative staff and researchers, but also among coworkers, between working groups and between managers and employees
- Activate knowledge management processes able to explicit tacit knowledge and share existing knowledge
- Plan the recruitment of new staff on the basis of the real needs of the Agency
- Make policies for recruitment and management of people with disabilities and for employment of temporary workers
- Provide for an incentives system, able to value each employee and to promote their professional growth

- Use participatory evaluation as a tool for a better human resources management and for improving the quality of work
- Create a comfortable working environment, considering spaces for socialization
- Support a clear definition of roles, competences and accountability
- Foster the participation of employees in Agency decision-making processes

The proposed interventions, to be effective, should take into consideration the specificity of each working context and of the different points of view of employees.

The authors recommend further studies in similar complex organizations, such as research agencies or universities, in order to verify the results of this study in other working contexts and to stimulate debate around this theme.

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Ethics

This article is original and contains unpublished material. Ethical issues are not involved.

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