WORKER SUSTAINABILITY

CRISTINA BANKS, PHD
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
SUSTAINABILITY

• The ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level
• The property of biological systems to remain diverse and productive indefinitely
• The endurance of systems and processes
• The ability to be sustained, supported, upheld, or confirmed
DOES SUSTAINABILITY EXTEND TO WORKERS?

• Strong connections between work-life balance, well-being and sustainability in the design of work and workplaces will enhance long-term effectiveness of employees over their working lives and enhance health and resource munificence of institutions and society.

• Employment practices that sustain work-life balance and well-being in workplace experiences are critical pathways to long-term workforce effectiveness.

Building Blocks

• Work environment is caring and supports employee well-being.
• Employees not seen as primarily resources that can be deployed and depleted to serve economic ends.
• Employees not faced with excessive workloads nor unrelenting pace of work for weeks and years on end.
• Employees give time to recover or seek extra resources they need to perform in the future.
• Burnout is avoided and employees are given time for renewal.
WHAT DIFFERENTIATES INTERVENTIONS THAT WORK VS. DON’T WORK?

• Single-pronged approaches vs. multi-pronged approaches
• Intervention based on proven science vs. trial and error
• High vs. low participation rates in the intervention
• High vs. low involvement/support of leadership and management in the intervention
• High vs. low incentive value attached to the behavior change
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING MODEL

• Focuses on the employee’s experience of the physical and psychological environment
• Views the employee as being a part of several nested environments, each having an impact on the employee’s need satisfaction.
• Explicitly acknowledges the role of employee’s need satisfaction in explaining the relationship between organizational attributes and employee outcomes.
• Need satisfaction → performance equation
  performance = f (ability X motivation)
QUALITIES IN THE WORKPLACE THAT “DRIVE” NEED SATISFACTION

- Privacy
- Flexibility
- Predictability
- Equity
- Comfort
- Connection
- Safety
Study Overview

• Focus Group Methodology
• Individual and Group Process
  1. “Think about what connection means to you. What would make a space feel more connected? Using words and images, take 5-7 minutes to record your ideas.”
  2. Prompt 2: The Box (spatial elements and qualities)
• Coding Methodology
  – Preliminary data, still ongoing
Comfort - *what*

- “Feeling good,” “physical, mental, social”
  - **Physical comfort**
    - Right lighting; good temperature
    - Being able to dress like you want
    - A good fitting chair that reclines, couch, bean bags; stretching room
    - Moveable furniture
  - **Mental** (*feel at ease, not come home stressed*)
    - Able to receive good energy from the people around me
    - Relationships with coworkers fostered (social events)
    - Being able to talk about personal issues; being trusted and encouraged; no discrimination; boss is accessible
Key Ideas

- **Breaks**: break room in center; gymnasium
- **Private spaces**
- **Outside/beyond office**
- **Amenities**: in center; childcare; gym
- **User-generated**: adaptable temperature; sliding doors
- **Circular building**
Connection - *how*

- **Connection to management, employees**: sense of importance to group, proximity of people; feeling welcomed; being able to voice concerns; knowing that you can approach anyone in the workplace
- **Connection to outside**: connection to nature/health, connection to the outer world
- **Connection of ideas**: comfort to collaborate, communication (at and beyond work), teamwork, sense of belonging
- **Other**: hexagonal workspaces, open plan, dress code – flexibility
Management/employees: break room, couches; short walls; memo wall
Outside: trees; glass
Collaboration: innovation area; café; collaboration desks
Study Overview

Survey: 5 sections

Independent variables

- **(Context)** Demographics, academic program
- **(Environment)** Rate importance of features
- **(Individual behavior)** Study habits

Moderating variables

- **(Basic needs)** Identify basic needs that are satisfied by each feature

Dependent variables

- **(Personal outcomes)** Rate satisfaction of study outcomes
Study Overview

Outcome measures:

- Satisfaction with study habits, performance in courses, learning and acquisition of knowledge.
- Productive when I study and do coursework, able to achieve my education goals, able to work efficiently and comfortably.
- Satisfaction with input on assignments, choice in where to study, control of when to study, predictable workload policies.
## Results

### What do students find important?

#### Workspace Features
- Windows
- Cleanliness
- Uncluttered workspaces
- Layout of study space
- Non-smoking policy

#### Ambiance Factors
- Natural light
- Quiet
- Clean
- Free from odors
- Thermal comfort
- Fresh air

#### Cultural Factors and Resources
- Equity, fairness
- Social bonding
- Cleanliness
- Access to healthy food
- Timely and effective communications
- Safety, free from harassment
- Reliable internet/Wi-Fi
Results

What features are most likely to satisfy needs?

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Supportive Study culture
- Recognition of accomplishments
- Research training
- Predictable workloads
- Support of peers
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with study habits</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Physical Well-Being</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Meaning/Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with performance</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with learning/knowledge</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Engagement/Connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am productive when I study</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to achieve education goals</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to work efficiently and comfortably</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with input on assignments</td>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
<td>Positive Emotions</td>
<td>Competence/Accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with choice in where to study</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with control of when to study</td>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>Personal Growth/Mastery</td>
<td>Engagemen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with predictable workload policies</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESIGNING FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- IEQ
- Views
- Biophilia
- Flexible work environments
- Ergonomic furniture
- Reliable, available technology
- Access to healthy food
- Restorative spaces
DESIGNING FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 
PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

• Personalization
• Social community
• Safeguards against hazards, harassment, inequities
• Recognition and appreciation
• Opportunity for personal and career development
• Participation in decision-making
• Control of work demand
• Real choice
ANALOGY TO THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN “HARDWARE” AND “SOFTWARE”

- Both can be designed to over-ride or take the place of the other
- Using “software” to change the perception of “hardware”
- Using “hardware” to change the perception of “software”
HOW TO KEEP WORKERS IN THE ORGANIZATION AND ENABLE THRIVING

• Help workers perform at their best → Design the most supportive environments
• Give workers what they need most → Implement changes that satisfy these needs