14. EADPH conference, 2009 in Tromsö, Norway

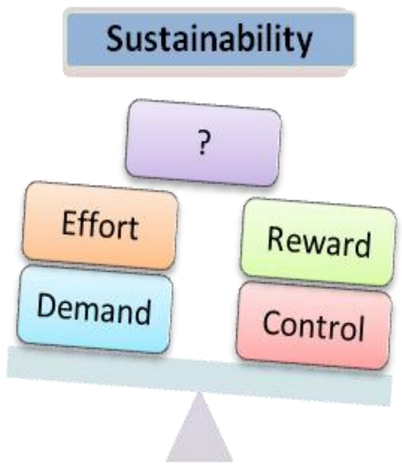
Exploring positive perceptions of dental work in Sweden and Denmark

MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA

KAMILLA BERGSTRÖM*, HANNE BERTHELSEN, KARIN HJALMERS, BJÖRN SÖDERFELDT
Department of Oral Public Health, Faculty of Odontology, Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden

Objectives

The aim of the poster is to present the results of three key items of an ongoing comparative study of general dental practitioners coming from Denmark and Sweden. The overall study focuses on dental work as an example of human service work, which involves cognitively, emotionally and technically demanding tasks. These tasks and the conditions in which they take place are potentially implicative of negative as well as positive personal effects.



By measuring positive effects, resources and rewards of dental work under different organizational settings, the overall aim of the study was to identify conditions promoting a sustainable working life in human service organizations. The study was approved by the Swedish regional ethical board.

Here, the degree of three variables, (1) ***work enjoyment,*** *(2)* ***satisfaction with work,*** and *(3)* ***a good working life***, are compared between subgroups of Danish and Swedish general dental practitioners.

Materials and methods

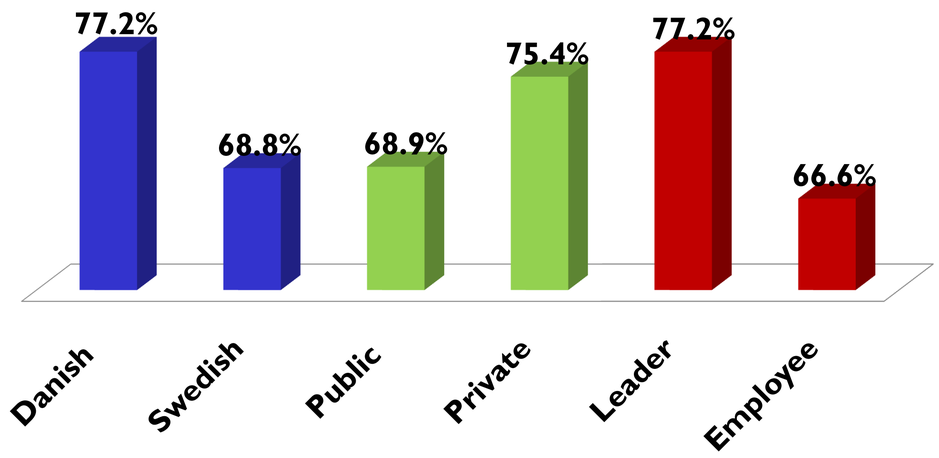
In 2008, a questionnaire, previously tested in a pilot, was sent to a randomly selected sample of 1835 practicing dentists in Sweden and Denmark. Different perceptions of work were covered in 9 dimensions. Three items to describe the dentists´ overall perception of work were analyzed through distribution analysis and Mann-Whitney U test were used for comparing ranks among groups.

Results

After two reminders, the total response rate was 68% (n=1226). Of the respondents, 62% were women, 51% were Swedish and 49% Danish, 60% were private practitioners and 61% were leaders.

As for the three items, frequency analysis showed that almost three fourths of the dentists experienced a *high* or a *very high degree of*: (1) ***work enjoyment*** (73%), (2) ***of satisfaction with their work as a whole*** (72%) and (3) ***of a good working life*** (74%).

Percentage of subjects experiencing a high or very high degree of *work enjoyment* among subgroups of dentists



Comparing the subgroups, items (1) and (2) showed statistically significant differences in rank between the groups coming from Denmark or Sweden, from private or public practices and from leader/owner or employee positions. Item (3) showed similar results, except for the comparison between the groups coming from Denmark or Sweden, which were non-significant.

Subgroups \ Items	*Work enjoyment*	*Satisfaction with work*	*A good working life*
Danish or Swedish	$P = 0.002$	$P = 0.019$	$P = 0.054$
Public or private	$P = 0.001$	$P = 0.001$	$P < 0.001$
Leader or employee	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$

Table 1. Significance test of differences in plots between subgroups

Conclusions

The initial results illustrate that Danish and Swedish dentists are good examples of persons with positive perceptions of human service work. The Danish dentists, the private practitioners and the leaders/owners score systematically higher than their counterparts. The statistically significant differences between the groups are to be further analyzed to track potential correlations to different organizational factors of a sustainable working life.

Contact: kamilla.bergstrom@mah.se

Funding: The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, Malmö University, The Danish Dental Association.