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Running Head: Group climate and worker's attitudes in youth prison

Fear is the Key

Keeping the Balance between Flexibility and Control in a Dutch Youth Prison

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Abstract

The present study examined the professional attitude of group workers in a Dutch youth prison and their perceptions of the organizational culture and leadership by line and staff management. To be able to attain therapeutic goals, group workers must maintain a balance between therapeutic flexibility and control. It was found that the interactions between group workers and prisoners created fear, suspicion and violence, and that staff varied in their behavioural responses to perceived unsafety. 'Transformational' (inspiring) leadership by line and staff management was associated with less fear and more flexibility and structure, which seems needed to create a rehabilitative group climate. The findings of this study can be used for the improvement of treatment of juvenile delinquents who reside in secure correctional facilities.

Key words: Group climate in youth prison; group workers attitudes; organizational culture; leadership

Summary of policy and practice implications

- An open group climate could provide a structured rehabilitative environment for incarcerated adolescents, but the difficulty in maintaining the balance between flexibility and control needs constant monitoring of climate quality to avoid negative consequences of incarceration.
- Education, training, and professional attitudes of group workers as well as organisational culture should be aligned with rehabilitative goals.
- Fear of violence could deter group workers from creating and maintaining an open living climate.
- Fear of violence can engender perceptions of losing control in both inmates and group workers. Group workers depend on each other for safety and do not criticize fellow workers. Group workers who are perceived to be 'in control' because of their repressive and often punitive behaviour tend to attain most authority, which can result in a rapidly deteriorating group climate. Living group climate should therefore be monitored regularly, especially after incidents to prevent a downward cycle of violence and punishment.
- Transformational leadership by line and staff management is needed to counteract feelings of unsafety among group workers and punitive attitudes, as well as to support group workers in performing their difficult task at the group.
- Almost every shift yields urgent problems. Group leaders should therefore be adequately supported by their line and staff management during shifts. To be able to do this, line and staff management and psychologists should be present at the living group on a regular base.

Introduction

Incarcerating adolescent delinquents in Dutch society, and in most Western societies serves the goals of punishment and deterrence (Liebling & Maruna, 2005), but rehabilitation is the most important goal (Gatti, Tremblay & Vitaro, 2009). The long term effects of incarceration, however, are not promising yet (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau & Cullen, 1990; Garrido & Morales, 2007; Gatti, Tremblay & Vitaro, 2009; Huizinga & Henry, 2008; Parhar, Wormith, Derkzen & Beauregard, 2008; Mac Kenzie, 2006; Pritikin, 2009, Loughran, 2009). Although Knorth, Harder, Kendrick and Zandberg (2008) performed a meta-analysis of the effects of (forensic) residential youth care (27 studies) and found moderate to large effect sizes for overall improvement, including improved social functioning and decreases in aggression and recidivism (Cohen's $d = 0.60$), institution workers in the Knorth study reported hardly any progression. Notably, when Stams, Van der Helm and Van der Laan (2010) performed an analysis solely on the controlled studies, the effect size dropped to a non-significant $d = 0.03$.

To conclude, we notice two urgent problems in this field of research: first empirical evidence for a positive effect of (forensic) residential youth care on rehabilitation is lacking. Second: there is a lack of knowledge about negative effects of incarceration and treatment conditions in residential youth care that may affect successful rehabilitation (Axford, Little, Morpeth, & Weyts, 2005; Drost, 2008). Therefore, the present study examines the role of workers' attitudes, organizational culture and leadership in shaping a rehabilitative group climate in youth prison. Characteristic of a rehabilitative climate is the combination of flexibility and structure, which should be attuned to the developmental needs of the juvenile delinquents. In a secure institution,

however, structure can easily turn into repressive control (Goffman, 1961; Zimbardo, 1991). Inspiring leadership by line and staff management seems therefore needed to help group workers find a balance between flexibility and control in the face of challenging behavior of inmates at the living group (Berridge & Brodie, 1998; Hicks, 2008), and to help group workers counteract the negative effects of coercion in correctional treatment of incarcerated delinquent youth (Parhar et al., 2008).

Negative effects of incarceration

Some researchers have found incarceration to have criminogenic effects (Camp & Gaes, 2005; Gatti et al., 2009; Kimberly & Huizinga, 2008; Liebling & Maruna, 2005; Osgood & O'Neill Briddell, 2006). These criminogenic effects of incarceration may be ascribed to the negative impact of imprisonment on moral development (Stams et al., 2006), socialization into criminality during imprisonment, exposure to the prison's antisocial subculture, strengthening of deviant bonds (Osgood, O'Neill Briddell, 2006), labeling (Huizinga & Henry, 2008), weakening of protective social bonds and brutalization (for a review, see Pritikin, 2009).

Recent neurobiological research has shown that the social climate affects human behaviour (Van Goozen, Fairchild, & Snoek, 2007). As incarcerated boys cannot leave their living area, the impact of the social climate on them is thought to be relatively large (van der Helm, Stams & van der Laan, 2010). Incarceration may engender stress, fear and aggression in the immediate environment. This can produce neurohormones, like vasopressine and cortisol, which are connected with negative emotions, hostility bias, antisocial behaviour, and low social involvement (Fishbein & Sheppard, 2006; Nelson &

Trainor, 2007; Popma & Raine, 2006, Tremblay, 2008; Sato, Uono, Matsuura, & Toichi, 2009; for a review see: Van Goozen et al., 2007).

Youth prison climate

Compared to most adult prisons the impact of the prison environment on adolescents is probably more pronounced, as incarcerated adolescents spend less time in their cells and often live in supervised living groups. In contrast to most adult prisons, social interaction at the living group is a main therapeutic instrument and serves educational goals (Slot & Spanjaard, 2009). A structured, safe and rehabilitative environment is often designated as an 'open' climate when support is high, opportunities for growth are evident, and flexibility is in balance with the organizational needs for control (Clark Craig, 2004; van der Helm, Stams & van der Laan, 2010; Ule, Schram, Riedl, & Cason, 2009; Wortly, 2002). In contrast, the prison climate should be regarded as 'closed' when support from staff is (almost) absent and opportunities for 'growth' are minimal. A closed prison climate is also reflected by lack of flexibility, a grim and uninviting atmosphere and repressive control, including incremental rules, little privacy, lack of safety and boredom and (frequent) humiliation of inmates (Harvey, 2005; Irwin & Owen, 2005; Liebling & Maruna, 2005; Little, 1990; Wright & Goodstein, 1989).

Flexibility versus control

Maintaining a structured and rehabilitative environment requires a delicate balance between flexibility and control (Clark Craig, 2004; Liebling, 2004; Liebling & Price, 2001; Wortly, 2002). Structure is needed to avert chaos, anarchy and violence among

adolescents who are often used to live in an aversive environment, and are afraid of and/or distrust other people (Sato, Uono, Matsuura, & Toichi, 2009). Flexibility is needed to practice newly acquired social competences and to stop a negative spiral of social fears, a tendency to evaluate ambiguous stimuli in the environment as negative, and socially inadequate or hostile behaviours (Miers, 2010; White, Shi, Hirschfield, Mun and Loeber, 2009). Too much reliance on structure, however, can turn into repressive control, which creates more fear and depression and fosters distrust and damages (therapeutic) relationships between staff and inmates (De Dreu, Giebels & Van der Vliert on the effects of punitive power, 1998, Wortly, 2002).

Flexibility is considered important from the perspective of the 'Risks-Needs-Responsivity' (RNR) principle of successful rehabilitation (Langdon, 2007). The RNR principle holds that the intensity of the behavioural intervention matches the risk for recidivism, that treatment should target criminogenic needs, and that treatment should be fine-tailored to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strength of the offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2007). Fine tailoring needs flexibility in treatment as opposed to a 'one size fits all' method. In youth prison, this arduous task of reconciling two seemingly opposite goals (the need for control to avert chaos and violence and flexibility to promote learning and rehabilitation) is especially the domain of group workers and their professional behavior.

Group workers professional behaviour

The professional behaviour of group workers in a closed forensic setting is subject to many (external) influences. Working with adolescents who are often victim as well as

perpetrator, and who display serious externalizing an internalizing behaviour (Vermeiren, 2003) requires efficacious professional behaviour of group leaders. For this, task maturity ('knowledge, experience and skills that the specific task requires'; Herschi & Blanchard, 1977), a shared social identity with common values, work motivation and safety are important conditions according to organizational literature (Fiedler, 1964; Furnham 1997; Haslam, 2004). An organizational culture that combines flexibility and structure and inspiring ('transformational') leadership (Bass, 2008) may shape conditions for group workers to create a flexible and open living climate (Fiedler, 1964; Herschi & Blanchard, 1977; Jaffee, 2001).

Aggression by inmates can easily be misattributed by group workers (Crick & Dodge, 1996), and therefore demands a high degree of professionalism and suitable education and training in order to be able to adequately interpret and handle 'aggressive' or challenging behaviour of the inmates. For a treatment orientation that is based on young offenders' prospects of rehabilitation (Cullen, Latessa, Burton, & Lombardo, 1993; Quinn & Gould, 2003) knowledge of their psychopathology is needed (Combined Dutch Inspections, 2007). Such knowledge facilitates adequate interpretation of challenging behavior and could help de-escalate the level of aggression in delinquent adolescents with serious mental, emotional and behavioral problems, which altogether could enhance safety at the living group.

We conclude that working with delinquent adolescents in a secure correctional institution requires higher professional education (for instance, Bachelor of Social Work or University degree in Educational Science or Psychology: Ministry of Justice, Dutch Prison Service, 2009).

Safety and professional behaviour

A closed prison climate, which is characterized by stress, suspicion, fear and frequent violence, can negatively influence staff behaviour. Severe stress emanating from violence could lead to either 'freeze', 'flight' or 'fight' reactions (Gray, 2003). 'Freeze' reactions have been found in group workers who distance themselves from the inmates ('just doing my shift', Liebling & Price, 2001) who are not responsive to their needs, and believe that 'nothing works'. 'Flight' reactions can be diverse: 'bad boys' are often neglected by the group workers who tend to concentrate on 'good boys'. Another flight reaction is retreating from the social interactions of the living group by performing administrative duties. 'Fight' reactions can be characterized by exercising strict control and punishment, 'get tough' ideations (Perelmans & Clements, 2009, Toch, 2008) at the living group and picking on 'bad boys'. Common values and a favourable organizational culture are required to maintain professional standards.

Common values and organizational culture

Organizational culture is defined by Schein (1996) as the way a group of people share and determine their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and overt behaviour and pass these on as 'the right way' to newcomers in the institution (Schein, 1996, 1997). One of the main characteristics of organizational culture according to Schein is its layered structure and the likelihood of internal inconsistencies. Schein proposed organizational culture to consist of three layers or 'onion' rings (Figure 1). The outer layer or 'artifacts' are the visible structures of the place or the way workers dress. Beneath artifacts are "espoused values" which are conscious strategies, goals and philosophies of the organization. The

core, or essence, of culture is represented by the 'basic (underlying) assumptions' that operate at a largely unconscious level. These basic assumptions concern notions about the nature of humans ('good' or 'bad'), human relationships, activity, reality and truth.

<Insert Figure 1 about here>

Internal inconsistencies in the youth prison 'onion' can be explained by espoused values that are based on a treatment orientation with common values associated with responsiveness and an organizational culture that is based on a balance between flexibility and control at the living group (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Haslam, 2004). Underlying basic assumptions can be simultaneously characterized by the core belief that all youngsters are 'bad', beyond cure and deserve harsh punishment, resulting in punitiveness and control, although 'espoused' institutional values stress rehabilitation and treatment. This basic assumption of 'incurable badness' can be nurtured by the growing acceptance and positive evaluation of retribution and severe punishment in the media and political landscape, where often criminal adolescents are portrayed as incurable 'urban predators' (Green, 2009; Piquero, Cullen, Unnever, Piquero, & Gordon, 2010). The 'nothing works' paradigm (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001) can exert a negative influence on 'basic assumptions' and group leaders' behaviour (Green, 2009). In a closed climate punitive 'basic assumptions' and 'get tough' ideations (Perelmans & Clements, 2009) contrast often with 'official' or 'espoused values' (treatment orientation). To maintain organizational values effective leadership is required.

Leadership

Task-maturity and high work motivation have to be complemented by a stable organization with clear organizational goals, a corresponding organizational culture and active, inspiring and innovative leadership (Camp, Gaes, Langan & Saylor, 2003; Colvin, 2007; Diluio, 1987; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008; Souryal p. 268 (2008). Leadership that is solely based on control is probably not sufficient for carrying out a complicated task, according to leadership literature (Bass & Bass, 2009; Fiedler, 1964). Leadership in a forensic setting should be inspiring and innovative to motivate (organizational) learning, growth and support of group workers in maintaining flexibility *and* control. Passive leadership can elicit disappointment and an organizational withdrawal response from group workers (the inmates 'take over') or increased punitive behaviour in order to gain repressive control of the living group (Perelmans & Clements, 2009). Active leadership is called upon to counteract these tendencies, especially after incidents. Active (and 'transformational') leadership (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) is also needed for maintaining work motivation in the face of challenging behaviour of incarcerated boys.

Work motivation

A high work motivation is needed to handle difficult adolescents and to preserve responsiveness towards them in spite of incidents and disappointments. Traditional elements of work motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) pertain to job characteristics like skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These job characteristics are thought to be fundamental to intrinsic work motivation. The 'nothing works' paradigm (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001) and a lack of a shared social identity at

work can be devastating to work motivation by diminishing perceptions of task significance and task identity (Haslam, 2004). 'Responsibility' (autonomy and feedback) is also often reduced in a closed climate where repressive control is not only directed at inmates, but also becomes part of an authoritarian social identity in group workers, which probably attract similar applicants for jobs available (Boekee, 2010) and has a major influence on professional behaviour (Haslam, 2004; de Quervain, Fishbacher, Treyer, Schellhammer & Schnyder, 2005).

Professional behaviour at the living group

As actual behaviour at the workplace is subject to so many influences it is often observed that professional behaviour does not align with organizational goals (Agyris & Schon, 1996, Pfeffer & Sutton, Kaptein, 2004). In some cases this disparity can lead to aversive behaviour of group workers: exercising strict, unfair control, neglecting needs of inmates and humiliating them (Souryal, 2009). Also downright criminal conduct like misuse of power and violence (Liebling & Price, 2001), discrimination (Bell, Ridolfi, Finly, & Lacy, 2009), maltreatment, staff sexual victimization of adolescents (Rabkin, 1999, Beck, Page and Guerino, 2010; Stein, 2006) and drug trafficking have sometimes been reported (Mc Carthy 1984).

Deviant behaviour of group workers can have a deleterious effect on treatment motivation, locus of control of incarcerated adolescents (van der Helm, Klapwijk, Stams & van der Laan, 2009), but also on the safety of other group workers, because prisoners in general and adolescents in particular are extremely sensible to perceived injustice and danger in their environment (Bortner & Williams, 1997; Liebling, 2004; Liebling & Price, 2001; Wooldredge, 1994 & 1998). Power differences at the living group often lead

to such perceived injustice. Recent research has shown that people with more organizational power are prone to enforce strict rules upon others, but at the same time violate those rules themselves. Enforcing strict rules and even punishment can establish a shared social identity, maintain one's reputation up to the point people even gain satisfaction from punishing others (de Quervain, Fishbacher, Treyer, Schellhammer & Schnyder, 2005). They often see their own violations as 'creative' and offer moral rationalizations for their behaviour (Lammers & Stapels, 2009; Lammers, Stapels & Galinsky, 2010). One interviewed incarcerated boy described such a situation (Van der Helm, Klapwijk, Stams & van der Laan, 2009):

“I: what putts you off here?”

“R: They don't keep to their own rules themselves. For instance, we have to eat our bread with forks and knives and cut our bread slices to six pieces. If we don't we are locked up. But when we are eating one of the group workers is standing behind me eating a lump of bread with his bare hands. When I ask him why he violates his own rule he answers: this way I can keep a good look at you.”

Fear and depression (White, Shi, Hirschfield, Mun, & Loeber, 2009) can lead to learned helplessness or reactance (Camp, Gaes, Langen & Saylor, 2003; Colvin, 2007; Griffin & Hepburn 2007; Kury & Smartt, 2009; Liebling, 2004, Trulson, 2007; Wortly, 2002). Repeated violent incidents may cause fear in group workers and this can lead to further withdrawal or even exercising even 'get tough' ideations and stricter repressive

control (Colvin, 2007; van der Helm et al., 2009, Perelmans & Clements, 2009; Steiner, 2008, Wortly, 2002).

To maintain an 'open' group climate group workers should combine therapeutic flexibility (responsiveness, providing opportunities for growth) with structure. To achieve this, organizational values must be congruent with group workers' social identity, motivation, personal values and education. Leadership should be inspiring and innovative to support and facilitate growth of group workers.

The aim of this study is to examine whether group workers' education, safety, common values, work motivation and leadership are sufficiently suited for maintaining a balance between flexibility (innovation) and control at the living group of a Dutch Juvenile Justice Institution. We also examine the effects of organizational culture and leadership at the living group. We hypothesize that active and inspiring ('transformational') leadership is important to provide for safety, and that a balance between flexibility and control is needed to facilitate rehabilitation. We interviewed group workers in a Dutch youth prison and subjected them to a questionnaire measuring work motivation, common values, safety, organizational culture and leadership.

Method

Participants

The present study was conducted in a Dutch youth prison in 2009 and 2010. The population consisted of $N = 59$ group workers (40% male and 60% female) randomly chosen from eight living groups ($N = 141$ group workers). The mean age of respondents was 32.2 years ($SD = 7.4$, range 20-53 years) and their mean experience was 2,5 years ($SD = 1.7$, range 1- 5 years). The participants were interviewed for about one hour and filled out a questionnaire. All workers participated voluntarily, signed an informed consent declaration and were told that their answers would be treated confidentially and anonymously and would be accessed only by the researchers. All names on the questionnaires and interview transcripts were deleted and given a code number. In order to protect the privacy of the workers, researchers had no access to the names.

Questionnaires and interviews

All interviews and questionnaires were administered by specially trained graduate students of the Leiden School of Social Studies (Bachelor of Social Work and master Youth care) and the University of Amsterdam (Department of Forensic Child and Youth Care Sciences). The questionnaires used were derived from Industrial and Organizational research on organizational culture, leadership and work motivation to assess whether youth prison organizational values, such as flexibility and rehabilitation, and the need for a balance between flexibility and control match with workers' values at the living group.

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument was an abbreviated version (15 items) that originated

from Quinn and Cameron's competing values theory (Quinn & Cameron, 1988, Cameron & Quinn, 1999), translated into Dutch Language and validated by van Muijen (1994).

Organizational culture (OC) was defined by Quinn and Cameron (1988) as '*what is valued, the dominant leadership style, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that characterizes an organization*'. OC

represents the values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization' (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Schein, 1992).

The competing values consist of a 'flexibility' dimension ('innovation') and a 'structure' dimension ('rules and procedures'). An example of an item from the 'innovation' scale is: '*Unknown situations are seen as a challenge*'; an example of an item from the 'structure' scale is: '*We keep to the rules here*'. The items were rated on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1= 'I do not agree' to 5= 'I totally agree'. Reliability in this study was satisfactory for all 4 scales (Cronbach's alpha for all scales was greater than .60 (table 1).

The Multifactor leadership Questionnaire. To measure leadership an abbreviated version (12 items) of the 'Multifactor leadership Questionnaire' (MLQ: Bass, 1990, 1995) was used, that was translated into Dutch and validated by den Hartog, van Muijen and Koopman (1997). The Bass 'Full Range Leadership Theory' distinguishes three kinds of leadership: 'passive leadership' (doing nothing), 'controlling leadership' (control) and 'transformational leadership'. 'Transformational leadership', sometimes called 'charismatic leadership', uses inspiration and innovation to motivate workers and is thought to increase group workers' awareness of task importance and values. An example of an item from the 'passive' scale is: '*my superior doesn't like to make decisions*'; an example of an item from the 'control' scale is: '*my superior keeps track of*

my performance' and an example of an item from the 'transformational' scale is: '*my superior shows to me different points of view*'. The items were rated on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1= 'I do not agree' to 5= 'I totally agree'. Reliability in this study was satisfactory for all 3 scales, with Cronbach's alpha for all scales greater than .60 (table 1).

The 'Need for recovery after Work Questionnaire' (NFR). To measure shared values, work motivation and safety perceptions, an abbreviated version (35 items) of the NFR was used. The NFR is a validated Dutch questionnaire (Veldhoven & Meijman, 1994) that quantifies workers' difficulties in recovering from work related exertion (Corn, Sluiter & Frings, 2006). An example of an item from the 'work motivation scale is: 'I am satisfied with my work'; an example of an item from the 'work perception' scale (subscale safety at work) is: 'I always feel safe at work'. The items were rated on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1= 'I do not agree' to 5= 'I totally agree'. Reliability in this study was satisfactory for all 3 scales, with Cronbach's alpha for all scales greater than .60 (table 1).

All workers were interviewed for one hour. The topic list in the open interview mirrored the constructs that were measured by means of the questionnaire. The interviews were used to create an in-depth description of work related perceptions and values, leadership, work motivation and to cross-validate the results obtained with the questionnaires. All interviews were written out verbatim and the transcripts were coded and analysed with Kwalitan (Peters, Wester, & Richardson, 1994), a computer program for coding qualitative results.

Qualitative study

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with group workers in order to provide insight into their attitudes and perception of group climate. The qualitative study consists of the following sections: education and training, values (flexibility and control), safety perceptions, work motivation, organizational culture, and leadership.

Education and training:

A total of 82% of the group workers remarked that they were sometimes afraid at the living group and did not know how to handle problems adequately: only 6 % of the group workers reported not to be afraid at all; 36% remarked that they got not enough support from 'above' and sometimes did not know how to handle conflicts properly:

Group leader: "One day we sat with three men upon a small boy, he kept crying for his mom, it went right trough me."

Interviewer: "What did you do then?"

Group leader: "Nothing, we just handcuffed him and carried him to isolation, that's the way things go here. I kept hearing his crying when I had returned home in the evening."

Values: flexibility versus control

Prevailing values in the interviews centred on 'repressive control'. More than 54 % of the group workers thought this to be *the* organizational goal and 42 % of the group leaders did not agree with rehabilitative organizational goals, expressing a need for stricter control and punishment. One group leader used these words:

“Education is not only talking, we can be stricter here; sometimes a corrective slap may do.”

Or a ‘get tough’ reaction:

“The organizational mission statement is rehabilitation, but I think we have gone too far in this. These boys have had enough chances; when there is an incident where I get hurt, talking is not enough, we have to punish them real hard. They have to burn. Not many colleges will help me in this”.

An advice to one of the interviewers was provided by a group leader:

“If you have a boy that is becoming a nuisance at the group, I have a good trick for you. When we are doing the dishwashing, I get to stand beside him and dry my wet hands on his shirt. He takes a swing at me, I duck and he is gone (isolation-red) for three days”

But also opposite reactions (‘Laissez-faire’) were noted (4):

“We are here so that the boys have a good time, I don’t want to spoil it, if they want to smoke marihuana its’s OK by me”

Safety perceptions

Group workers (85%) felt they were dependent for their safety on fellow group workers.

Twelve percent of the group leaders reported feelings of unsafety, but nearly all (97%) group leaders talked extensively about safety problems and fear of injuries (those working in girls groups less). All group workers recollected severe incidents and 76% reported to be frightened and to feel unsafe more than once:

“After some time the chairs, which aren’t bolted to the floor, cease to be a chair but become something they can throw at you”.

Safety had also to do with fellow workers:

“Safety has to do with other group workers who don't do a proper job, not with the boy's. I can see immediately who is afraid and sits his whole shift in the office compartment”.

And:

“Yes, I feel safe, but that's because I can fight. But when I look around there are a lot of women around, so if there is an incident you have a real problem. There are too few men here. I don't mean 'pedagogic talking' men, but real men who can stand their ground”.

Another example was self-reassuring:

“I am trained in martial arts; when it comes to a conflict I am not afraid of anyone”.

Work motivation

At total of 64 % of the respondents said they got work motivation out of successes with the adolescent; 74 % also got their motivation from working with fellow workers and a positive group climate. Factors that diminished work motivation (41%) were 'nothing works' cognitions, negative group climate, loss of control, not enough punishment for transgressions of rules and violence problems with adolescents.

“There really are group workers who don't do a thing when something happens; they say often: 'I don't feel well I'd rather sit in the office today”.

Or:

“I am here for the money; the rest doesn't interest me”.

And a nothing works statement:

“Whatever you do or say, these boys will always be back in a few months”.

Organizational culture

Opinions about organizational culture were diverse and ranged from 'repressive control' and 'get tough' statements ('*we are too lenient here for them*', 72%), 'human relations' statements ('*I feel safe with my fellow workers, they support me when something happens*', 87%) and statements pertaining to 'flexibility' ('*punishment is not enough, you have to create trust and help these boys*', 43%). Fewer (30%) statements were coded as 'rational goals' ('*we are here to rehabilitate them*'), but all goals mentioned were not specified according to espoused organizational values, like treatment and rehabilitation in the organization's pedagogical handbook. Some group workers (24%) found organizational culture changing into the direction of more repressive control before and after a group uprising:

'The atmosphere became 'us' against the boys and we had to isolate a lot of boys and punish them very often. Fellow group workers who were more inclined to punish took the lead and were backed by management. Although I didn't agree always and we had at one time almost the whole group in disciplinary trajectories, we didn't discuss this because you don't want to question your fellow worker: we have to rely on each other. I went with the flow'.

Leadership

A total of 29 % of the respondents complained about passive leadership:

"From the other group they were allowed to wave their bare parts at the girls and group leaders didn't do nothing; they even didn't punish them".

And:

“When I complained about fellow workers letting through drugs (I could clearly see the Marihuana leaves printed on the bag) he replied: they are only youngsters”.

Transformational leadership was reported by 52% of the group leaders:

‘One time our group was a shambles. A lot of incidents and aggression and we didn’t trust each other anymore. This new team leader took responsibility for the boys and the group leaders. He was here when we needed him and was always positive about our ability to overcome problems.’

Results showed that group workers' attitudes did not always align with organizational goals of rehabilitation. These attitudes ranged from extreme ‘laissez faire’ and therapeutic attitudes to outright punitive and ‘get tough’ attitudes. Post hoc, we coded group workers as ‘laissez faire’ (6%), ‘therapeutic’ (45 %), and ‘punitive’ (42%) and a ‘mixed’ group (7%) of having both therapeutic and punitive attitudes.

Quantitative study

The quantitative study consists of three sections. The first section describes group workers' education and their own work attitudes. In the second section, associations between perceptions of safety and work motivation on the one hand and organizational culture and leadership on the other hand are examined in correlational analyses. In the final section, a structural equation model that summarises the main results of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses were fitted to the data, analysing factors that

emerged as salient and influential from the quantitative results and open interviews with the group workers.

Preliminary analyses: are education and work experience among group workers sufficient to successfully carry out the job?

The educational level of the group leaders sample ranges from elementary school (1 respondent) to university (3 respondents) and is often not specific to the job: only 22% of respondents had a degree in pedagogical education. In the group without specific training, 38 respondents had attended vocational training, ranging from security guard to soldier, and 4 obtained a Bachelor degree. We asked group workers if they thought their education was sufficient for this job: 4 % thought this was not the case (in this group two respondents had a vocational specific education) and 96 % thought their education was sufficient for the job. Mean work experience (already reported: mean years of experience 2,3; $SD = 1.8$, range 1- 5 years), was short, considering the task difficulties and 30 % of respondents were actually looking for another job, reflecting a high turnover.

Associations between values, safety, work motivation, organizational culture and leadership: are flexibility ('innovation') and structure at the living group related to safety, common values, work motivation and leadership?

Correlational analyses (Table 1) showed that 'common values', were positively associated with 'transformational (inspiring) leadership' ($r = .43, p < 0.01$) and 'motivation' ($r = .52, p < 0.001$). 'Safety' was positively associated with 'structure' ($r = .45, p < 0.01$) and 'transformational leadership' ($r = .48, p < 0.01$), but negatively

associated with 'passive leadership' ($r = -.25, p < 0.01$). 'Work motivation' was positively associated with 'safety' ($r = .73, p < 0.001$), 'flexibility' ($r = .67, p < 0.001$) and 'transformational (inspiring) leadership' ($r = .57, p < 0.01$).

'Structure' was positively associated with 'common values' ($r = .27, p < 0.05$), 'flexibility' ($r = .55, p < 0.01$), and 'transformational leadership' ($r = .45, p < 0.01$) and negatively associated with 'passive leadership' ($r = -.27, p < 0.05$). 'Flexibility' was positively associated with 'common values' ($r = .53, p < 0.01$), 'transformational leadership' ($r = .66, p < 0.001$) and negatively associated with 'passive leadership' ($r = -.50, p < 0.001$).

Structural equation modelling: active and inspiring ('transformational') leadership is important to provide for safety, and a balance between flexibility and control.

To further investigate relations between 'passive' and 'transformational' leadership, 'safety' and the connections with flexibility and 'structure' (Figure 2), a series of structural equation models were fitted to the data using the statistical software package Amos 18. We chose only to present the best-fitting model. The organizational culture variables 'flexibility' and 'structure' were the dependent variables. Fit-indices (NFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA⁵) and the model Chi-Square, also designated as the generalized likelihood ratio, were used to evaluate model fit (Kline, 2005). The following cut-off values are indicative of close model fit: NFI and CFI > .90, TLI > .95 and RMSEA < .06, whereas a non-significant Chi-Square indicates exact model fit (Arbuckle, 2005; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005).

⁵ CFI (Comparative Fit Index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) are indices of goodness of fit that are independent of sample size. Models that fit well score favourably on these fit-indices. For further references see Arbuckle (2007).

The model showed an exact fit to the data: $X^2(2) = 5.9, p = .5$. Fit indices that are less sensitive to differences in sample size than the Chi-square test (Civo *et al.*, 2006) showed a good fit to the data: NFI= 0.96; CFI= .96; TLI = .97; RMSEA = 0.04. It can be derived from Figure 2 that 'safety' predicted 'structure' and 'flexibility'. Whereas 'inspiring leadership' predicted more 'flexibility' and 'structure', 'passive leadership' predicted less 'innovation' and was associated with less 'safety'.

Discussion

This study examined group workers' perceptions of group climate and their attitudes, education, feelings of safety, motivation, personal values, organizational culture, leadership and the relations among these factors. The majority of group leaders lacked a specific pedagogical training and expertise to deal with adolescents who suffer from serious psychopathology. Although some research reports this to be a problem, especially when dealing with adolescents with psychiatric problems (Joint Dutch Inspections report 2007), group workers themselves did not perceive this to be a problem. Group workers may not perceive lack of professional training, as they may not feel that any training can prepare them for working with incarcerated youth. Prison workers often perceive a great distance between what has been taught in vocational training programmes and the skills they learn on the job. Among inexperienced and undereducated workers, this could indicate some form of self protection (Kruger 2004) in terms of 'illusory superiority' (Matlin, 2004; Alicke, Dunning, & Kruger, 2005). Lacking necessary pedagogical knowledge can be a main problem for effective professional behaviour.

Results of the present study suggest that group workers depend on each other for their safety and for being able to create a positive and rehabilitative group climate. Shared common values at work, positively associated with flexibility ('innovation'), structure, feelings of safety and work motivation were found to be correlates of a positive group climate. Transformational (inspiring) leadership was positively associated with an open and supportive group climate, whereas passive leadership was associated with a non-rehabilitative and closed group climate. Finally, the high turnover of group workers – resulting in lack of job experience, psychological detachment from work, and lack of team stability and coherence – may negatively affect professional functioning of group workers.

Effective professional behaviour was influenced by leadership and fear of incidents, which showed in the interviews. The SEM analysis replicated these findings. When leadership is 'transformational', group workers report substantially less fear and more flexibility ('innovation') and they perceive more 'structure'. When leadership is passive, group workers might not be able to attain flexibility and, structure, which could result in substantially more fear at the workplace and eventually loss of control. Such loss of control can create withdrawal responses and 'laissez faire' attitudes in some group workers. Other group workers may respond by becoming less flexible and stricter. They exercise more repressive control, are less efficacious in conflict handling and develop more punitive attitudes, which may contribute to a less flexible and more closed climate. Notably, group workers who are perceived to be 'in control' because of their repressive and often punitive behaviour tend to attain most authority, which can result in a rapidly deteriorating group climate.

Passive leadership and inspiring leadership appeared as competing leadership styles in the SEM model, where passive leadership is causing unsafety in organizations. Inspiring group leadership not only seems to have a positive effect on workers' attitudes and feelings of safety, but also on inmates' conduct and group climate (Hicks, 2008; van der Helm, et. al., 2009).

The group workers responded very differently to questionnaires and open interviews. Although group workers rated their education as sufficient in the questionnaire, their education was not up to Dutch National Standards (Bachelor degree in Social Work). This was sometimes reflected in workers telling the interviewer not knowing what to do in critical situations or getting no help from fellow workers, but also not being able to consider alternatives for punishment and control (efficacious conflict handling). They turned out to be more negative about the living group climate, reporting much more fear of violence in the interviews. Elaborated remarks about these incidents were mentioned more often than became apparent in the results obtained with the questionnaires. The interview results showed fewer consensuses about work values, organizational culture and leadership when compared to the questionnaire results. 'Punitive' and 'get tough' ideations were expressed by the group workers, in contrast with the mission statement of the institution (rehabilitation and treatment).

The different results that were obtained with questionnaires and open interviews may be due to the intrinsic properties of a 'total institution' that not only have a negatively effect on inmates, but also on group workers (Goffman, 1961). Obedience and adaptation alignment ('playing it cool together', Goffman 1961) could lead to underreporting of fears at the workplace in questionnaires ('on paper'). The problems,

associated with the use of self-report questionnaires in secure accommodations have already been established for inmates (Breuk, Clauser, Stams, Slot, & Doreleijers, 2007). A possible explanation for this can be derived from research on dissonance reduction and self categorization theory at work (Haslam, 2004): admitting you are afraid is not congruent with group workers' social identity ('being in control') and makes work at the living group much harder ('seeing chairs as throwing objects').

Another plausible explanation for the substantial underreporting of fear at the workplace is found in the propensity to give socially desirable answers. Possible fear of repercussions can be one of the sources of this answering tendency (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). This can also pertain to reporting of deviant behaviour of fellow group workers and social loafing. Researchers should therefore be careful not to rely on a single assessment method and instead complement self-report questionnaires with in-depth interviewing (see Stams *et al.*, 2006).

There are some important limitations of this study that need to be acknowledged. First, as already referred to, we found evidence of serious underreporting of problems when using questionnaires, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the questionnaire data. Second, the small sample size and the inclusion of only one youth prison hamper the generalizability of the study findings. Finally, the sample size was too small to allow multi-level analysis in order to account for dependency of measurements in hierarchically structured data (e.g., group workers are nested into living groups). Notably, the neglect of statistical dependency results in capitalisation on chance and the risk of spurious research findings. Because of this and other limitations the results of our study should be interpreted with caution and viewed as preliminary.

The present study is probably one of the first studies examining the relations between group climate, fear, leadership and organizational culture in a youth prison. 'Passive leadership', lack of shared values and shared social identity may lead to more fear, less social support at the workplace, strict and even deviant behaviour of group workers becoming dominant, resulting in violence, increasing stress and symptoms of burn-out. These results are consistent with findings from general research by Furnham (1997) and Haslam (2004) but also with findings from children's home research (Berridge & Brodie, 1998; Hicks, 2008), indicating that 'transformational leadership' is vital for maintaining a proper balance between flexibility ('innovation'), structure and control. This balance is probably a prerequisite for an open and supportive group climate as well as for providing more safety and work motivation (Wade, Biehal, Sinclair, & Gibbs, 1998). Leadership and active presence during incidents seems to be very important for group leaders to counteract their fears.

An open group climate contributes to greater treatment motivation and higher internal locus of control of incarcerated adolescents (van der Helm, et. al. 2009). As the present study only provides preliminary evidence of associations among group climate, work motivation and organizational culture and behaviour, results should be replicated in a prospective, longitudinal study that allows for the examination of contextual effects by means of multi-level analysis. Nevertheless this study is one of the first to open the 'black box' of treatment in forensic residential youth care.

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Table 1: Correlations among Safety, Common Values, Structure, Flexibility, Leadership and Motivation

	M	SD	Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	safety	common values	structure	flexibility (innovation)	passive leadership	transformational leadership	Work motivation
safety	3.80	0.86	.79							
common values	3.88	0.70	.68	.47**						
structure	3.90	.52	.82	.45**	.027*					
flexibility (innovation)	3.90	.69	.78	.56**	.53**	.55**				
passive leadership	1.90	.67	.74	-.25*	-.36**	-.27**	-.50**			
transformational leadership	3.71	.73	.74	.48**	.43**	.45**	.66**	-.54**		
work motivation	3.61	.50	.76	.73**	.52**	.39**	.67**	-.24*	.57**	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed significance)

Figure 1: Organizational Culture after Schein

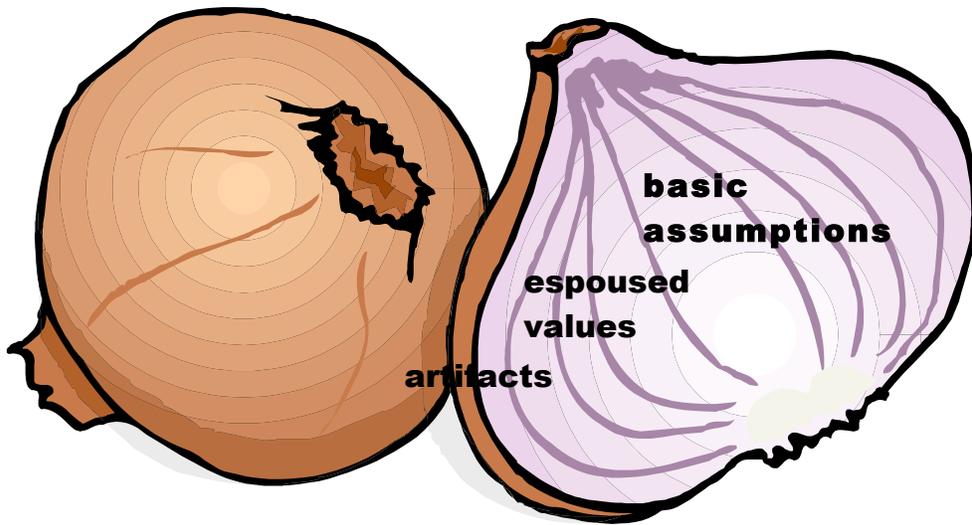


Figure 2: SEM-model of Safety, Leadership, Flexibility and Control

