The Effects of Organizational Constellations for Organizations and their Employees

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Abstract

Organizational constellations are an upcoming phenomenon, though in many cases unknown and not fully understood. This is not strange; the procedure during an organizational constellation differs from the common way to analyze problems and issues. That is a pity, the effects of organizational constellations that are proved so far, are namely really positive. The present study shows which effects organizational constellations have after questioning participants of an organizational constellation before and on a longer time after this constellation. It has been found that more insight in organizational systems is developed after attending an organizational constellation, just like a higher degree of systemic knowledge and a more positive attitude against the organizational problems or issues. People who are familiar with the method do not significantly score higher on the effectiveness of organizational constellations than people who are not familiar. Even as women, who do not score higher than men, and more creative people, who do not score higher than less creative people. These findings show us that an organizational constellation has positive effects for organizations and their employees. It is important to announce these positive effects because organizations might take their profits of it. To make the effects more powerful, future research can broaden this study by using more participants. This probably gives us more and other important results to continue the knowledge of the organizational constellation.

Family Constellations; the Starting Point to Organizational Constellations

In the eighties, Bert Hellinger introduced to us the family constellation, a way to make clear the family ties to make families conscious and alert on the importance of these ties. Families are complicated systems; a lot of influences from all kind of levels have an impact on the functioning of the family. Bert Hellinger explains this with his technique as no other.

What it is and how it Works

The family constellation, developed by Bert Hellinger in the eighties, is a technique to make people conscious of the prevalent family ties and the accompanying energy levels which all have an influence on them. Every family, from anyplace and any culture, has certain ties. These ties are developed by the culture in which the family lives, the past of the family and the circumstances and events that have occurred (Roozen, 2003). It can be seen that in every group or subgroup in a family, some connection exists. A family constellation makes these connections visible; not by reasoning this, but, on the contrary, by feeling this. The connections in a family can be imitated and experienced, and after that, be understood. It has been proven that the unconscious state of mind has a bigger capacity to process; that is why we can do so much things without reasoning; we can react to so much stimuli without thinking how to react. We just do it; make a reaction that fits in the situation. Our unconscious mind knows what to do, and therefore knows more than our consciousness (Balja & Kramers, 2008). The family constellation is based on this fact; our unconscious state of mind can experience what is good and what is wrong, so when a family will be constellated, it can be felt what is going on. In a family constellation, a family structure will be imitated.

The family constellation takes place in a room with an open space, this means; a space where the whole family can 'stand'. The person who wants the family constellation places his family members somewhere in that room where he thinks they belong. These family members have to reproduce what they feel; they should not give an interpretation. Often, metaphors will be used, like 'I feel locked'. The interpretations given by the family members make clear where the energy misses, where it maybe flews over, where the balance is disturbed and where the past gets too little attention. It brings up some new perceptions which only can be received by constellating a family in that way; this can be very emotional and confronting but on the long term very functional (Balja & Kramers, 2008).

What is the goal?

By experiencing a family constellation, new perceptions can and will come up; family ties are better understood; families will communicate better after the constellation; they have been confronted with the prevalent energy systems in their families and are able to deal with them. The purpose of a family constellation in the first place is to declare what the importance is of the various energy subsystems that exist in a family, as mentioned earlier. By declaring these subsystems, families will be more aware of the influences of these systems and therefore probably will communicate better. On the longer term, families can reach better relationships and a better mutual understanding thereby (Roozen, 2003).

Systemic thinking in Organizations

Systemic thinking means that every component of a structure counts; you can not see a body without for example its lungs, hair and legs. Every part of the body, directly visible or not, has a certain influence on the functioning of the body; the body needs these parts to function

effectively. This can be seen in the foregoing described part about family constellations. Organizations are just like families complex entities that are influenced by a lot of different energies. This is why the concept of family constellations also started to be applied in organizations. An organization can be compared with a family; every person in an organization has a function. Every function needs its space. Every function needs its admission. Every function and every part of the organization has its past (Weber, 2000). It is important that every function can be practiced effectively for the organization to be successful and well-functioning. So just like in a family constellation, it is important to make clear those elements of an organization to become aware of them. Being aware of this knowledge is the key to deal with problems or issues that seemed unsolvable. The knowledge that is expected to come up during an organizational constellation can be seen as implicit knowledge. De Geus (2007) makes a distinction between the 'unaware' and the 'aware'. According to him, these two concepts are not as close to each other as it seems sometimes. 'Unaware' can be seen as; the unaware effects of country, culture, world, religion and family habits. People are created by their family, their education and their surroundings; they cannot be seen apart from it. 'Aware' can be seen as things that can and will be reasoned by people in daily life. Organizational constellations are the 'unaware' part, with al its important concepts. Every part of the organization thus has a different perception, which is crucial for the motivation of employees, for the satisfaction of employees and for the functioning of the organization (Backhausen & Thommen, 2006). Shortly summed up, an organizational constellation is a technique that reveals which areas in an organization need more attention. Further, it shows how these areas are connected. Not much has been investigated

yet about the effectiveness of the organizational constellation itself, though research has found that our unconsciousness is very important in our daily functioning (Balja & Kramers, 2008).

The past ten years, more organizations try the technique of an organizational constellation to become aware of the problems or issues in their work setting. The following example tries to make clear how the organizational constellation works;

Person X is manager of the sales department in a big warehouse. He leads three teams. Two teams are obedient and motivated, the other team is recalcitrant; moves against almost all the rules made by person X, even if these rules are in accordance with the purpose of the company. Person X thinks that one team member of that team (person A) leads the contrariness, the rest of the team goes with him. He has already talked to person A, but without result, person A will not admit. A lot of meetings with all three teams as well as with just the concerning team have been organized, however, person X does not experiences any difference. He decides to present his problem to an organizational coach to make an organizational constellation. To build up this constellation, some representants are needed, these representants (in most cases) will be persons from outside the organization. Person X explains his problem to the organizational coach. Thereafter, the organizational coach makes clarifying notes about the problem. He asks person X to tell which factors he thinks are most important in this case. Person X explains at first the company as a whole, the concerning team members who are 'compliant', the concerning team member who leads the rest of the team (person A) and the two other, obedient teams. This comes down to four representants; one representant for the company, one for the compliant team members, one for person A (who leads the rest of the team) and one for the two other, obedient

teams. The organizational coach asks person X to begin with placing the first representant, who represents the company, somewhere in the space, where he thinks is correct. He has to experience this; based on his subconscious feeling. The representant who represents the company stands up and says; I represent the whole company. Person X now stands behind this representant and places both his hands on the shoulders of him. Then he places him somewhere in the place. He does this with all the representants. After positioning them, the organizational coach starts asking them how they feel; just to describe literally what they feel. Maybe sick, maybe dizzy, maybe a heart fluttering or a feeling of joy and so on. The representant has to describe what he experiences on that moment exactly, without explaining why he feels like that. The person who represents the whole company seems to be positioned right next to the representant of the obedient teams; both the representants feel safe but also in isolation. The representant of person A feels distracted, not belonging to the rest. The representant of the complying team members stands next to person A and feels sick, wants to run away. Person X observes it and starts to see what might be happening in his organization. The organizational coach asks the representants to take on a new position which gives them a better feeling. The representant of the obedient teams seem to walk to the other team, the representant of the company walks away from the two teams and now stands on a place where he has the survey. The representant of person A walks to the two other teams. The organizational coach continues asking how the representants feel. Eventually, it turned out that person A probably feels distracted from the other two teams, his team has originated later. Therefore he probably feels out of the picture; the whole company and the two other teams have a history together; it turned out they have developed a strong advertising campaign that made the company more successful.

Person X now knows what deserves more attention in his company; the concerning team needs to get more affinity with the company as a whole. This greater amount of affinity will result in a better mutual understanding with the other two teams. Person X already has some ideas to reach this and leaves this organizational constellation with lots of more new insights.

The example above shows us the components and structure of an organizational constellation. Some research found that people seem to have a universal way to experience things; a research of Schlötter (2005) in van der Valk, Janse, & Weggemans (2007) has shown that 250 subjects reported some similar experiences when they rated things. This shows us that an organizational constellation, with his representants, can reliably make something clear about the organizational systems.

Organizations and Organizational Constellations

An organization may have a lot of problems. Not every problem has to be crucial for the functioning of the whole, but some signs of malfunctioning must be taken into account. It can be that employees are always late, often sick or have a low work achievement. They do not achieve what is expected from them. Further, it is possible that the higher management in an organization is not taken seriously. The reasons for these problems can be various. A possibility is the history of an organization; due to reorganization, employees are not certain about their position anymore. Or employees still want to hold on to the way of work of the previous boss. Other problems can be: team members feel like they give a lot while others take their profit of that; employees feel kept out; employees feel not recognized and employees think they are not taken seriously (van der Valk, Janse, & Weggemans, 2008). When not every employee knows what is

expected from him, some uncertainty can come up. This uncertainty can cause other problems like a decrease in motivation, whereas motivation is very important for an organization to function effectively (Robbins & Judge, 2007). A lot of factors can be mentioned that have an influence on the functioning of an organization; also the classification of roles. Every person has a certain position in an organization. When this position is disturbed, which means that the employee thinks he is not on the right place or is not taken seriously, role ambiguity can occur, and this role ambiguity (vague description of roles) has a negative impact on achievement. This means that more role ambiguity and a bad description of roles possibly leads to less achievement. (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Taken together, to be a well-functioning organization, some knowledge about the influence of systems is almost 'obliged', being aware of the connection between the different types of influences is if possible still more important. Signs of malfunctioning like described before can be taken as a motivation to step in an organizational constellation.

Previous Studies on Organizational Constellations

Research of Van den Berg & Roevens (2007) has shown us that an organizational constellation shows where the energy exists in the organization, what deserves more attention and what is more important than presumed before. People learn there are other important influences in their organization. Participants in the organizational constellation acquire better insights in the relationships between people in the work setting. Further, participants receive a better connection with their work environment. Finally, a decrease of helplessness in the work setting occurs after an organizational constellation. It seems to be that only 1 percent of the organizations which participated in an organizational constellation have a negative attitude about

it. Research of van der Valk, Janse,& Weggemans (2008) showed that people get more aware of their position in an organization, even as they get more aware of the way others experience their presence; they learn what the influence of their own behavior is on others and on the organization.

What can be Reached by an Organizational Constellation

Effective organizations are organizations which function effectively, their ways of organization are consistent through the whole organization; they fulfill their functions on a proper level; a manager fills in its management task, a team member can work with other people effectively. (Hendriksen, 2004). The organizational structure has to be correct to achieve this; the organizational structure is the way in which work tasks are divided, grouped and coordinated. Is the manager accomplishing its own tasks? Is everybody accomplishing the task belonging to his or her function? The concepts position (1), binding (2) and balance in giving and taking (3) are important for effective organizations. A properly used position (1), which means that employees are treated suitable for their function, achievement, expertise and tenure, is important to be successful. Further, it is important that every employee feels respected and kept in, in an organization; the concept of binding (2). A correct balance in giving and taking also must be taken into account; employees want to feel recognized, want to receive a suitable reward for their jobs and want to feel 'heard' in an organization; they want to be taken seriously (3). Properly applying these three concepts can avoid organizational problems; organizational constellations often make clear these three concepts and also discover misbalances in them (van der Valk, Janse, & Weggemans, 2008). Sometimes, organizations need a second constellation to get more aware of their prevalent problems or issues (Weber, 2007).

Insight, Dealing and Feeling

After an organizational constellation, people obtain more insight in the relationships in an organization, as shown by previous theories. This was measured on the short term, expected therefore is that people after an organizational constellation also will obtain more insight in organizational systems on the longer term. Furthermore, they feel less helplessness, this means that they can function more independent in the organization. On the longer term, this may come to being more able to deal with organizational problems. More independency and less helplessness in an organization also may lead to a positive feeling towards organizational problems. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3a and 3b are based on this:

H1: On the longer term after the organizational constellation, participants will have more insight in organizational systems than before the organizational constellation

H2: On the longer term after the organizational constellation, participants will be more able to deal with their organizational problems than before the organizational constellation

H3a: On the longer term after the organizational constellation, participants will have a more positive feeling towards organizational problems

H3b: On the longer term after the organizational constellation, a higher degree of systemic knowledge than before the organizational constellation will exist

This study also wants to show what an organizational constellation literally does with people; participants were asked to describe their attitude towards the prevalent organizational issue or problem before the constellation and on the longer term after the constellation. As the overall

effect, it is expected that their attitude against the prevalent organizational problem or issue becomes more positive.

H4: On the longer term after the organizational constellation, participants will write more optimistic about the prevalent issue or problem in their organization than before the organizational constellation

Familiarity, Gender and Creativity

Participants in organizational constellations can be from various organizations. When organizations decide to participate in an organizational constellation, they need to have some trust in the methodology of a constellation. Otherwise, they would not choose for a constellation. So, participants who participate in a constellation probably have a positive attitude towards systemic thinking. This part of the article pays attention to the different concepts that will be taken into account when the effectiveness of an organizational constellation will be measured.

Familiarity

When people participated in a constellation one time, they seem to be very enthusiastic about the method (Weggemans, 2007). People who have more knowledge about systemic thinking because they are more interested in the concept and have already experienced it, therefore might be more enthusiastic. When people are familiar with the concept, which means that they have already attended an organizational constellation, the organizational constellation will probably be more effective. This goes back to the principle of 'familiarity', something that you are familiar with, can have more effect because you have a better understanding of the topic

and you are more related with it. This 'familiarity' can make other interventions or concepts 'unfamiliar'. (Luhmann, 2000). Having more knowledge of the concept 'systemic thinking' means for example; you understand the importance of a persons history, family, religion and experiences for the decisions that person makes. The same counts for an organization; you understand that there is an influence of the history, clients and earlier chiefs of an organization on the success of that organization. People who are familiar with the method are probably more interested in the concept and will be more accessible for change due to the organizational constellation (De Geus, 2007). In the present study, being familiar with the concept 'systemic thinking' means; already attended an organizational constellation. This brings us to hypothesis 5:

H5: The organizational constellation will be more effective, which means creating more insight, being more able to deal with organizational problems and feeling better towards the organizational problems, for participants who are familiar with the technique than for participants who are not familiar with the technique

Gender

Research of Davis & Davis Floyd (1996) shows us that women take more action based on their intuition; intuition has a greater impact on the behavior and actions of women than on the behavior and actions of men. On behalf of that, organizational constellations probably will have more positive effects on the behavior, thoughts and feelings of women against the organizational problems after the constellation than on the behavior, thoughts and feelings of men. This brings us to our sixth hypothesis:

H6: The organizational constellation will be more effective, which means creating more insight, being more able to deal with organizational problems and feeling better towards the organizational problems, for women than for men

Creativity

Creativity is a trait which means that people have much capacity for imagination; they have a lot of ideas, their ideas are innovative and flexible (they reach a certain novelness), they can produce a lot of ideas at one point of time (fluency) and they can easily switch to other ideas (flexibility) (Sikzentmihalyi, & Moerdijk, 1998). An organizational constellation probably will be more effective for people who have a more creative state of mind because more creative people will be accessible to new ideas, to eccentric ideas and do not have a conservative state of mind (Sikzentmihalyi, & Moerdijk, 1998). Shortly said; they will probably be more accessible for the effects of the organizational constellation. From this point, our seventh hypothesis arrives:

H7: The organizational constellation will be more effective, which means creating more insight, being more able to deal with organizational problems and feeling better towards the organizational problems, for participants who are more creative than for participants who are less creative

Systemic Thinking Cards

De Kroon, Rubens, & Weggemans (2007) have developed the so called 'systemic thinking' cards for organizations. These cards consist of several questions concerning organizational problems. Examples of questions are: *'Is the organizational system balanced?'* *'What is the profit of being absent?'* Professionals like organizational coaches and advisors can use these cards to make clear what systemic thinking means. These cards may show whether an organizational system is balanced. When needed, organizations can choose for an organizational constellation after studying these cards. By studying these cards, people can obtain some inside information about their organization and themselves. The cards exist about two years. Next to the main research question, this study will investigate whether 'systemic thinking' card users (with users, professionals are meant) think the effects of systemic thinking cards are comparable with the effects of organizational constellations. 'Comparable effects' means; will participants, who use their systemic thinking cards more, think that the use of systemic thinking cards will cause a better insight in organizational systems? Examples of insight issues are; being aware of organizational problems and understanding the cause of an organizational problem. Also, it will be measured how participants in general think about the use of systemic thinking cards and insight in organizational systems. This addition to the main research question shows us the meaning of professionals about the effectiveness of systemic thinking cards, another (sub) type of systemic work (the first type of systemic work in this study is an organizational constellation). It is an evaluation of the cards; which shows whether these cards have the purposed goals, namely creating more insight in organizational systems. This brings us the following hypothesis:

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H8: participants who use their systemic thinking cards more, will assert that use of systemic thinking cards gives more insight in organizational systems than participants who use their cards less

The Present Study

The foregoing part of the article has shown us some positive effects of organizational constellations; organizations can be helped by applying this technique. Organizations can become more successful by a better understanding of the organizational system and more (and better) communicating. The organizational constellation can bring up positive effects. These are important effects which can bring organizations on a higher level of collaboration and mutually understanding, which means that organizations therefore can make better results and eventually probably more profit. Unfortunately, organizational constellations may be doubtful because of its vague description and difficult explanation of effects; people can have doubts about the positive effects because these effects are outside their 'reasoning' and people are not familiar with it. People cannot declare the effects precisely, which makes them doubtful (Luhmann, 2000). This doubt may resist organizations to step in an organizational constellation. Thereby is the technique expensive, but if you the positive results come up, relatively cheap. More scientific proof of the effects of organizational constellations hopefully eliminates the doubt around the technique and makes it therefore more accessible for more organizations. As mentioned earlier, not much research has been dedicated to the effects of organizational constellations on the longer term. This study wants to investigate these effects, because they will add what happens when people are more used to the new theory; what will be the profit of that for the organization?

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Foregoing studies were occupied with the short term effects of organizational constellations. This study is interested in three longer term questions; will organizational constellations create more insight in organizational systems? Will they create a better dealing with organizational problems, which means; are people more able to choose a suitable intervention for organizational problems after attending an organizational constellation? And will they cause a better feeling towards organizational problems? Thereby, this study takes into account three variables that might have an influence on the effectiveness of an organizational constellation. These variables and the hypotheses will be described below. The purpose of this study is to measure whether an organizational constellation is effective. This means; has a constellation the desired effects? When an organization has a certain problem, will the constellation reveal where this problem exists? And after that, will the participants be more familiar with the concept 'systemic thinking' (development of more insight), will they be able to do something about the prevalent problem in the work setting (dealing with the organizational problem) and be happy with that solution (have a better feeling towards the work setting than before the constellation)? Then, the systemic thinking cards will be taken into account; what are their effects according to professionals? Will systemic thinking cards cause a better insight in organizational systems?

Method

This study exists of two parts. The most important part is the investigation of the effects of an organizational constellation (on the longer term). Next to this, the subjective meaning of professionals about systemic thinking cards and their effects will be studied.

Study I: Effects of an Organizational Constellation

Respondents

To investigate the effectiveness of the organizational constellation, three organizational constellations will be used. There will be twelve participants in these three constellations. These participants are employees from two Dutch companies, one which manages the network of roads, the waterways, the traffic and the environment and one which cares about individual and group coaching. All participants have a higher level function in their company. Higher level function means; management, board of directors etcetera. Ages vary from 26 to 59, tenure varies from three months to 19 years.

Measures and Procedure

Before and six weeks after the constellation, participants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. These two questionnaires will be filled in by letter (before the constellation) and filled in digitally (after the constellation). The questionnaires consist of several items about systemic constellations, which have to be rated on a 5-points Likert scale. The questionnaires consist of the following;

Attitude towards organizational problems. The starting question of both questionnaires asks participants to describe the prevalent organizational problem or issue. The difference between describing this issue or problem in the first and second questionnaire will be determined by checking the type of description that will be given by participants (negative, moderate/neutral or positive). In the questionnaire added at the end of this study, the first question handles about attitude towards the organizational question.

Insight into organizational systems. Six items about insight in organizational systems are included, the Cronbach's alpha of these 6 items turns out to be .66. The absolute minimum value for Cronbach's alpha to be reliable is .60, this means that the items measure the concept insight satisfactory, though weak consistency exists. Items 1 to 6 measure 'insight'; these items can be found in the questionnaire added at the end of this study.

Dealing with organizational problems. There are 6 items about dealing with organizational problems, the Cronbach's alpha of these items is .66, item 6 is thereby deleted. The items measure the concept satisfactory, though the consistency is weak. The items that measure this concept are items 7 through 12.

Feeling towards organizational problems. To measure feeling towards organizational problems, also 6 items are included. Cronbach's alpha on these items is .70, item 2 is deleted to get this alpha value. This shows us that the items about 'feeling towards organizational problems' are reliable, the alpha value now reaches the minimum of .70.

Familiarity, gender, and creativity. Familiarity is a nominal variable; the beginning of the questionnaire asks whether participants have already attended an organizational or family constellation (yes or no). Gender is also asked at the beginning of the questionnaire. To measure the variable creativity, a creativity scale with 30 items is included. This is a creativity scale developed by Gough (1979) and can be found in the first questionnaire after the 18 items concerning insight, dealing with organizational problems and feeling. Because this creativity scale is already used and approved in previous research, it is a reliable measure of the variable 'creativity'. In this study, creative participants will be participants who have a score higher than 10. The maximum score is 30, because the creativity scale counts 30 characteristics that indicate

creativity. When people have more than 10 creativity characteristics, they will be scored as being more creative. Then, creativity will be split up in two parts; more creative and less creative.

Degree of systemic knowledge. There are 7 items included to measure the degree of systemic knowledge, Cronbach's alpha on these items turns out to be .60, item 4 is deleted to get this alpha value. These items are reliable; though there is a weak consistency also. The 7 items that measure systemic knowledge can be found at the end of the questionnaire, after the creativity scale.

Effectiveness is thus divided into three parts (insight in organizational systems, dealing with organizational problems and feeling towards organizational problems).

The second questionnaire consists of the same items, with the exception of the creativity scale.

Analysis

To analyze the effects of organizational constellations on the longer term, a paired samples t-test will be used. This analysis will measure whether there is a difference within the participants about the effectiveness of organizational constellations. The difference will be measured between the first and the second questionnaire. Will the mean from the first questionnaire differ from the second questionnaire? The difference of this group before and after the constellation will be taken as the 'effectiveness' of the constellation. To measure the effects of the variables familiarity, gender and creativity on effectiveness of the organizational constellation, a repeated measures anova will be used to check if:

- Effectiveness will be significantly higher for people who are familiar

- Effectiveness will be significantly higher for women

- Effectiveness will be significantly higher for more creative participants

Last, to measure the difference between the attitude towards the prevalent organizational problem or issue in the first and second questionnaire, a paired samples t-test will be used.

Study II: Systemic Thinking Cards

Respondents

In this study, 11 participants will participate. Questionnaires about the 'systemic thinking' cards will be sent by e-mail. These participants are professionals, like coaches or organizational professionals.

Measures and Procedure

These questionnaires will take about 5 to 10 minutes to fill out. Participants can rate the items on a 5-points Likert scale. These questionnaires contain 12 items about the degree of insight in organizational systems received by systemic thinking cards. The Cronbach's alpha of these 12 items on the variable 'insight' turns out to be .83, this means that the items are highly reliable and are supposed to measure the same variable. Also, the questionnaire will contain some items about the degree of satisfaction with these cards, this will not be taken into account in the present study. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix, items 1 to 4 will ask the degree of use of systemic thinking cards, items 5 to 16 will measure the insight in organizational systems, item 17 and 18 will ask something about the purpose and satisfaction with the cards. These last 2 items will not be taken into account in this study.

Analysis

To determine the effects of 'systemic thinking card use' on insight in organizational systems, a one-way anova will be used. This technique will measure whether card use (never,

often, more often) has an influence on insight in organizational systems. A Scheffé post hoc test will deport whether there is a difference in insight in organizational systems between the three described subdivisions of card use. Furthermore, the mean of degree of insight in organizational systems by card use will be computed. A higher mean means more insight in organizational systems by systemic thinking card use. Last, the correlation between degree of insight in organizational systems and degree of card use will be computed, to show how card users rate the effectiveness of their cards.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Study I: Organizational Constellation

Insight Point of Time 1 and Point of Time 2

A paired samples t-test showed us there is a significant difference between insight in organizational systems on point of time 1 and point of time 2, $t(11) = -2.09$, $p < .05$. On the longer term after the constellation, participants thus developed more insight in organizational systems than before the constellation. A repeated measures anova furthermore showed us that the partial eta squared is .47, which means that 47 % of the variance in insight in organizational systems can be declared by experiencing the organizational constellation. Hypothesis 1 is therefore confirmed. Table 1 shows the corresponding means and standard deviations.

Dealing Point of Time 1 and Point of Time 2

A paired samples t-test showed us there is a significant difference on dealing with organizational problems between point of time 1 and point of time 2, though dealing with organizational problems seems to become harder after an organizational constellation, $t(11) =$

3.22, $p < .05$. This is not in accordance with our second hypothesis, on the longer term after an organizational constellation, dealing with organizational problems will become harder. Table 1 shows the corresponding means and standard deviations.

Feeling Point of Time 1 and Point of Time 2

Furthermore, the paired samples t-test showed us there is no significant difference between feeling towards organizational problems on point of time 1 and point of time 2, $t(11) = -.5$, $p = .32$. This means that there is no significant difference between feelings towards organizational problems before the organizational constellation and on the longer term after the organizational constellation. Participants feelings towards organizational problems did not become significantly more positive, either significantly more negative. Hypotheses 3a is therefore not confirmed, no better feeling towards organizational problems will be obtained on the longer term after an organizational constellation. Table 1 shows the corresponding means and standard deviations.

Degree of Systemic Knowledge Point of Time 1 and Point of Time 2

Last, the difference between degree of systemic knowledge on point of time 1 and point of time 2 was measured with a paired samples t-test, this showed us that participants developed more systemic knowledge after the organizational constellation than before the organizational constellation, $t(11) = -3.29$, $p < .05$. A repeated measures anova showed us that the partial eta squared is .50, which means that 49.5 % of the variance in degree of systemic knowledge can be declared by experiencing the organizational constellation. Hypothesis 3b is therefore confirmed, a higher degree of systemic knowledge will be obtained on the longer term after an organizational constellation. Table 1 shows the corresponding means and standard deviations.

Attitude Point of Time 1 and Point of Time 2

Another paired samples t-test showed us the difference between the both point of times on attitude against the prevalent issue or problem in the organization. On point of time 2, participants wrote more positive about their prevalent organizational problem or issue than on point of time 1, t (11) = -5, $p < .05$. A repeated measures anova thereby showed us that the partial eta squared is .70, which means that 70 % of the variance can be declared by experiencing the organizational constellation. Hypothesis 4 is hereby confirmed. Table 1 shows the corresponding means and standard deviations.

Familiarity and Insight, Dealing and Feeling

A repeated measures anova showed us that people who are familiar do not score significantly higher on insight in organizational systems than people who are not familiar, F (1, 1) = .31, $p = .59$. Another repeated measures anova showed that people who are familiar do not score significantly higher on dealing with organizational constellations than people who are not familiar, F (1, 1) = .46, $p = .52$. Furthermore, people who are familiar do not seem to feel significantly better after an organizational constellation than people who are not familiar, F (1, 1) = .16, $p = .74$. These three findings do not confirm the fifth hypothesis, an organizational constellation is not more effective for people who are familiar with organizational constellations. The mean score of familiarity is 1.67 (varying from 1 to 2; 1 = familiar, 2 = not familiar), the standard deviation is .49.

Gender and Insight, Dealing and Feeling

A repeated measures anova showed us that women do not have a significant better insight in organizational systems than men after an organizational constellation, F (1, 1) = 1.71, $p = .22$.

Women do not score higher on dealing with organizational problems than men after an organizational constellation, $F(1, 1) = .19$, $p = .52$. Furthermore, women also do not significantly feel better after an organizational constellation than men, $F(1,1) = .17$, $p = .69$. Hypothesis 6 is therefore not confirmed, an organizational constellation is not more effective for women than for men. The mean score on gender is 1.42 (varying from 1 to 2; 1 = male, 2 = female), the standard deviation is .51.

Creativity and Insight, Dealing and Feeling

A repeated measures anova showed that more creative participants do not have a better insight in organizational systems after an organizational constellation than less creative participants, $F(1, 1) = 1.71$, $p = .22$. Another repeated measures anova showed us that more creative participants are not able to deal better with organizational problems after an organizational constellation than participants who are less creative, $F(1,1) = 1.68$, $p = .22$. Furthermore, the last repeated measures anova showed us that more creative participants do not have a significant better feeling after an organizational constellation than less creative participants, $F(1, 1) = 0$, $p = 1$. Our seventh hypothesis is therefore not confirmed, an organizational constellation is not more effective for participants who are more creative. The mean score on creativity is 1.50 (varying from 1 to 2, 1 = less creative, 2 = more creative), the standard deviation is .52.

Study II: Systemic Thinking Cards

Mean Judgment of Systemic Thinking Cards by Participants

The mean judgment of the systemic thinking cards given by participants is 50.55, with a standard deviation of 8.86. There are 16 items, so the lowest score given to these items can be 16 (because the scales range from 1, totally disagree, to 5, totally agree). The highest score therefore can be 80. The middle score is 48, this score reaches more to the positive side than to the negative side of judging the amount of systemic insight given by the systemic thinking cards. So the mean score that is computed now, shows us that participants think that systemic card use moderately goes together with more insight in organizational systems.

Systemic Thinking Card Use and Insight

The correlation between degree of systemic card use and insight in organizational systems turns out to be .22, this is a small correlation; not much coherence exists between systemic card use and insight in organizational systems. A one-way anova showed us that there is no significant difference between more or less systemic thinking card use on judgment of insight in organizational systems by systemic thinking card use, $F(2; 8) = .45$, $p = .65$. This means participants who use their systemic thinking cards more do not have another judgment about insight in organizational systems caused by systemic card use than participants who use their systemic thinking cards less. A Scheffé post hoc test showed us whether there are significant differences between the three degrees of systemic card use, the following is found by the post hoc test:

1. Never – often: $p = .72$, with a mean difference of 6.33
2. Never - more often: $p = .68$, with a mean difference of 7.67

3.   Often – more often: $p = .98$, with a mean difference of 1.33

Table 2 shows these results more extensive. This shows us there is no significant difference between the three subdivisions of degree of systemic card use. Furthermore, only one subset was given by the Scheffé post hoc test, which also means that the three subdivisions not differ significantly from each other. There are no differences between using the cards never, using the cards more often and using the cards often on degree of insight in organizational systems. Hypothesis 8 therefore is not confirmed.

Discussion

This research showed us the effectiveness of organizational constellations and furthermore the effects of systemic thinking card use according to professionals.

Study I: Organizational Constellation

Insight in Organizational Systems

This study found at first that participants gained more insight in organizational systems on the longer term after attending an organizational constellation. They also seem to have obtained more systemic knowledge; scores on systemic knowledge where significantly higher on the second point of time. Participants are more aware of the systems that have an influence on their organization, which is a positive fact, because more awareness will lead to more mutual understanding and a better communication. This is a benefit for the organizational functioning, once the insight is better and the degree of systemic knowledge is higher, participants will

probably be more accessible to change their feelings towards organizational problems and are eventually more able to deal with them.

Dealing with Organizational Problems

This study showed that dealing with organizational problems becomes harder after attending an organizational constellation. This is not in accordance with the expectation and seems strange. Though it seems strange, a logical explanation can be found for it. After an organizational constellation, participants get more insight in their organizational systems (as found in our results). Though they get more insight, this does not have to be positive at once. Participants might first need to get used to these insights before being able to deal better with their organizational problems or issues, some habituation time to these new insights probably is needed. The longer term, as used in this study, is six weeks. After six weeks no large improvements can be made in most organizations; the improvements mostly can just be seen after a still longer term, like half a year or a year. Then, dealing with organizational problems probably is also better. Future research to conclude this is needed.

Feeling towards Organizational Problems

The results showed that participants do not feel better towards organizational problems after the systemic constellation. For this finding, about the same statement can be made as in the foregoing paragraph; it can probably be that participants are confronted with the 'real' cause of a problem. In the first place, this can be confronting and non pleasant, because the cause of the problem possibly can be found by the participant. Therefore, participants do not have to feel more positive towards these problems; probably, these problems are confronting because these are not the expected problems, this can cause a negative feeling towards this problem. But, on a

term longer than six weeks, participants probably feel more positive about it because they have given it a place and can deal with it easier. The negative feeling possibly fades away after a longer time, because there will be more understanding for the problem and more habituation of the problem. Future research to measure this is needed.

Attitude towards the Prevalent Organizational Problem or Issue

The results showed that after the organizational constellation, participants wrote more positive about their prevalent organizational problem or issue. This can be because after these 6 weeks, something has been done about the problem, though this would be very fast. Also, it is possible that participants hold a more positive attitude against the prevalent issue because they are glad to have some more knowledge about the concept. Nevertheless, it is a positive finding that shows us another positive result of an organizational constellation. Though this finding is positive, it contradicts the foregoing finding about feeling towards organizational problems. This finding showed there was no positive feeling towards organizational problems after the organizational constellation. This can be declared; the first part handled about organizational problems in common, the second part about a specific organizational problem or issue. When the problem or issue is specified and clear to the participant, a positive feeling against it apparently is possible.

Differences between Cognition, Action and Emotion

According to the foregoing statements it can be concluded that still a longer term is needed for participants to get ready to deal with their organizational problems and to feel better about them. This is logically; when insight (cognition) exists, a better dealing (action) and feeling

(emotion) are not present at once. As found by this study, a longer term than six weeks needs to pass by to reach this.

Interaction Effects of Familiarity, Gender and Creativity

This study showed that the effectiveness of an organizational constellation is not higher for participants who are familiar with organizational constellations, for female participants and for more creative participants. The effectiveness was divided into insight in organizational systems, dealing with organizational problems and feeling towards organizational problems. Nor familiar participants, nor female participants nor more creative participants score higher on these three concepts than their counterparts (non familiar participants, male participants and less creative participants). Though this is not in accordance with the stated hypotheses, it is a positive finding, because the effects of an organizational constellation will be the same for every participant; this shows us that no foreknowledge is needed for an organizational constellation to reach the desired effects. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that participants in an organizational constellation though need some trust in the effects of the organizational constellation, otherwise they would not attend it; that is why it is important to get more scientific proof and acquaintance of these effects.

Study II: Systemic Thinking Cards

Use of Systemic Thinking Cards and Insight in Organizational Systems

The second study showed us the professional meaning about systemic thinking card use and insight in organizational systems obtained by these cards. No difference has been found between card users who use their cards never, more often and often. Card users rated as follows:

they thought that systemic thinking card use would lead to a moderate increase in insight in organizational systems. This might be because they all know the purpose and addition of an organizational constellation and use their cards often in the organizational constellation. When these cards will be used by non-professionals, other results might come up. These cards may make people aware about the underestimated effects that are important for effective organizational functioning, for example the history of an organization or the implicit, unspoken rules about rights and duties that employees might have. A longer tenure, for example, implicitly means that employees can permit themselves more. These are examples which can be taken into account in future research. Before deciding to take part in an organizational constellation, using these cards might be a good 'warming-up' in the concept of systemic thinking.

Restrictions

Longer term effects. This study endeavored to measure the longer term effects of organizational constellations. Longer term means in this study; after six weeks, this was because there was no longer time available to measure these effects in this research. Previous studies mainly aimed at the short term effects of organizational constellations, though longer term effects are nevertheless even important. No effects were found when measuring feeling towards organizational problems. This might probably be because participants did not got used to the cause of the organizational problem or issue yet, as a result of what they might (still) feel uncomfortable with it. Probably, when measuring after three or six months, other effects will be found on feeling towards organizational problems. Participants might then hold a more positive feeling towards organizational problems. Another possibility (as described earlier) is that participants are more able to describe their feelings towards an organizational issue or problem

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when the organizational issue or problem is mentioned by them literally. In this study, measuring the feeling towards organizational problems occurred by rating items about organizational problems in common. Measuring the attitude towards the specific described organizational problem by the participants turned out to be more positive after the organizational constellation than before.

Low amount of participants. This study counted 12 participants for study I and 12 participants for study II. Because of this little amount of participants, some effects probably are not found. Therefore it can not be said that these effects are not there, using more participants would probably show more and stronger effects. Unfortunately, because of the short time of this study and the currently poor economic situation, finding participants was not easy. An organizational constellation brings up positive effects, but nevertheless it is expensive. Against this, the organizational constellation eventually is not expensive because of the effects it brings and the profits that can be taken out of them. During this economical recession, organizations possibly delay organizational constellations because no money is available, that is why participants were very hard to find. When the economic situation improves, more participants are probably available to find stronger results. Furthermore, when this study takes place over a longer term, more time is available to find participants.

Future Research

Some other purposes of the organizational constellation might be served in future research. It is not just important to prove that a systemic constellation has effect, though it is much more important to show what participants do with these effects; when they are able to choose a suitable intervention, will they do it? And what is the meaning of having more insight

in the concept of systemic thinking when participants are not motivated to do something about that? Also, more important to investigate next to the effectiveness of systemic constellations is the following; what motivates people to do something with that effectiveness? And what makes people to intrinsically believe in the effectiveness of systemic constellations? The same questionnaires as used in this study can also be used in future research.

As described before, much can and also has to be investigated about organizational constellations and their effects; more results will bring more familiarity, more trust in the technique, more acquaintance and eventually more profit for organizations. Nevertheless this research made a little step in the direction to make the world more aware of the positive and often not reasonable effects of systemic thinking, something that is really important to know.

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Table 1

Means (standard deviations) on both point of times on insight, dealing, feeling, degree of systemic knowledge and attitude against prevalent problems or issues

		Point of time 1	*Point of time 2*
Insight	(N = 12)	17.83 (3.83)	19.92 (3.20)
Dealing	(N = 12)	19.58 (2.11)	17.67 (1.61)
Feeling	(N = 12)	12.92 (2.81)	13.25 (1.71)
Degree of systemic knowledge	(N = 12)	21 (3.25)	22.92 (2.35)
Attitude	(N = 12)	2 (.60)	2.83 (.39)

Note: all variables are measured on 5 point scales, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Table 2

Means (standard errors) and mean differences (standard deviations) between using systemic thinking cards never, often or very often by a Scheffé post hoc test

	Card use		
	Never	More often	Often
Judgment about insight	45 (6.64)	52.67 (5.42)	51.33 (3.84)
Never	/	7.67 (8.57)	6.33 (7.67)
More often	7.67 (8.57)	/	1.33 (6.64
Often	6.33 (7.67)	1.33 (6.64)	/

1: Questionnaire about the organizational constellation

Geslacht	m / v
Leeftijd	_____
Functie binnen organisatie	_____
Dienstjaren bij organisatie	_____ jaar
Reeds organisatieopstelling of familieopstelling meegemaakt	j / n

Kunt u hieronder aangeven wat voor u momenteel uw heersende vraag / probleem binnen uw organisatie is? Waar gaat uw aandacht vooral naar toe (is er een probleem, kunt u de oorzaak van een probleem niet thuisbrengen etc.)?

In onderstaande items zal gesproken worden over 'deze situatie'. Hiermee wordt datgene wat u hierboven heeft beschreven bedoeld. U kunt uw antwoorden aanduiden op een 5-puntsschaal.

De verdeling van de punten is als volgt:
1 = helemaal mee oneens
2 = mee oneens
3 = neutraal
4 = mee eens
5 = helemaal mee eens

	Helemaal mee oneens				Helemaal mee eens
1. De situatie die ik hierboven beschreven heb zie ik als een probleem omdat het voor mij niet duidelijk is wat er van me verwacht wordt	1	2	3	4	5
2. In deze situatie is het onduidelijk wat men van mij verlangt	1	2	3	4	5
3. Onduidelijkheid over eenieders positie binnen een groep zorgt voor spanning op de werkvloer	1	2	3	4	5
4. Ik ben op de hoogte van de oorzaken van deze situatie	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ik weet wat ik moet doen om de aspecten van deze situatie waar ik minder tevreden mee ben, te veranderen	1	2	3	4	5
6. In deze situatie is het belangrijk een onderscheid te maken tussen factoren die veel invloed hebben en factoren die minder invloed hebben	1	2	3	4	5

7.Ik heb het gevoel dat ik met deze situatie om kan gaan	1	2	3	4	5
8.Ik kan goed omgaan met de stress die bij deze situatie komt kijken	1	2	3	4	5
9.Ik kom als eerste met nieuwe ideeën bij situaties zoals hierboven beschreven	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ik heb het gevoel dat ik niets kan doen aan de aspecten van deze situatie waarmee ik minder tevreden ben	1	2	3	4	5
11. Ik benader deze situatie als een uitdaging	1	2	3	4	5
12. In mijn werkomgeving worden problemen en kansen uitvoerig besproken	1	2	3	4	5
13.Ik ervaar de beschreven situatie als een hindernis op mijn werk	1	2	3	4	5
14.Ik ervaar de door mij beschreven situatie als een uitdaging	1	2	3	4	5

	Helemaal mee oneens			Helemaal mee eens	
15.Ik heb het gevoel dat ik mezelf beter kan ontplooien door deze situatie	1	2	3	4	5
16.Ik heb het idee dat ik niet verder kom bij het werken aan deze situatie	1	2	3	4	5
17.Ik voel me prettig door het aangaan van de uitdaging in deze situatie	1	2	3	4	5
18.Ik voel me machteloos omdat ik niet weet wat er van me verwacht wordt	1	2	3	4	5

Onderstaande vragen staan los van deze situatie:
Kunt u aangeven welke van onderstaande kenmerken op u van toepassing zijn? (Bijvoorbeeld door er een kruis voor te zetten)

_____ Bekwaam	_____ Eerlijk
_____ Onnatuurlijk	_____ Intelligent
_____ Slim	_____ Goed gemanierd
_____ Voorzichtig	_____ Brede interesses
_____ Verzekerd	_____ Inventief
_____ Egoïstisch	_____ Origineel
_____ Alledaags	_____ Beperkte interesses
_____ Humoristisch	_____ Bezonnen
_____ Conservatief	_____ Oprecht
_____ Individualistisch	_____ Vindingrijk
_____ Conventioneel	_____ Zelfverzekerd
_____ Informeel	_____ Sexy
_____ Ontevreden	_____ Toegeeflijk
_____ Inzichtelijk	_____ Snobistisch (verwaand)
_____ Achterdochtig	_____ Onconventioneel

Onderstaande vragen gaan over de mogelijke oorzaken van 'deze situatie'. De vragen kunnen wederom op een 5-puntsschaal beoordeeld worden.

	Helemaal mee oneens				Helemaal mee eens
1.Naar mijn mening bestaat er meestal invloed vanuit meerdere lagen vanuit de organisatie	1	2	3	4	5
2.Ik denk dat de oorzaak van deze situatie bij één persoon te zoeken is	1	2	3	4	5

3.De wereld bestaat uit een complex geheel van verschillende systemen die invloed hebben	1	2	3	4	5
4.Ik ben gevormd door mezelf, anderen hebben geen invloed op mij	1	2	3	4	5
5.Vaker wordt onderschat hoeveel invloed onzichtbare (onbekende) dingen kunnen hebben op een situatie	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ik ben op de hoogte van de betekenis van het concept systemisch denken	1	2	3	4	5
7.In organisaties is het belangrijk rekening te houden met de invloed van bijvoorbeeld het verleden van een organisatie	1	2	3	4	5

Tot slot nog een aantal vragen over uw verwachting m.b.t. de opstelling die u zo meteen gaat meemaken:

1.Ik verwacht dat deze opstelling laat zien waardoor onduidelijkheden tot stand komen	1	2	3	4	5
2.Ik verwacht dat deze opstelling mij tot nieuwe inzichten brengt	1	2	3	4	5
3.Ik verwacht dat ik door deze opstelling beter om kan gaan met onduidelijkheid op de werkvloer	1	2	3	4	5
4.Ik verwacht dat deze opstelling ervoor zorgt dat ik meer inzicht krijg in de heersende krachtenvelden in mijn werkomgeving	1	2	3	4	5

2: Questionnaire about the systemic thinking cards

Geslacht	:	M/V	
Leeftijd	:	_____	
Hoe lang in het bezit van de kaartjes	:	_____	
Beroep	:	_____	

Hieronder staan enkele vragen over het feitelijk gebruik van de kaartjes, u kunt uw antwoorden op de 5-puntsschaal aanduiden (1 = nooit, 2= bijna nooit, 3 = soms, 4= vaker, 5= vaak)

	Nooit		*Soms*		*Vaak*
Ik maak tijdens workshops en/of trainingen gebruik van de kaartjes	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes geef ik als relatiegeschenk mee aan klanten	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes worden door mij verkocht aan klanten	1	2	3	4	5
Ik maak zelf gebruik van de kaartjes wanneer ik tegen een probleem aanloop	1	2	3	4	5
Mijn klanten * gebruiken de kaartjes bij problemen met hun werk	1	2	3	4	5

Hieronder staat een aantal stellingen, wilt u telkens op de 5-puntsschaal aangeven in hoeverre u het met deze stelling eens bent? (1= helemaal mee oneens, 2= mee oneens, 3= neutraal, 4= mee eens, 5= helemaal mee eens)

	Helemaal mee oneens			*Helemaal mee eens*	
Ik denk dat het gebruik van de kaartjes het systemisch inzicht vergroot	1	2	3	4	5
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes krijgt men over het algemeen een beter beeld van de mogelijke factoren die allemaal een rol spelen bij problemen	1	2	3	4	5
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes leert men beter te bepalen wat de oorzaak van een probleem is	1	2	3	4	5
Klanten geven aan dat de kaartjes leiden tot meer inzicht in de aard van hun problemen	1	2	3	4	5

* Dit kunnen klanten van coaching of training zijn of deelnemers aan een workshop
** Met het gebruik wordt bedoeld; het bestuderen van de kaartjes, het gebruiken van de kaartjes tijdens een coaching/trainingssessie

	Helemaal mee oneens			*Helemaal mee eens*	
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes kan voor iemand onduidelijkheid over de eigen positie binnen een organisatie verminderd worden	1	2	3	4	5
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes leert men hoe omgegaan kan worden met situaties binnen een organisatie waarmee men minder tevreden is	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes geven een beeld van de oorzaken van problemen	1	2	3	4	5
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes wordt duidelijk waar de oplossing voor een probleem gevonden kan worden	1	2	3	4	5
Het gebruik van de kaartjes zorgt ervoor dat men begrijpt welk krachtenveld heerst binnen een organisatie	1	2	3	4	5
Het gebruik van de kaartjes zorgt ervoor dat men weet wat te doen	1	2	3	4	5
Door het gebruik van de kaartjes heeft men een richtlijn om te gaan zoeken naar een geschikte interventie voor een probleem	1	2	3	4	5
Het gebruiken van de kaartjes leert mensen analytisch naar problemen of situaties te kijken	1	2	3	4	5
Het gebruik van de kaartjes werkt verhelderend wat betreft het inzicht in heersende krachtenvelden binnen een organisatie	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes maken de theorie van het systemisch denken duidelijk	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes helpen bij het oplossen van problemen binnen organisaties of bij personen	1	2	3	4	5
De kaartjes zorgen ervoor dat organisatiesystemen anders bekeken worden	1	2	3	4	5

Het beoogde doel van de kaartjes (meer inzicht verkrijgen in de samenhang van de organisatie/ van een systeem) wordt dikwijls bereikt	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben tevreden met het gebruik van deze kaartjes	1	2	3	4	5

Verdere opmerkingen m.b.t. de kaartjes Systemisch Bekeken: