Contents

List of Symbols and Abbreviations XIX

List of Figures XXIII

List of Tables XXV

1 Introduction 1
  1.1 Problem Statement ........................................ 1
  1.2 Research Goal ............................................... 4
  1.3 Outline of this Thesis ..................................... 5

2 Agency: An Abstract and Multifaceted Construct 9
  2.1 Agency in the Workplace Learning Literature .......... 10
    2.1.1 Agency as a Prerequisite of Work-Related Learning .. 11
    2.1.2 Agency as Something Individuals Do .................. 21
    2.1.3 Agency as an Outcome of Work-Related Learning ..... 32
    2.1.4 Recapitulation and Conclusion ....................... 33
  2.2 Agency in Other Research Traditions ..................... 37
    2.2.1 Social-Cognitive Psychology .......................... 38
    2.2.2 Life-Course Research .................................. 49
    2.2.3 Organisational Behaviour Research on Proactivity .. 60
    2.2.4 Recapitulation and Conclusion ....................... 82
  2.3 Deriving a Working Definition of Agency ................ 86
  2.4 Chapter Summary ........................................... 93

3 The Role of Agency in Professional Development 95
  3.1 On the Development of Professional Expertise .......... 96
    3.1.1 Expert Performance at Work .......................... 96
### Contents

3.1.2 Cognitive Adaption as Foundation of Expert Performance ............................................. 99  
3.1.3 Developing Expertise ................................................................. 103  
3.1.4 Deliberate Practice ................................................................. 107  
3.1.5 Recapitulation and Conclusion .................................................... 112  
3.2 Means of Professional Development ...................................................... 113  
3.2.1 Learning from Experience .......................................................... 114  
3.2.2 Learning from Social Interaction .................................................. 118  
3.2.3 Learning from Consulting Media .................................................. 121  
3.2.4 Learning from Institutionalised Learning Activities ......................... 123  
3.2.5 Recapitulation and Conclusion .................................................... 125  
3.3 Agentic Actions Related to Professional Development ......................... 126  
3.3.1 Crafting (Learning) Experiences at Work ...................................... 128  
3.3.2 Information and Feedback Seeking .............................................. 131  
3.3.3 Deliberate Engagement in Institutionalised Learning Activities ......... 135  
3.3.4 Recapitulation and Conclusion .................................................... 139  
3.4 Chapter Summary ................................................................. 141  

4 Research Questions, Research Model, and Research Approach 147  
4.1 Research Questions ................................................................. 147  
4.2 Hypotheses and Research Model .................................................... 149  
4.3 Research Approach and Implementation ........................................... 154  

5 Study 1: Initial Insights Into Work Agency in the Domain of Geriatric Care Nursing  159  
5.1 Methodology ................................................................. 160  
5.1.1 Sample ................................................................. 160  
5.1.2 Interview Procedure .......................................................... 162  
5.1.3 Analysis ................................................................. 163  
5.2 Findings ................................................................. 168  
5.2.1 Expertise in Geriatric Care Nursing ........................................... 168  
5.2.2 Geriatric Care Nurses’ Manifestations of Agency ....................... 171  
5.2.3 Relevant Organisational Context Factors .................................... 177
5.3 Discussion .......................................................... 180
   5.3.1 Conceptualisation of Expert Performance in the Domain of Geriatric Care Nursing .................................. 180
   5.3.2 Exercising Agency at Work in the Domain of Geriatric Care Nursing .............................................. 181
   5.3.3 Agentic Actions Relevant to Expertise Development in the Domain of Geriatric Care Nursing ............... 185
   5.3.4 Organisational Context Factors That Affect Geriatric Care Nurses’ Engagement in Agentic Actions .... 186
   5.3.5 Methodological Approach and Limitations .................. 189
5.4 Chapter Summary .................................................. 190

   6.1 Proposed Study Design and Sampling Strategy of the Main Study ..................................................... 204
   6.2 Development of the Survey Instrument ....................... 207
      6.2.1 Work Agency Facets ........................................ 209
      6.2.2 Agentic Actions .......................................... 212
      6.2.3 Organisational Context Factors .......................... 214
      6.2.4 Expertise Measures ....................................... 215
   6.3 Purpose and Methodological Approach of the Pilot Study ... 218
   6.4 Findings of the Pilot Study .................................... 220
      6.4.1 Participation, Sample Information, and Missing Values 220
      6.4.2 Item and Scale Analyses ................................ 221
      6.4.3 Testing Assumed Relationships ......................... 224
   6.5 Discussion ...................................................... 227
   6.6 Chapter Summary ............................................... 231

7 Study 3: Work Agency and Its Effect on Expertise Development ......................................................... 233
   7.1 Methodology ...................................................... 234
      7.1.1 Sample ................................................... 234
      7.1.2 Data Entry, Preparation, and Screening ................. 237
      7.1.3 Instrument ............................................... 239
Human Agency at Work
An Active Approach towards Expertise Development
Goller, M.
2017, XXVII, 373 p. 17 illus., Softcover
ISBN: 978-3-658-18285-4