

Chapter 29

Well-Being at Work: A Comprehensive Review About Its Predictors and Outcomes

Pinar Bayhan Karapinar
Hacettepe University, Turkey

Selin Metin Camgoz
Hacettepe University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Well-being is defined as individuals' subjective and global judgment whether the individual is experiencing the relative presence of positive emotions, the relative absence of negative emotions, and satisfaction with their life. This chapter addresses individuals' well-being at work, since work composes an important part of individuals' life experiences and has important effects on both employees' and organizations' effectiveness. For this purpose, this book chapter provides a comprehensive overview of well-being with respect to its predictors as well as its outcomes. More specifically, personality factors, job characteristics, and occupational stress are explored in terms of individual and organizational antecedents, whereas job satisfaction and work performance are utilized as outcomes of well-being. This chapter will be of interest to researchers, practitioners, and organizational consultants in providing a comprehensive guideline about the implications of well-being at work settings.

INTRODUCTION

Well-being refers to an individual's hedonic experience of feeling good and to the eudemonic experience of fulfillment and purpose (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It represents a universal goal of human existence (New Economics Foundation-NEF, 2014). Beginning from Aristotle's time, it has been a crucial concern of philosophers, and in societies well-being is promoted as a desirable goal to strive for (Wright & Bonett, 2007). Striving and sustaining well-being is also an important arena in case of modern work force. Today the top management in worldwide organizations, governments and other organizations acknowledge

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that wellbeing, productivity and profitability are closely linked (NEF, 2014). However, according to Gallup's World Poll, 63% of the global workforce is 'checked out'. Likewise, The Wall Street Journal notes that more than half of American workers are less content with their jobs (Why We Need More Wellbeing, 2016).

Starting from the millennium, the association between well-being and work has taken the center stage on industrial and organizational psychology and has driven fundamental impetus in welfare politics of organizations (Peeters, Taris & de Jonge, 2013). Industrial and organizational (I/O) psychology is the scientific study of individual and group behavior in formal organizational settings (Jex & Britt, 2008). It aims to assess individual, group and organizational dynamics and incorporates that research to identify solutions to problems that improve the well-being and performance of employees. Early prominent scholars of Fisher and Hanna (1931) on their classical research makes it very clear, that dissatisfied worker is "responsible to a much greater extent for labor turnover than is commonly realized. Studies now clearly suggest that well-being of employees may be in the best interest of employers by helping the working employees to feel happy, satisfied and committed in their work life (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). Accordingly, literature pertaining to employee well-being relates it to important outcomes including employee and organizational productivity (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000), absenteeism, turnover, and performance deficits (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001).

The definitions of well-being encompass a multifaceted construct including domains of physical, psychological, economic, affective, work related, subjective, and overall well-being (Arcidiacono & Di Martino, 2016; Danna & Griffin, 1999). In this regard, it has been investigated in various disciplines including psychology (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2009), philosophy (Haybron, 2008), and economics (Frey & Stutzer, 2010). However, as the body of research concerning well-being is vast, this would go beyond the scope of this chapter to address them all. Therefore, for the specific purpose of this chapter, we narrow down our focus to employee well-being solely.

The major purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview to the current body of knowledge on well-being, particularly with regard to its important dispositional and work related determinants as well as its significant individual and work-related consequences. In essence, employee well-being results from the interaction between the individual and the environment. Explicitly, the way employees feel has not only to do with their personality, but also with their jobs. Therefore, the examination of both personality and work related factors is essential. Mainly, three aims are tried to be achieved: (1) examining the nature of well-being, (2) illustrating the factors and the determinants of employee well-being at work, (3) Identifying the impact of well-being on organizations. In terms of determinants of well-being, personality factors (e.g., Big-Five personality factors, locus of control, Type A behavior), job characteristics, and occupational stress are explored. As to the consequences and impacts of well-being, job satisfaction and job performance are utilized.

Throughout this chapter, first, a general introduction and historical overview including definitions and conceptualizations of well-being are provided. Second, a review of empirical research focusing on the determinants and the consequences of well-being are presented. The authors conduct the search of existing literature largely focusing on studies published after the year 2000. The keywords of employee *well-being*, *psychological well-being*, *well-being at work*, *occupational well-being*, and *subjective well-being* are used in selecting the articles from relevant electronic databases. Finally, the authors propose a section regarding the cultural variations in well-being. Overall, this chapter will be of interest to researchers, practitioners, and organizational consultants in providing a comprehensive guideline about the implications of well-being at work settings.

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