Chapter 20
Workplace Well–Being as a Buzzword:
Criticisms Made Toward Future Explorations of the Concept

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the proposed chapter involved a provocation regarding the assumptions about the meaning of workplace well-being. The proposed work included four aspects from which the writers intended to demonstrate the multiple challenges that scholars faced regarding the meaning of well-being: (a) theoretical lenses, (b) philosophical worldviews, (c) degree of mixed methodologies in peer-reviewed literature, and (d) epistemological considerations. The researchers also proposed the following three challenges: (a) an issue existed regarding inconsistency in contemporary organizational responses toward workplace misinterpretations of conflict, (b) a universal agreement did not exist regarding the meaning of workplace well-being, and (c) a significant use of situational leadership models, combined with the other two challenges, perpetuated the reliance on the concept of well-being as a buzzword instead of an actual goal worthy of consideration. Furthermore, solutions to the challenges included organizational forums and epistemological consideration

DEFINITION OF WELL-BEING

Employee well-being encompasses the physical, mental, economic, and emotional health of individuals within an organization (Heery & Noon, 2017). Various factors contribute to well-being, including access to tools and resources, relationships with colleagues, workplace safety, compensation (such as salaries, wages, and bonuses), and working hours (Pilbeam, 2011). Bach and Edwards (2013) emphasize that employee well-being is essential for cultivating a healthy work environment, enhancing individual outcomes and overall organizational performance.

Organizations prioritizing employee well-being are better positioned for success (Armstrong, 2016), as they can manage stress levels, foster a positive and productive environment, and encourage employees to exceed expectations. Holbeche (2009) suggests that implementing employee well-being programs is a vital management strategy for creating environments where employees can thrive and perform optimally. Employee well-being can vary from person to person but is largely influenced by the internal workplace environment (Bach & Edwards, 2013). However, external factors such as family, housing, and health issues also play a significant role. While employers may not control external factors, human resources can help mitigate workplace stressors and offer work-life balance initiatives to support employees (Holbeche, 2009).

Bach and Edwards (2013) argued that employers have a responsibility to provide care and support for the mental, economic, emotional, and physical well-being of their employees. Despite this, Briscoe, Schuler, and Claus (2009) noted that many organizations still neglect employee well-being and fail to implement strategies to address it. Muller (2009) similarly pointed out that a lack of attention to employee well-being and the absence of supportive programs is a common reason employees choose to leave their organizations.

INCONSISTENCY IN CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES

A primary argument states that emphasizing workplace well-being ignores the inconsistency in contemporary organizational responses toward employee conflicts. In a world of moral relativism, one person's virtue becomes another person's vice. Therefore, what one member interprets as an organizational value can be considered a source of contention to others, especially if the stated value conflicts with another person's moral framework. According to Titov, Virovere, and Kuimet (2018), "In the ideal world, propagated and real values ought to coincide, but the results of our research demonstrate that while propagated values in organizations are on higher

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