

The Case Of Eroding Well-Being Of The Modern-Day Employee: A Demand For Attention Of Human Resource Management (HRM) Research

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Abstract: This research paper discusses the case of eroding well-being of the modern-day employee. In doing so it highlights the well-being related issues faced by the middle managerial level employees working in private sector organizations in general and Sri Lanka in specific. Further it discusses the work that has been done in the area of employee well-being so far and highlights the need for undertaking more scholarly work in the area from the human resource management perspective. Accordingly, the gaps in literature both local and international covering the area of employee well-being has been discussed and future research directions have been established.

Index Terms: Emerging market multinationals, Employee Well-being (EWB), Human Resource Management research, Middle managerial level employees, Modern day employees, Sri Lanka,

1. INTRODUCTION

GLOBALIZATION has brought in significant changes in the world business environment (Laszlo & Cescau, 2017). It represents the structural making of the world, characterized by the free flow of information via the extensive use of technology along with physical and human resources across national boundaries. Globalization has created an increasingly complex, ever-changing, and competitive business environment (Dunning, 2014; Savrul, Incekara, & Sener, 2014). This heightened competition in the marketplace requires organizations to seek and gain Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA), to remain in the market as able players (Aaker, 1989; West, Ford, & Ibrahim, 2015). Due to the significance of sources of sustainable competitive advantage for maintaining and improving the competitive position of the enterprises and ensuring long-term success, both organizations and academics are searching for sources that help firms to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). According to Teece (2014), sustainable competitive advantage results from the possession of relevant capability differentials. These should be unique to a business, where the current or potential competitors would not be able to duplicate them (Porter, 1985; Barney, 1991). From the standpoint of the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, even though there are traditional sources that provide competitive advantage for a firm such as natural resources, technology, economies of scale, and so on,

These are identified as 'vulnerable resources' due to their inherent nature, which make them easy to be copied by the competitors (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2015). As such, being the only inimitable resource; human capital or human resource is an especially important source of providing sustainable competitive advantage for organizations facing global competition, through its unique features and nature (Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Campbell, Coff, & Kryscynski, 2012; Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, Jr., & Lepak, 2012). Though other novel sources that would provide competitive advantage for corporations have been identified (e.g., new technology and information systems, redesigned business strategies and structures, etc.), human resource is the live wire behind the creation of all these and bringing in a transformed enterprise to life (Bamberger, Biron, & Meshoulam, 2014). Accordingly, it could conclude that knowledge-based resources such as managers/superior talent play a significant role as a prime source of creating a sustainable competitive advantage for firms operating in turbulent business environments (Siedel & Haapio, 2016).

2 DRIVE FOR PERFORMANCE

The extreme concern of organizations to thrive in competitive environments have led them to make the maximum utilization of the stock of human capital, as they increasingly understand the importance of employees. According to the seminal work of Porter (1985), and the subsequent work on Strategic Management, which emphasize on the resource-and-knowledge-based views of the firm, 'human resource' is highlighted as a significant component of the internal value chain of a business and hence, the organizations are experimenting different mechanisms through which they can create a positive effect on organizational performance through human resources (Cania, 2014; Guest, 2011). Earlier, the firms had not clearly understood the specific mechanisms by which human resources affect firm performance (Collins & Smith, 2006; Guest, 2002), and the organizations were using their own experimental ways by bringing in radical changes, in their strive to compete in the marketplace. Nevertheless, during the last 10-20 years, the organizations are gradually understanding the potential benefits of using High-Performance Work Systems (HPWSs) as a means to maximize employee contributions toward gaining sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Chapman, Sisk,

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Schatten, & Miles, 2016). HPWS refer to a group/system of separate but interconnected Human Resource (HR) practices designed to enhance skills and efforts of employees (Boxall, Ang, & Bartram, 2011) with the ultimate expectation that it would lead to more exceptional organizational performance (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Van De Voorde, Paauwe, & Van Veldhoven, 2012).

3 ERODING WELL-BEING OF THE MODERN-DAY EMPLOYEE

As organizations and the researchers are now clear about the association between the human resource and firm performance (Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012; Paauwe, Wright & Guest, 2013), all these parties are highly concerned about the utilization of human resource in achieving organizational performance; and unfortunately this has happened at the expense of attention for Employee Well-being (EWB) (Guest, 2017). In the today's workplaces, work demands of employees at different organizational levels have become untenable as they employ a few people to get more work done, amidst increased management pressure and high job insecurity (De Witte, Pienaar, & De Cuyper, 2016). This pressure over employees is highly associated with the current economic turmoil experienced by the entire world, where most organizations are required to do more with less to avoid negative financial implications (Mucci, Giorgi, Roncaioli, Perez, & Arcangeli, 2016). Hence, the time spent at work is not a positive experience for many employees. MOST OF THESE WORK-RELATED DEMANDS, CORPORATE PRACTICES, AND EXPERIENCES LEAD TO NEGATIVE EMOTIONS WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE EMPLOYEES (E.G., A SENIOR TEAM AT A LARGE MNC WERE EAGER TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE SENSE OF OVERLOAD AND OVERWHELM THAT THEY AND THEIR EMPLOYEES WERE FEELING; A SENIOR LEADER AT A FORTUNE 150 COMPANY HAD RUN A BUSINESS REVIEW MEETING FOR FOUR HOURS WITHOUT A SINGLE BREAK, EVEN TO GO TO THE BATHROOM; MOST OF THE WHITE-COLLAR EMPLOYEES WORK LONG HOURS AND PUT THEIR HEALTH AT RISK) (LAWRENCE, TROTH, JORDAN, & COLLINS, 2011). ORGANIZATIONS ARE BRINGING IN NUMEROUS TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES WITH THE ADVANCEMENTS IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO MITIGATE THESE ISSUES RELATED TO EXCESSIVE WORK DEMANDS. WHILE SOME CHANGES GENERATE POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES SUCH AS SAVING TIME THROUGH AUTOMATION OF ROUTINE ACTIVITIES, PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO EMPLOYEES TO WORK FROM HOME, AND PROVIDING EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION, OTHERS PRESENT CHALLENGES TO EMPLOYEES AS WORKLOADS AND DEMANDS BECOME INCREASED (BARBER & JENKINS, 2014). EXTENSIONS OF WORK BEYOND THE WORKING HOURS HAS ALSO LED TO WORK-HOME INTERFERENCE. SUCH CONTEXTS AFFECT THE QUALITY OF RECOVERY TIME OF EMPLOYEES AFTER WORK AND INCREASE THEIR STRESS LEVELS (BARBER & JENKINS, 2014). THESE TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS ALLOW EMPLOYERS TO DE-VALUE THE CAPABILITIES OF EMPLOYEES AND CONTRIBUTE TO SKILL OBSOLESCENCE AND ASSOCIATED JOB INSECURITY (GUEST, 2017). AFTERMATH OF THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS THAT HIT THE WORLD ECONOMY, PRESSURES AND STRESS AT WORK EXPERIENCED BY EMPLOYEES ARE AGGRAVATED BY THE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (MUCCI, GIORGI, CUPELLI, & ARCANGELI, 2014). HOWEVER, MOST OF THESE INCREASES IN WORKLOADS, IN THE ABSENCE OF INCREASES IN REWARDS HAVE REDUCED THE JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS AT WORK, LEADING TO FRUSTRATION AMONG EMPLOYEES (BRYSON, FORTH, & STOKES, 2015). THESE CHANGES AT WORK, THE

CONDITIONS SURROUNDING THE JOB, AND THE SUBSEQUENT PRESSURES AT WORK, AS WELL AS THE DEMANDS FROM THE SOCIETY, CREATE AN INCREASING THREAT TO EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, WHICH RESULTS IN HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES NOT ONLY FOR EMPLOYEES BUT ALSO FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILIES (GUEST, 2017). THERE ARE MANY EMPLOYEES IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS, WHO ARE UNDER MEDICATION FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL AILMENTS WHICH ARE ATTRIBUTED TO CAUSES EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR OCCUPATION (GUEST, 2017) AND THIS JUSTIFIES THE NEED TO DEVOTE CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING WITHIN BOTH THE WORKPLACES AND THE SOCIETY. A MAJORITY OF EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCE (DYSFUNCTIONAL) STRESS AND LOW WELL-BEING AT WORK AND THAT LEADS TO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES SUCH AS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRAIN, ORDINARY PHYSICAL ILLNESSES, CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES ETC. (BARTHOLOMEW, NTOUMANIS, CUEVAS, & LONSDALE, 2014), ABSENTEEISM (SHIMAZU, SCHAUFELI, KAMIYAMA, & KAWAKAMI, 2015), PSYCHOSOMATIC COMPLAINTS, AND JOB DISSATISFACTION (SALANOVA, DEL LÍBANO, LLORENS, & SCHAUFELI, 2014; MEMON, TING, SALLEH, ALI, & YACOB, 2016). THINGS HAVE EVOLVED TO THIS LEVEL ACROSS ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD, MAINLY DUE TO THE OVER-EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OVERLOOKING THE WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES. MOST OF THE CORPORATE PRACTICES, ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS, AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE TODAY'S WORKPLACE ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS IMPROVING BOTH THE INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE. DURING A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC TURBULENCE, THESE PERFORMANCE PRESSURES ARE MOSTLY OBSERVED IN PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS COMPARED TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS (DI MARCO ET AL., 2016) SINCE THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE ORIENTATIONS AND THE BANKRUPTCY RISKS (E.G., ABBAS & RAJA, 2015; GEORGE, 2015; LUECHINGER, MEIER, & STUTZER, 2010) OF THE TWO TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS. FOR THAT REASON, IT IS OBSERVED THAT THE EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FACE MORE SIGNIFICANT WELL-BEING ISSUES, AND THUS, THE FOCUS IS REQUIRED ON EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. WORK PRESSURE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WORKPLACES RESULT IN PROLONGED STRESS AND LOWER WELL-BEING, AND THIS HAS BECOME A SUBJECT OF INTEREST FOR MANY ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND THE ORGANIZATIONS AT PRESENT (RODRÍGUEZ-MUÑOZ & SANZ-VERGEL, 2013). THIS AREA OF CONCERN IS A PART OF AN ARRAY OF DISCIPLINES, VIZ, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (PISANTI, MONTGOMERY, & QUICK, 2017), HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM) (EDGAR, GEARE, HALHJEM, REESE, & THORESEN, 2015), ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR (OB), AND THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY MOVEMENT (DONALDSON, DOLLWET, & RAO, 2015). AS A RESULT, AREAS OF WORKPLACE STRESS, BURNOUT, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, AND SUBJECTIVE, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND OTHER TYPES OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING HAVE BEEN THEMES TO A LARGE AMOUNT OF CORPORATE DISCUSSIONS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH FROM THE EARLY DAYS SUCH AS THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY (ZHENG, KASHI, FAN, MOLINEUX, & EE, 2016). STILL AND ALL, IT IS VERY IRONICAL THAT THE INTEREST AND THE NEED FOR THE TOPIC SHOWS NO SIGNS OF WANING BUT A FLUCTUATING DEMAND (E.G., INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (IJHRM) CALLED FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE ON 'WELL-BEING AND HRM IN THE CHANGING WORKPLACE' IN 2014; NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS CALLED FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE ON 'GENDER AND WELL-BEING AT WORK' IN 2016; THE THEME OF THE ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT

(AOM) 78TH ANNUAL MEETING IN 2018 IS INFLUENCING OVERALL EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING). THIS INCREASING INTEREST AROUND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN ACADEMIA IS DUE TO THE INCREASING NUMBER OF EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES OF THESE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES AND DIVERSE STATE OF DEBATES ON THE SAME IN ACADEMIA. HOWEVER, THE TYPE OF STUDIES PUBLISHED UNDER THIS TREND CONTRASTS WITH THE EARLY WORK IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYEE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, AS THOSE STUDIES MOSTLY FOCUSED ON THE PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYEE EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS WORK ENVIRONMENTS (DANNA & GRIFFIN, 1999). ACCORDINGLY, MOST OF THE PRIOR STUDIES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THIS AREA ARE DIRECTED AT IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL WORKPLACE CONDITIONS THROUGH ERGONOMICS TO MINIMIZE OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES OF EMPLOYEES (E.G., GRANDJEAN & HÜNTING, 1977; JOHNSTONE & MILLER, 1960; SANDERS & MCCORMICK, 1992). ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING WERE INITIALLY CONSIDERED AS AN AREA OF STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY AND HENCE, RECEIVED LIMITED ATTENTION FROM SCHOLARS IN THE FIELD OF HRM (EDGAR ET AL., 2015). THE REASON FOR THIS BEING THE EMPHASIS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE PURSUED AT THE EXPENSE OF CONCERN FOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING (GUEST, 2017), WHICH IS ALSO A MAJOR REASON FOR THE REDUCED EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, THE CHANGES IN THE NATURE AND CONTEXT OF WORK, SUPPORT FOR A GREATER FOCUS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ON THE AREA OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING. THE STUDIES WHICH HAVE BEEN ALREADY DONE ON THE AREA OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING WHICH FALL WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF HRM, UNLIKE THE STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY, NEED TO TAKE A UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH IN THEIR EXPLANATIONS AS TO HOW EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING CAN BE ENHANCED CONCURRENTLY ENCOURAGING HIGH PERFORMANCE. THOUGH SEVERAL STUDIES ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED SO FAR, MOST OF THEM CENTER ON THE ABSENCE OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESSES. HOWEVER, THE NEED COMES FOR MORE STUDIES ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING WITH THE GENERAL SENTIMENT EXPRESSED WITHIN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (SELIGMAN & CZIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2000) THAT WELL-BEING SHOULD BE VIEWED AS MORE THAN THE ABSENCE OF ILLNESS. FURTHERMORE, THE REASONABLY SIZEABLE BODY OF EXTANT STUDIES ON THIS AREA ARE FRAGMENTED AND UNSYSTEMATIC AS MOST SCHOLARS HAVE FOLLOWED A MEDICAL MODEL (MEYER, MALTIN, & THAI, 2012), AND AS SUCH, THERE IS A CALL FOR MORE MANAGEMENT-CENTERED STUDIES ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING (GUEST, 2017). THESE VAST, BUT SURPRISINGLY DISJOINTED AND UNFOCUSED BODY OF LITERATURE ACROSS DIVERSE FIELDS THAT RELATES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE, RAISES DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS, BECAUSE IT REMAINS UNCLEAR AS TO HOW THE CORPORATE INTERVENTIONS SHOULD BE DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT OPTIMAL OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED (VAN DE VOORDE, PAAUWE, & VAN VELDHOVEN, 2012). AMONG THE PRIVATELY-OWNED ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS WITH A GLOBAL PRESENCE SUCH AS MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNCs) SEEK TO BE THE 'EMPLOYER OF CHOICE' AND DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A MAXIMALLY ENGAGED WORKFORCE IN THEIR EFFORTS FOR EXPANSION AND GROWTH (FARNDALE, BEIJER, & KELLIHER, 2015; KELLIHER, HAILEY, & FARNDALE, 2013). HENCE, THEY INVEST MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF MONEY ON PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THEIR WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS, AS THEY BELIEVE IT WOULD LEAD TO INCREASED LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (KELLIHER ET AL., 2013). MOST OF THE

FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES HAVE IMPLEMENTED SOME FORM OF WELLNESS PROGRAM TO ENSURE EMPLOYEES RECEIVE A PROPER DIET, PROPER EXERCISES, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, AND ENJOY SOUND ERGONOMIC CONDITIONS (OVSEY, 2012). ALONGSIDE, COMPANIES HAVE ALSO CREATED GAME ROOMS AT OFFICE PREMISES, IMPLEMENTED UNLIMITED VACATION POLICIES, OFFERED GYM MEMBERSHIPS, PROVIDED FREE MEALS, AND OFFERED EMPLOYEES A MULTITUDE OF OTHER REWARDS, ALL IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY. ACCORDING TO THE STAYING@WORK SURVEY 2015/16, 57% OF ORGANIZATIONS IN ASIA OFFER HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES (WILLS TOWERS WATSON, 2016). IT IS BELIEVED THAT THESE INITIATIVES WOULD PRODUCE AN ARRAY OF POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FIRMS SUCH AS REDUCED MEDICAL COSTS, LOWERED ILLNESS-RELATED ABSENTEEISM, LOW EMPLOYEE TURNOVER, AND A WORKFORCE CHARACTERIZED BY GOOD PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, ETC. (ALBRECHT, BAKKER, GRUMAN, MACEY, & SAKS, 2015; ILIES, AW, & PLUUT, 2015). HOWEVER, IT IS OFTEN NOTICED THAT DESPITE ALL THESE INITIATIVES AND INVESTMENTS, PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EMPLOYEE (UN)WELL-BEING SUCH AS PROBLEMS IN PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ETC. COMPLICATE THINGS FOR ORGANIZATIONS BY CREATING A RIPPLING IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS' OUTCOMES. HENCE, THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO, HAVE THESE INITIATIVES TRULY MADE AN IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING? IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, IT IS CRUCIAL TO INVESTIGATE THIS AREA OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND SEEK POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS. ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYEE STRESS, BURNOUT, POOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE, POOR HEALTH, AND WELLNESS, AS WELL AS STUDIES ON RESULTS OF STRESS AND WELL-BEING PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS, ALL APPEAR TO SUGGEST THAT EMPLOYEES WORKING IN BEST PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT LEADING 'THE GOOD LIFE' THAT THEY WANTED BY EDUCATING THEMSELVES, EVEN THOUGH THEIR COMPANIES PAY A SIX-OR-SEVEN FIGURE RETURN.

4 LACUNA IN LITERATURE ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND THE NEED TO EXPLORE

In investigating the area of employee well-being, the leading scholars in the field mainly from the West suggest the need for re-directing the focus of research studies away from looking at the effects of individual differences on employees' well-being towards individuals' perceptions of the events that occur in the workplace and how those incidents affect their well-being (Sonntag & Ilies, 2011; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Ilies, 2012). A majority of theoretical and empirical work so far on the area of employee well-being has followed the trait approach (Xanthopoulou et al., 2012), where the studies have looked at how the dispositional traits (e.g., personality, mood) of individuals have affected on their well-being (Karapinar & Comgoz, 2017; Wood & Beckmann, 2006). Further, the studies covering the determinants of employee well-being have focused on demographic, socio-demographic, and labor market factors rather than broader organizational conditions. Moreover, the studies that have explored the determinants of employee well-being have only focused on several factors associated with individuals and organizations separately. Taking these into consideration, authors propose to combine the organizational conditions that impact on employee well-being along with the individual characteristics that contribute to employee well-being in future studies to generate new insights in the area of employee well-being, that would produce tenable insights to solve grave issues in the corporate world in the field of employee well-being. Subjective well-being, which

is a construct largely associated with employee well-being, is a subjective experience (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Diener, 1984) and deals with the overall effectiveness of aspects related to one's life as a whole (both on and off the job) (Diener, 1984). This construct, as is associated with 'eudaimonia,' gives the same meaning of 'happiness' as suggested by early philosophers like Aristotle, but still, the term happiness is considered a more lay construct (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). The term employee well-being is used in this paper as it brings more precision and has a standard operationalization facilitating scholarly endeavor than the concept of subjective well-being. Employee well-being is a significant area of discussion today, as society is experiencing the negative consequences of neglecting the value of having a sound body and a mind. Thus, it is essential to look at the resources available for employees which create employee well-being and eliminate/minimize the factors or work/job related demands that contribute to low levels of employee well-being. There is a widespread interest at present among the organizational researchers and practitioners alike on the area of employee well-being (Zheng, Zhu, Zhao, & Zhang, 2015) as they realize that the research related to the field of Human Resource Management (HRM) have been overemphasizing on the areas of individual and organizational performance at the expense of employee well-being (Kaufman, 2012, Guest, 2011). Scholars in the field of HRM and Organizational Behavior (OB) emphasize the fact stated by the 'Mutual Gains Model,' which states that the HRM function should benefit both organizations as well as individuals (Guest, 2017). This interest is further driven by the pressures at work and in society, which creates severe threats on the well-being of the workforce, which has ultimately contributed to the creation of an unhealthy workforce. One of the significant challenges that existed so far in studying or exploring employee well-being by the academics was the complexity associated with its definition and the varying models that have been proposed over the years (Tetric, 2002). However, with the clarity of the components of the concept, now the academic interest is primarily driven towards the area of employee well-being and its related aspects. Gradually this area is attracting considerable attention among the scholarly community over research around job stress, as the area of employee well-being covers a broad domain (de Jonge, Bosma, Peter, & Siegrist, 2000). One of the primary reasons for this emergence of this area as an essential research topic in the fields of Organizational Behavior (OB) and HRM is the criticality of it to the survival and development of organizations around the world (Spreitzer & Porath, 2012). In Sri Lanka, academic research in employee well-being still lags behind the needs of the organizations and society. For example, the choice of research subjects of most of the prior studies in the area of well-being are not corporate employees but, the school children (e.g., Hamilton, Foster, Richards, & Surenthirakumaran, 2016), special youth (e.g., Fernandopulle, Anuradha, Samarasekara, & Fernandopulle, 2012), adolescents (Thalagala, Rajapakse, & Yakandawala, 2004) and the poverty affected rural communities (Semasinghe, 2015) in the country. This dearth of research on well-being in Sri Lanka is mainly because the area had been a research interest primarily of medical professionals and sociologists to date. According to the understanding of authors' there are a number of studies conducted in Sri Lanka focussing only on employee occupational stress (e.g., Gomes, 2012; Jayarathna

& Rathnayake, 2016; Prabakaran & Panchanatham, 2013) which is one single aspect of well-being, whereas they have mostly not paid attention to the broader aspects of employee well-being. Taking this lacuna in research on the area of employee well-being, we suggest more work on employee well-being needs to be conducted in Sri Lanka, which is an emerging market striving for economic growth. With the introduction of modern technology, shifts towards globalization, and rivalry in the international markets, the nature of work in the private sector has changed dramatically over the last few years (Landy & Conte, 2016; Ramsdal, 2016). Several organizations have downsized and restructured their organizations through automation, while some have undergone mergers, acquisitions, entered strategic alliances, and ownership changes in their survival efforts over competition (Foster, Hassard, Morris, & Cox, 2016). The impact of these transformations have affected not only the blue-collar workers as in the early days but also the white-collar workers of these firms (Patri, 2016), including the managerial layers. When it comes to 'Managers' - the positions as well as the job holders are not a homogeneous category and includes hierarchical layers as top/senior managers, middle managers, and operational managers (Hales, 2006), hence, the nature of work, the type of stress and pressure, and the other things experienced by each category is relatively different (e.g., In the organizational reforms such as delayering, downsizing, restructuring, etc., it is the middle management positions and the middle managerial employees who are often targeted as redundant - McCann, Morris, & Hassard, 2008). In this view, middle managers are observed to be always under stress and pressure as their positions and privileges are often under threat (Holmemo & Ingvaldsen, 2016). They are also considered as an essential group in organizations, as they are positioned above the work floor/non-executive workers and carry responsibilities for supervising (Birken, Lee, & Weiner, 2012) while bridging the ideas from the top with the reality from the front line (Holmemo, & Ingvaldsen, 2016). Anicich and Hirsh (2017) identify this as the dual responsibility of engaging in both leading and following simultaneously. According to the same authors, they are the group that is often subject to the power and politics of both higher and lower command colleagues. They need to manifest a low power deferential behavior in dealing with the superiors while adopting an assertive high-power behavior in dealing with their subordinates. Failure to conform to these role-based expectations and conflicting demands of multiple stakeholders often lead to conflicts, stress, disappointments, and frustrations, etc. Given this situation, the middle managerial employees repeatedly experience well-being issues due to the psychologically challenging circumstances that they often face at work (Schaufeli, Taris, & Rhnenen, 2008). These challenging and stressful circumstances encountered daily by these employees takes a toll on their physical health, which sometimes leads to hypertension and even heart disease (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017). In a survey of 21,859 full-time employees across a range of industries, researchers have observed that middle managers have higher rates of depression and anxiety over other employees (Prins, Bates, Keyes, & Muntaner, 2015). Therefore, we emphasize that current well-being research should address the problems experienced, mainly focusing on the middle management layer of organizations. One of the major theoretical explanations

regarding the employee well-being and its importance towards organizations that has been extensively studied is 'The Happy-Worker/ Productive Worker Hypothesis.' The thesis states that employees high in well-being also perform well, and vice versa (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). But one of the significant shortcomings of this thesis is that though it highlights the importance of ensuring employee well-being, it does not establish the antecedents of employee well-being and thus offers managers of organizations with little guidance as to what needs to be done to ensure employee well-being/happiness, etc. Most of the studies so far that have looked at employee well-being investigate its consequences (e.g., employee job performance, retention, engagement), but many of them have ignored looking at the antecedents of employee well-being in organizations. Accordingly, we propose future research should address antecedents of employee well-being in the context of private sector organizations in Sri Lanka using the middle managerial level employees as the sample and thereby contribute to the dearth of studies looking at antecedents of employee well-being.

5 SIGNIFICANCE/RELEVANCE OF STUDIES ON THE AREA OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Studies undertaken in the area of employee well-being provides several insights for organizations, at a time where organizations both in Eastern and Western parts of the world are considering about improving the health and wellness of employees more than ever. In an article titled, Health and Well-Being in the Workplace: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature by Danna and Griffin (1999) state "Health and well-being in the workplace have become common topics in the mainstream media, in practitioner-oriented magazines and journals and, increasingly, in scholarly research journals" (p. 357). This increasing interest in the health and well-being of employees in both organizations, as well as among the scholarly researchers, is increasing at an increasing rate despite a time of almost two decades have elapsed from the time this article was written. This is mainly because having a high level of well-being is useful not only for employees but also for the employers (Robison, 2010) as well as because employees at all levels of organizations are increasingly facing issues with their physical health and mental well-being due to the pace at which the world of work is moving. Thus, a much more prominent place in organizational research is in demand to cater to the issues of the area of well-being. As such, employers seek sources of creating a productive workforce by making them happy and by ensuring their well-being. Thus, the findings of research in employee health and well-being would provide an idea for the employers on what interventions to be made within the organizational set-up to ensure employee well-being. Gone are the days where organizations thought employee well-being is none of their business. This earlier cooperate behavior was also associated with the ill-defined nature of the concept of employee well-being.

Nevertheless, now, based on the happy worker-productive worker thesis, employers have realized that employees who experience high levels of well-being tend to manifest high performance, and most of the high performing employees in organizations are those who experience high levels of well-being. Hence findings of studies undertaken focusing employee well-being will provide insights to both the Industrial/Organizational Psychologists and the HR Departments of organizations in designing interventions and

launching programs and initiatives within the organizations to improve the well-being of individual employees of the organization as well as in improving the organizational health. Consequently, these would lead to reduced medical costs and lowered absenteeism as well as increased employee engagement levels and performance (Beichl, 2015).

Studies covering employee well-being bring together two strands of research namely Human Resource Management (HRM) and Industrial and Organizational (I-O) psychology, to offer a theoretical model for improving employee well-being in organizations. By doing so, they could integrate a vast amount of surprisingly disjointed and unfocused body of literature in a diverse set of fields to present a novel explanation on employee well-being in the workplace. Further, the organizations are making a fundamental mistake by treating this employee well-being related issues in a micro perspective as a talent management issue or a personal issue of individual employees, rather than considering it to be an overall organizational challenge. According to a report by ComCare (2010), sponsored by the Australian government, ineffective line managers are also often contributing to the failure and low success of well-being interventions by organizations. However, this evidence indicates that organizations continuously make efforts to promote organizational health and employee well-being, even though they have not been carefully directed to cater to the real requirements. From the point of view of organizations, it is a great challenge for organizations dealing with the issues of well-being as they need to promote well-being while focusing on employee and organizational productivity. Hence, modification of organizations and the behavior of its members have never been an easy task in the organizational drives for promoting well-being (Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2015). "Many well-intentioned interventions to promote health and well-being (in organizations) have failed to meet expected results (Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2015)." Likewise, there is ample evidence available that indicates, in-house health-promoting interventions which were even brought in as organizational development efforts of organizations have become unsuccessful, though the number of scholarly research elaborating these failed interventions are limited and thereby the studies in this area will gain much corporate interest. Such studies would be embraced by society with both hands as these studies would provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of employee well-being, among both academic and practitioner communities. 6

Conclusion This review paper is produced taking the narrative or a more qualitative approach over an effects estimation approach, to provide a snapshot of the gaps in literature in the area of employee well-being. Thus, this is a non-quantitative (non-metanalytic) review paper. Thus, it makes a short evaluation of the work published in the area with particular focus to Asia and Sri Lanka and thereby provides a 'state-of-the-art' understanding on the areas available for exploration in employee well-being. The paper attempted to provide the readers with an integrated and synthesized overview of the current state of knowledge and describe existing gaps and future research directions. Thus, this work establishes a stable platform for the future scholarly work around employee well-being and related areas such as creating healthy organizations.

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