

relationship between well-being, HRM and performance, critiques of well-being, and finally how well-being may be realised in practice through HRM.

## Defining Well-Being – A Difficult Task

The ILO offers a definition of workplace well-being that signals an important breadth:

Workplace well-being relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organisation (ILO, 2009).

The ILO definition is helpful but it is far from the only way to define well-being. This chapter focuses on meanings of workplace well-being but as will be seen shortly, this should be considered within the relevant national and international contexts as these can, and do, shape workplace experiences, e.g. employment law, collective institutions, approaches to social protection, and health care. The term well-being can thus be used in a multitude of ways, and it is, therefore, difficult to offer a clear and definitive definition. One reason for this is the interdisciplinary nature of work on well-being, with contributions from economics, organizational psychology and sociology, making conceptual clarity difficult (Kowalski and Loretto, 2017). The extent to which the lack of a consistently used definition is problematic is open to debate. On a basic operational level, an adequate definition – for example, that offered by professional bodies for the HR profession – may be sufficient to enable HRM practitioners to design and implement well-being policies and practices. However, the need for clarity is more significant when we consider the development of research into well-being and the pursuit of conceptual clarity and a coherent evidence-base (Dundon and Rafferty, 2018). For example, if research is using different understandings and measures of well-being, how are comparisons to be made? Nevertheless, there some commonality in approach can be found.

## Occupational Stress Models

Occupational stress models such as the Job Demand and Control model (Karasek, 1979; Karasek and Theorell, 1990) and the Job Demand Resource model (Demerouti et al., 2001) are used in HRM well-being research (e.g. Huang et al., 2019) and in occupational psychology (see Nielsen et al., 2017 for a meta-analysis). Nielsen et al. (2017) ground their analysis in the ‘happy-productive worker thesis’, and Kowalski and Loretto summarise that ‘the centre of these theories is the notion that being equipped with appropriate resources can help off-set the potential and adverse effects of high job demands of the workplace’ (2017: 2236). These models have been used to illustrate the psychologicalisation of HRM, however Boxall (2021) argues this is not necessarily a bad thing since it includes ‘health’ dimensions of well-being such as stress and burnout which HR has a tendency to ignore, instead focusing only on ‘happiness’ dimensions such as job satisfaction.

## Health, Happiness and Relationships

Grant et al. argue that well-being is multi-dimensional and can be understood in broad terms ‘as the overall quality of an employee’s experience and functioning at work’ (2007: 52). Building on