CONCEPTUALISATION AND FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT FOR WORKPLACE WELL-BEING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
Workplace well-being has remained an evergreen concern in academic and professional fields. It has, however, suffered from the lack of a unified definition, with scholars, professionals, and policymakers bringing in diverse perspectives. This study reviews existing literature to contribute to the discourse on the conceptualisation of workplace well-being. The study adopts a qualitative approach, utilising thematic analysis. After applying specific criteria to eliminate literature that did not suit the study, the researchers selected 75 scholarly articles published between 2010 and 2024. The study reveals various terms and descriptors already used in the conceptualisation of workplace well-being fall into seven broad themes, which are psychological and emotional well-being, physical health and safety, job satisfaction and engagement, social relationships and support, life satisfaction and personal fulfilment, work-life balance and flexibility, and organisational commitment and performance. The study proposes a definition of workplace well-being that captures the thematic categorisations. This definition integrates theoretical perspectives, including the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, psychological safety theory (PST), and ergonomic well-being. The study also proposes a framework emphasising the multi-dimensional attribute and the interplay between work and non-work environments. The definition and framework advanced in this study contribute to the

ongoing discourse on this subject. These can serve as inputs into future research, developing organisational policies, and informing governmental regulations that enhance employee well-being and performance.

1   INTRODUCTION

Workplace well-being is a phenomenon that has received attention in various literature. As an area of scholarly interest, it has remained an evergreen issue of concern across multiple academic disciplines and professional callings. Grawitch et al. (2006) observed that interests in workplace well-being date back more than a century, with traces to the works of early industrial and organisational psychologists. Cvenkel (2020) traces the evolution of interest in workplace well-being to the eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution era when employers first demonstrated concerns for the health and welfare of their employees. Since then, interest in workplace well-being has garnered attention across academic and professional disciplines. Such interest is prevalent among public and private sector organisations, governmental institutions and entities, and global multilateral institutions such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Kaushal, 2013). Kowalski and Loretto (2017) and Chari et al. (2018) affirm that interests within and across disciplinary fields in workplace well-being have been extensive. However, the signs, as of today, still point to growing attention from scholars.

Although workplace well-being has attracted extensive scholarly inquiries and a record of significant progress as an area of study, researchers still grapple with the problem of a unified definition (Dodge et al., 2012; De Simone, 2014; Fisher, 2014; Wilcox & Koontz, 2022; Bautista et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2023). The various scholars allude that scholarship on workplace well-being has been overshadowed by the lack of a single, universally accepted definition among scholars, leading to a blurred understanding. The blurrity of conceptualisation is the main factor responsible for the prevalence of approaches and what has been termed a "conceptual muddle" (Kelloway & Day, 2005). This lack of consensus on the definition of workplace well-being has led to different disciplinary approaches (Rook et al., 2020), variations of theoretical perspectives, and differences of opinions on the prioritisation between objective and subjective well-being indicators (Dodge et al., 2012; LaMontagne et al., 2014; Chari et al., 2018, Bautista et al., 2023). For instance, the conceptual debates on workplace well-being have generated tensions such as health-focused vs. happiness-focused (Danna & Griffin, 1999) and hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being (Fisher, 2014; Rook et al., 2020). Furthermore, the lack of a precise definition for workplace well-being also affects study designs and the development of appropriate measurement instruments (Krekel et al., 2019; Aryanti et al., 2020, Jarden et al., 2023).

Other issues linked to the lack of a unified definition for workplace well-being include the preponderance of studies lacking a specific definition of workplace well-being; a few examples are Wood and De Menezes (2011), Jarden et al. (2018) and Aryanti et al. (2020). Definitions are important as they help provide background knowledge, shape the direction, and guide the outcomes of studies by ensuring consistency in developing measurement instruments and reporting results. Additionally, the lack of definition directly impacts the design or selection of programs to promote employee well-being or wellness in organisations. According to LaMontagne et al. (2014), Spence (2015), and Sherman et al. (2023), the lack of common understanding of what constitutes workplace well-being may result in programs inadequately tailored to address the needs of the workplace and employees. However, De Simone (2014)

similarly argues that the lack of a consensus definition has not negatively impacted scholarly interests in investigating various aspects of workplace well-being. In fact, despite its definitional ambiguity, the subject matter has been confirmed to continue to attract scholarly interest (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Chari et al., 2018), especially from a multidisciplinary perspective (Grawitch et al., 2006; Ho & Kuvaas, 2019; Pacheco et al., 2020).

The purpose is to contribute to the body of literature on the problem of conceptualising workplace well-being by identifying common descriptors, themes, and/or taxonomies used to define or describe the concept. It attempts to address the concerns of stakeholders on the elusive consensus on the definition of workplace well-being. The definition proposed at the end and the framework that emanates from this scholarly effort will be an additional stepping stone to gaining valuable insights for designing and conducting future studies on workplace well-being. The effort can also help bridge the knowledge gap, particularly when interested stakeholders desire to understand workplace well-being. Furthermore, as suggested by this study, such a definition and framework can help managers in organisations and those tasked with designing workplace well-being programs gain reasonable knowledge they can apply to develop or improve existing workplace well-being intervention programs.

1.2 Research Questions

This study has three research questions that form the nucleus of its contributions to the discussions on conceptualising and model formulation for workplace well-being.
1. What descriptors, expressions or themes have researchers used to conceptualise workplace well-being?
2. Can the insights from these descriptors, expressions, or themes be synthesised to formulate and propose a definition for workplace well-being?
3. Can the resulting conceptualisation of workplace well-being be used to develop a framework for workplace well-being?

The remainder of the paper takes the following outline. The literature review follows comes next in three parts. The first part is the theoretical review, the second part focuses on a few empirical studies, and the last part spells out the research questions. Then follows the methodology section, where we present the theoretical framework for the study and the procedure for literature search and inclusion, which are detailed before moving to the presentation and analysis of data with the aid of thematic content analysis. The final part of the paper is the conclusion section. This section discusses the findings, the proposed definition, the framework for workplace well-being, their justifications, and the study's limitations and future research directions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Theoretical literature

At this juncture, exploring some theoretical perspectives on the definition of workplace well-being is appropriate. Definitions are clear and specific statements that convey the meaning of a term, often enabling a consistent understanding of a term (Michie et al., 2019). Although the lack of a universally acceptable definition for workplace well-being (Dodge et al., 2012) has been a source of concern and often perceived as a weak point of inquiries into the subject matter, it reflects its multi-dimensional nature. This section contains some theoretical underpinnings for the plausibility or otherwise of standardised definitions.

The social constructionist theory suggests that the perception of reality or understanding of a particular concept, which may include workplace well-being, is influenced by social and cultural exposures and not an outcome based solely on objective reality. It implies that

workplace well-being will convey different meanings to different industries (Rook et al., 2020); for instance, the meaning in a manufacturing environment may differ from that of a technology firm. Similarly, different cultural settings will likely lead to different perceptions and mechanisms for addressing workplace well-being challenges. Khalis and Hourmat (2021) argue that cultural dimensions within organisations significantly influence employees' subjective well-being.

Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) job demands-resources (JD-R) model perceives workplace well-being as the attempt by organisations to create a balance between the stressors in the workplace, that is, job demands and the support which the employee gets, that is, the resources available to employees. These resources can include those provided by the organisation or those acquired, maintained, and retained by the employees (Nielsen et al., 2017). Employers and employees have also demonstrated divergent perceptions of workplace well-being, with such perceptions shaping the choices of the type of well-being initiatives and participation in such initiatives by the employers and employees, respectively (Spence, 2015). Thus, in alignment with Sonnentag (2015), definitions of workplace well-being can vary depending on the industry's job demands, the resources, and initiatives available to combat workplace stressors.

Another theoretical perspective on the multi-dimensionality of workplace well-being, which further lends credence to the difficulty in achieving a universally acceptable definition for the term, is the positive organisational scholarship (POS) theory. This theory emphasises giving attention to only the positive aspects of organisations. Peterson and Park (2006) highlight the POS theory's key concerns: worker satisfaction and morale, transformational leadership, organisational innovation and creativity, and individual and municipal virtues. The theory essentially seeks to explicate only those conditions that promote positive outcomes, such as resilience, hope, and optimism, and how organisations can help their employees derive these attributes. Thus, the theoretical perspective rejects the reliance on any rigid definition of workplace well-being; instead, it encourages a dynamic construct tied to positive organisational and employee outcomes. Employee outcomes include capability, capacity, flourishing, high morale, and job and life satisfaction.

Machery's (2009) heterogeneity theory provides another noteworthy insight into the multi-dimensionality of workplace well-being. This theory is premised on the diversity of views, ideas, and opinions, suggesting the impracticality of everyone facing one direction about any phenomenon. Indeed, there will always be different approaches to everything and issues. These different approaches represent the pluralistic nature of cognition and perception of reality. Therefore, discussions about workplace well-being are bound to be divergences of subjective workplace well-being, psychological well-being, eudaimonic well-being, and physical well-being (Rook et al., 2020; Wilcox & Koontz, 2022). All of these constructs are valid and co-exist with the multifaceted issue of workplace well-being.

The last theoretical perspective on the challenge of the definition of workplace well-being that this study considers is critical realism. This theory builds on the philosophical proposition that knowledge can be developed, interpreted and described (Bukowska, 2021). It strongly emphasises understanding the role and influence of underlying factors in generating observable events. The crux of the theory lies in distinguishing between an event and the underlying factors that cause it (Bhaskar, 2007). While reality exists, individual understanding will likely differ due to different backgrounds, exposures, and cognitive limitations, among several underlying factors. This theoretical perspective suggests that while a universally acceptable definition of

workplace well-being may yet be realistic, it is susceptible to contextual limitations and the different factors that shape individual perceptions of reality. Thus, individual interpretations will play a significant role in any definition of workplace well-being.

The various theories demonstrate the multi-dimensional nature of workplace well-being and explain the multiplicity of perspectives responsible for the differences in opinions on its definition. These theories provide different lenses for studying this subject, shaping its conceptualisation and different academic disciplines, professions, and occupational practices. While some theoretical perspectives outrightly suggest that achieving a universally acceptable definition is impossible, others suggest that a standardised definition may not be impossible but will depend on various subjective, domain, or structural factors.

2.2   Empirical literature

Spence (2015) conducted a study that focused on programs for the promotion of workplace well-being termed 'WorkWell' programs and the problem of employees' participation in them. The 'WorkWell programs are initiatives organisations design to improve their employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being. However, the study mainly addressed the deficiencies in previous studies, which narrowed their focus on the impact of well-being or 'WorkWell' programs on business areas like financial performance and productivity. The study, however, deviates from the approaches of previous studies to explore individual and organisational factors that influence employee participation in 'WorkWell' programs.

In setting the tone for the study, Spence (2015) adopted the 1948 seminal definition by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which described well-being as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity." This definition was deemed sufficient for considering employer-sponsored wellness programs relevant in providing employees with a complete state of good health or well-being. The strength of this definition lies in its acknowledgement that well-being is multifaceted and does not simply imply the absence of illness. Therefore, well-being is a desirable positive state of health, including psychological and social conditions, in which the individual seeks a better quality of life.

The shortcomings of this definition lie in its broadness and the possibility of developing extensive workplace well-being programs beyond what employees need from the organisation. Findings from the particular study suggest that this definition may inform organisations to invest resources in employees' well-being programs that exceed the needs of employees, therefore resulting in a low return on investment. Secondly, the broad definition breeds a significant gap that borders on the effective measurement and evaluation of workplace well-being initiatives, aligning with the concern expressed by LaMontagne et al. (2014), De Simone (2014), and Chari et al. (2018). Consequently, a more nuanced definition that expands the scope beyond employees' physical and implicit psychological health and incorporates their perspective on what workplace well-being is to them would be more appropriate.

Slemp et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study to evaluate the relationship between job crafting and autonomy support on the one hand and workplace well-being on the other. The study gathered data from 250 working-class adults. It adopted the structural equation model (SEM) to confirm the hypothesis that autonomy support is a predictor of job crafting, which, in turn, predicts workplace well-being. The study highlighted the significance of workplace well-being in achieving organisational success, elucidating the concept through terms reflecting workers' job expectations.

The study defined the concept of workplace well-being by the three subjective components of workplace positive and negative effects and job satisfaction. The measures for the three components were developed from the affective well-being scales and the Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire, respectively developed by Warr (1990) and Cammann et al. (1979), both works cited by Slemp et al. (2015). This definition leans towards a subjective well-being approach by viewing the subject from employees' workplace experiences of affection and cognition. This definition provides a theoretical approach that was absent in the previous definition by Spence (2015) and views workplace well-being as the acknowledgement of positive and/or the absence of negative experiences. However, the focus of the definition only on hedonic features implies some degree of inadequacies. This definition may not have fully taken into cognisance the eudaimonic aspect (Fisher, 2014; Rook et al., 2020), which deals with factors such as the meaning, purpose, or career growth, which are important aspects of workplace well-being. The definition did not consider the importance of the impact of other organisational conditions like physical environment (Brennan et al., 2002; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2014), social connections (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018; Putra et al., 2023), work-life balance (Allen et al., 2013; Kelliher et al., 2019). Another factor that the definition neglects is cultural and individual differences (Leifels & Bowen, 2021; Atan, 2023).

Incorporating the eudaimonic aspect of well-being initially ignored can be introduced as a way of improving the definition by Slemp et al. (2015). Similarly, addressing other factors such as the social dimensions of the workplace, the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction and well-being in off-job situations, consideration for individual characteristics, workplace conditions, and cultural influences will contribute to the robustness of the definition.

Chari et al. (2018) provide an improved definition of workplace well-being over that of Slemp et al. (2015), which only explored the subjective perspective. In a study based on the conceptual framework developed by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Chari et al. (2018) translated theoretical concepts of well-being into suitable measurement models. Developing the models involved the systematic review of various literature on worker well-being and building on the inputs from expert panellists, who assisted in prioritising the constructs for the measurement instrument.

The authors viewed the concept of worker well-being as both a subjective and an objective phenomenon that extends beyond the work environment and encompasses the quality of an individual's healthy life as impacted by the work environment and other psychosocial conditions. In addition, the authors stated that specific attributes must be present or experienced for employees to thrive and achieve their full potential. Rasool et al. (2021) identify these attributes as including employees' positive perception of the job, the prevailing ambience within the organisation, and the nature of employees' social interactions outside the workplace.

This workplace well-being concept integrates subjective and objective views and acknowledges that worker well-being is affected by factors outside the workplace. Another noteworthy insight is the multi-dimensional framework, consisting of five domains and twenty flexible subdomains that can be further refined and operationalised to provide a more subtle understanding of the concept. However, the subjective aspect may introduce challenges that can impact measurability and objective comparison of well-being outcomes between individuals and across groups. The definition suggests an imbalance in the employer's and employee's responsibility for well-being. This blurred line may result in employers perceiving that too many resources are devoted than is necessary to meet their traditional occupational

health and safety responsibilities. On the other hand, employees may perceive that they bear much of the responsibility for their well-being. These limitations can affect the implementation of the framework.

While the definition is comprehensive by covering subjective and objective well-being angles and acknowledging the influence of non-work contexts on worker well-being, some important areas are still not covered. For instance, technology significantly impacts the workplace, the execution of tasks, and employees' well-being. The twenty subdomains of the framework put forward by the study can be made more robust by including subdomains for digital or technological well-being, diversity, equal opportunities, work-related social media impact, and ethical concerns.

Krekel et al. (2019) examined over 300 research studies to determine the relationship between employee well-being, productivity, and firm performance. The meta-analysis involved a survey of evidence from over 200 firms across 49 industry sectors, including those in the Gallup database. The review also included studies that employed laboratory or field experimental research design and real-life business events. The study's main goal was to propose a position on whether or not organisations stand to derive any benefits from their investments in employee well-being. However, the study did not define employee or workplace well-being; instead, the authors used measures such as employee satisfaction and employee engagement to describe it. The scholars acknowledge that employee well-being is broader than employee satisfaction and engagement and includes positive effects such as job and life satisfaction. By not stating an explicit definition of employee or workplace well-being, the study flexibly explored the subject matter from a broad perspective, including employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and positive effects. This broad application paved the way for the findings and their relevance across different industrial organisations. The study's lack of a specific definition for employee or workplace well-being may suggest a blurred understanding of the concept and/or oversimplification.

Aryanti et al. (2020) reviewed 18 journal articles on workplace well-being in a study that concluded that it is a key element for every organisation. The study suggests that workplace well-being is an important factor that fosters 'healthy and highly productive' employees and thus benefits organisations. The review study conceptualises workplace well-being as a general feeling of prosperity derived by workers and includes intrinsic and extrinsic work values. This definition draws strength from Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, which argues that the workplace consists of intrinsic values, such as responsibility, achievement, recognition, and advancement, and extrinsic factors, such as company policies, pay, supervision, work environment, and interpersonal relationships.

The combination of these factors results in the positive psychological core effect experienced by employees reflected in the definition of 'sense of prosperity,' demonstrating that workplace well-being is a multifaceted concept. The definition appears comprehensive, considering employees' emotional state, cognitive evaluations of work values, balancing of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and the perception of workplace well-being as an outcome of combining individual experience and the work environment. Its focus is mainly on psychological well-being as it neglects several other aspects of workplace well-being, such as employee physical health and social relationships. Another limitation is that the definition has neglected the importance of contextual factors such as the type of industry, cultural influences, and the impact of specific job roles on workplace well-being. The definition focuses on subjective

experience rather than objective measures, thus enabling the possibility of different interpretations of the central themes 'sense of prosperity' and 'general feelings' of the definition.

In order to improve upon this definition, the following suggestions are worth considering. Firstly, the definition should establish and be more specific on the indicators for determining what constitutes and how to determine a 'sense of prosperity' and 'general feelings.' Secondly, scholars can expand the definition by including the important aspects of well-being, such as the omitted physical and social aspects. Furthermore, acknowledging contextual factors such as the type of industries in which organisations operate, the cultural environment, and the nature of the job will make the definition more robust and applicable to different work settings.

3   METHODOLOGY

The study adopts the qualitative methodology of the thematic analysis method to review existing literature on workplace well-being. The study adopts a thematic analysis method combining the six-step guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) with the NVivo version 12 software tool. While the six-step guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006) guided the review and extraction of descriptors of workplace well-being from the selected literature, NVivo v.12 software was employed for the coding and grouping these descriptors into themes and sub-themes.

3.1   Theoretical framework

Although this study expresses concerns about the lack of a universally acceptable definition for workplace well-being and seeks to propose a definition of its own, it recognises the multi-dimensional and multifaceted nature of the concept. In this regard, it adopts the heterogeneity theory as its guiding framework. This theoretical alignment implies that although it may not be feasible to have a singularly acceptable definition for workplace well-being, there may be a possibility for some convergence of the multi-dimensional perspectives about it. Therefore, this study proposes a definition and framework of workplace well-being that aligns with the JD-R model, deriving insights from the identified descriptors and themes.

### 3.2   Data collection inclusion criteria

The study sourced its inputs from relevant scholarly literature on workplace well-being. The literature search was conducted across five (5) databases comprising Google Scholar, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Semantic Scholar, and ResearchGate, using varying search terms such as 'workplace well-being/well-being', 'employee well-being/well-being', and 'worker well-being/wel-being'. The search for scholarly literature was limited to fifteen years, from 2010 to 2024.

3.3   Inclusion and sample selection

The criteria for filtering and reducing the pool of materials generated from the databases were: 1) type of literature - limited to only articles published in scholarly journals; 2) year of publication between 2010 and 2024; 3) at least one variation of the search term in the title or keywords; 4) language of the publication - original publication or translation into English language; and 5) open accessibility of the full text of the article.

Figure 1 shows the search output flow chart and the final sample size, including the 75 journal articles selected for review. The final selection comprised five (5) journal articles purposively selected from the top five results for each year.

Fig. 1 - Flow diagram of literature inclusion and number of articles reviewed for the study.
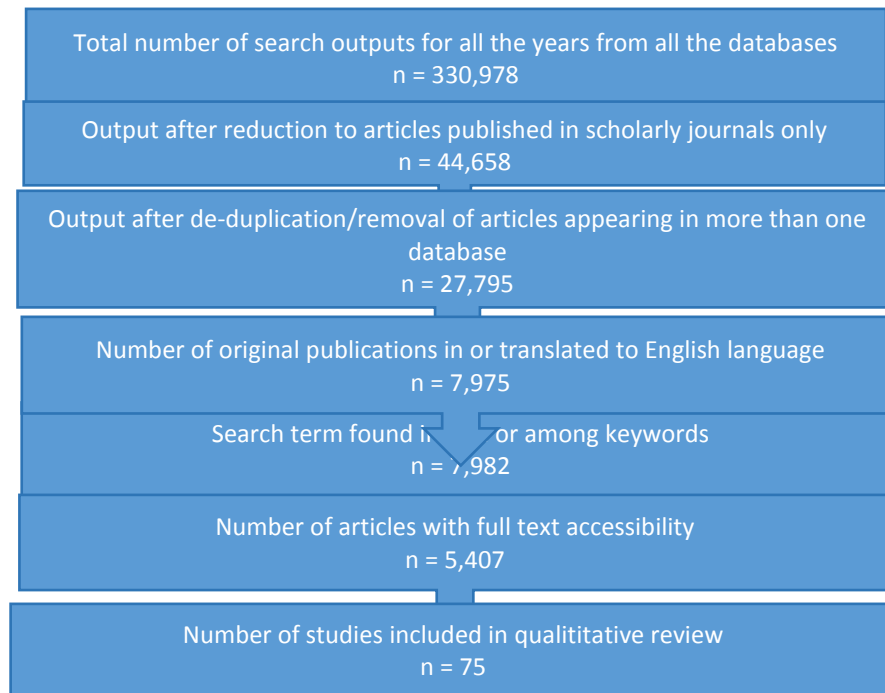
Source: Authors process of eliminating literature that are not need in the study

4   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings from the thematic analysis of the various literature on workplace well-being reveal seven (7) broad themes based on the various descriptors. These themes and descriptors address the first research question and lay the ground for the proposed definition and development of the framework for workplace well-being.

4.1   Results

Research question 1: What descriptors, expressions or themes have researchers used to conceptualise workplace well-being?

Theme 1. Psychological and emotional well-being
This theme is reflected in several of the literature reviewed. Its various sub-themes included positive and negative effects of workplace well-being, subjective feelings, and the perception of either a thriving or a job and life full of distress (Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2021; Chang & Hsu, 2022; Gupta et al., 2024). Additional descriptors associated with this theme of workplace well-being are enthusiasm, vigour, pleasure, displeasure, depression, and tiredness (Rook et al., 2020). Furthermore, psychological and emotional well-being results from individuals' subjective experiences, often influenced by their perception of emotional and cognitive states (Vescovelli et al., 2018; Mitrushina & Tomaszewski, 2019).

Theme 2. Physical health and a safe workplace
The second theme addressed the foundational role of physical health in sustaining employee well-being. An employee's physiological make-up and the work environment conditions can impact physical health. Su and Swanson (2019) identified physical discomforts such as musculoskeletal pain and gastrointestinal problems as conditions of poor well-being. Similarly, some of the studies reviewed perceived workplace well-being as an obligation of the organisation to provide a safe environment for employees to perform their assigned tasks with minimal or no risk of accidents, injuries, or physical harm (Faez et al., 2021). Consequently,

Marin-Garcia and Bonavia (2021) assert that physical well-being is reflected in good body health, including musculoskeletal and cardiovascular wellness, implying that workplace well-being encompasses physical vitality and safety.

Theme 3. Job satisfaction and engagement
This third theme of workplace well-being is connected to the descriptors of the feeling of engagement, fulfilment, and satisfaction employees derive from their job roles and the organisations in which they work. More than half of the studies that make up the review described workplace well-being in terms of job satisfaction and/or burnout (Bakker, 2015; Krekel et al., 2019; Sapra et al., 2023; Vorma et al., 2024). The other descriptors fondly associated with this theme include enthusiasm, vigour, and happiness (Albrecht, 2012; Hall et al., 2016; Bartels et al., 2019; Gupta et al., 2024). Workplace well-being was also described by such indicators as employee productivity and performance (Nielsen et al., 2017; Krekel et al., 2019; Chang & Hsu, 2022).

Theme 4. Social relationships and support
Research supports social relationships' positive impact in formal and informal organisations. Research has identified that social interactions among colleagues in an organisation influence workplace well-being across various organisational contexts (Nielsen et al., 2017). This fourth theme emanates from such descriptors as relationship with unions (Verwijmeren & Derwall, 2010), social integration, acceptance, and coherence (Canibano, 2013), the ability to maintain good interpersonal relationships, gain respect, and enjoy support from both colleagues and superiors (Vorma et al., 2024). Other studies that expressed social relationships as a form of workplace well-being include Ho and Kuvaas (2019), Gulzar et al. (2020), and Lizano et al. (2021). Additional descriptors under this theme include justice, equity, collaboration, and support (McLellan, 2017; Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2021).

Theme 5. Life satisfaction and personal fulfilment
This theme revolves around the positivity of employees' experiences at the workplace and beyond. The impact of workplace experiences often transcends into workers' broader life sphere, affecting their well-being in both on- and off-job situations. The thematic descriptors include having meaningful lives, realising lifetime goals, flourishing, gratefulness, happiness, living well, being self-worthy, and contentment (Adams, 2019; Krekel et al., 2019; Anitha & Shanthi, 2020). Another description that falls under this thematic category is employees' feeling of happiness and pleasure and having a mental state that is congruent with and authenticates their beliefs and values (Bartels et al., 2019).

Theme 6. Work-life balance and flexibility
This theme also repeatedly featured among several definitions and descriptors of workplace well-being. The repetitive appearance of this descriptor in several conceptualisations of workplace well-being in the studies reviewed suggests it is a synonymous term for workplace well-being. Work-life balance and flexibility emphasised the benefits of balancing personal and professional responsibilities. For example, Kossek et al. (2012) emphasise that workplace well-being entails flexibly shifting between work and family roles. Boxall and Macky (2014) perceive work-life balance as a measure that helps reduce job-induced stress and conflicts between job and family roles. Similarly, Adams (2019) explained that work-life balance enables employees to manage stress and function optimally in life and work contexts.

Theme 7. Organisational commitment and performance
The descriptors categorised under this final theme are related to the organisation. They include those organisational features that influence and contribute to the subjective and cognitive evaluations of the organisation and employees' conditions. The organisational culture, value system, support, investments made in employees, and autonomy support are among the organisational features that contribute to the perception of workplace well-being.   The final theme harmonises descriptors identifying organisational structure and values as key drivers of well-being. Von Bonsdorff et al. (2010) suggest that job autonomy enables psychological satisfaction and enhances employees' sense of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Monteiro and Joseph (2023) reinforce the position that organisational culture and value systems impact employees' holistic well-being, thereby positively shaping their trust and commitment to supportive organisations. Such commitments lead employees to be productive and perform well in the workplace, which Juchnowicz and Kinowska (2021) describe as finding purpose and making meaningful contributions to the organisation.

Table 1 summarises these findings highlighting the themes, sub-themes, and brief explanations.
Table 1 - Summary of thematic findings

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Psychological and emotional well-being	Positive affect and happiness	Focuses on emotional satisfaction, happiness, enthusiasm.
	Flourishing vs. distress	A continuum from flourishing to burnout/depression.
	Subjective experience	Individual state of arousal or pleasantness
Physical wellness and safe workplace	Physical wellness	Absence of physical illness or discomfort.
	Healthy body and functioning	Cardiovascular and muscular health as part of well-being.
	Safe work environment	Positive outcomes from health-focused practices.
Job satisfaction and engagement	Job involvement and flow	Active participation and deep engagement in tasks.
	Satisfaction and burnout	Direct and indirect relationship with job satisfaction and burnout respectively.
	Productivity and performance	Well-being enhances organizational performance.
Social relationships and support	Peer support	Social and emotional support from colleagues and co-workers.
	Leadership and justice	Perception of fairness and leader engagement influence well-being.
	Collaborative culture	Working together fosters a sense of belonging and social well-being.
Life satisfaction and personal fulfilment	Meaning and purpose	Experiencing significance in the workplace and life.
	Authenticity and self-acceptance	Being true to oneself and accepted at work.
	Self-actualization	Achieving one's potential and living meaningfully.
Work-life balance and flexibility	Role flexibility	Ability to manage personal and work obligations.
	Time and space control	Autonomy over work hours, flexibility of work arrangements.
	Reduced conflict	Balancing demands to prevent stress and overload.
Organisational commitment and performance	Organisational support	Resources and policies promoting employee health and happiness.
	Job control & retention	Empowerment, autonomy, and reduced turnover.
	Meaningful work	Contribution and recognition in organizational mission.

Source: Authors summary from thematic analysis output using NVivo v.12 software

Research question 2 - Can the insights from these descriptors, expressions, or themes be synthesised to formulate and propose a definition for workplace well-being?

At this juncture, following the identification of the themes and sub-themes about different ideas of workplace well-being and in fulfilment of one of the fundamental objectives and research questions of this study, the definition below is proposed.

'Workplace well-being is a concept that seeks to balance the totality of job demands, its types, forms, processes, organisation's practices, and resources on the employee's ability to make impactful contributions to the achievement of desired organisational and personal goals, and his/her capacity to cope, derive a sense psychological safety, good ergonomic conditions, job and life satisfaction, and being able to engage in positive social connections with colleagues and others in both work and non-work environments'.

The above definition leans mainly on Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) JD-R model. Also, it draws support from the psychological safety theory (Edmondson, 1999) and the concept of ergonomic well-being (Dul et al., 2012). The definition's core components, strengths, and weaknesses are discussed in the succeeding section.

Research question 3 - Can the resulting conceptualisation of workplace well-being be used to develop a framework for workplace well-being?

Below is a proposed framework for workplace well-being based on the proposed definition.

Figure 2: Framework of workplace well-being developed from the proposed definition.
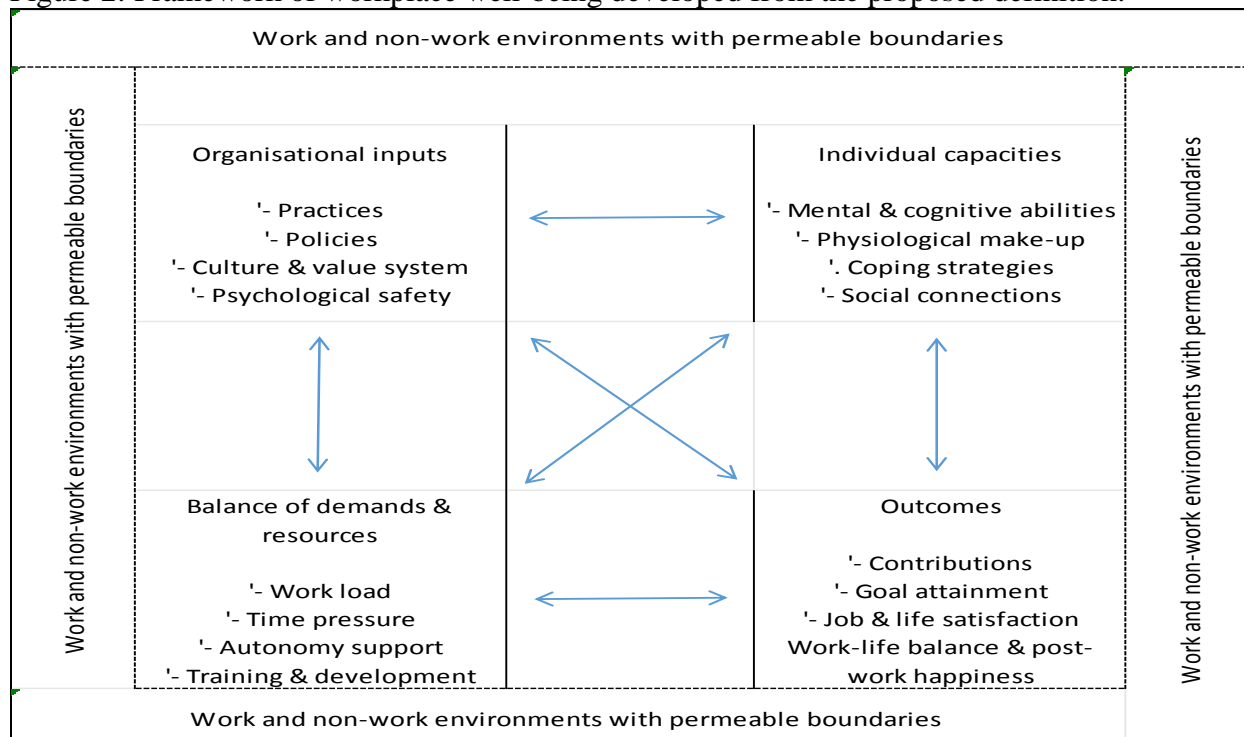
Source: Framework developed from the Authors' definition for workplace well-being.

4.2   Discussions

Although this study leans on the heterogeneity theory (Machery, 2009), which suggests the multiplicity and differences of views about any phenomenon, it still proposes a comprehensive definition. This definition brings together various perspectives to conceptualise workplace well-being. The definition has six parts drawing from various theoretical frameworks such as

Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), Edmondson's (1999) psychological safety, and ergonomic well-being (Dul et al., 2012) models. Other components of definition are job and life satisfaction, social connections, and the integration of work and non-work situations.

The first principal component in the proposed definition of workplace well-being is job demands, which consist of the types, forms, processes, organisation practices, and resources. Every job demands physical, psychological, and social efforts, and even specific organisational expectations such as workload, time pressure, and output. On the other hand, organisations provide resources to help employees work effectively and achieve set goals; some examples of resources are supervisory support and job autonomy. When the resources available to employees are inadequate to perform optimally and meet the job demands, they experience burnout, strain, and stress. In contrast, they are better motivated when resources are sufficient to meet the job's demands (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Bakker and Demerouti (2017) posit that positive workplace well-being is a balance between job demands and the resources available to employees to carry out their assigned tasks.

Secondly, according to Edmondson (1999), employees find psychological safety in the shared belief that risk-taking as a collective team promotes individual workplace well-being. Psychological safety reduces the anxiety and stress experienced by an employee arising from the possible consequences of their ideas or actions resulting in mistakes or adverse outcomes because it enables employees to express themselves, admit their errors, and collaborate. Psychological safety reduces the fear of negative repercussions, fosters better focus on the tasks, increases job engagement and improves general well-being in the workplace (Newman et al., 2017). The definition also features physical safety by emphasising the importance of maintaining good ergonomic conditions. A workplace keen on employees' well-being will incorporate measures to optimise their ability to function and perform well in its design measures. Such a workplace will seek to reduce physical strains, prevent accidents, and protect employees from injuries and musculoskeletal problems (Dul et al., 2012; Su & Swanson, 2019).

Job and life satisfaction are another component in the proposed definition of workplace well-being. Job and life satisfaction are positive emotions, subjective well-being, and the result of good work experiences. Job and life satisfaction imply that an employee is happy with the quality of his/her life, enabled by the ability to maintain an adequate work-life balance. Research has established links between job satisfaction and improved mental health, job retention, and organisational commitment (Faragher et al., 2005; Sehunoe et al., 2019). On the other hand, Greenhaus and Allen (2011) affirm the link between work-life balance and life satisfaction. Thus, job and life satisfaction embraces well-being beyond the workplace.

The definition also highlighted employees' positive social connections to workplace well-being. Social connections, such as interpersonal relationships with colleagues, have been linked with the tendency to trust and collaborate and the perception of belongingness in the workplace. Furthermore, interpersonal relationships among co-workers, community members, and others outside the workplace have reduced stress, improved job performance, improved job and life satisfaction, and enhanced general well-being.

Finally, the proposed definition recognises that employee well-being is a concept that extends beyond the boundary of the workplace. It demonstrates that employee well-being encompasses an open system in which work and life elements are interdependent, interact, and influence

each other. Thus, the proposed definition's incorporation of work and non-work environments gives it a holistic view.

5.   CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to identify common descriptors and/or themes, propose a definition, and develop a framework for workplace well-being based on a review of selected published scholarly articles. The study achieved its objectives by identifying the taxonomies of workplace well-being and categorising them into broad themes. The insights gained from these descriptors and themes were helpful in the formulation of a proposed definition and in consolidating this definition into a framework for the concept of workplace well-being.

5.1   Contributions and implications of the study

The aggregate of the objectives met, and the research questions addressed are the novel contributions the study brings to the discourse on workplace well-being. Some of the unique contributions of this study are:

A straightforward and unambiguous integration of different theoretical models. The proposed definition's core is the fusion of psychological safety with the traditional job demands-resources (JD-R) model of workplace well-being. Although previous works have established links between psychological safety and reducing stress and burnout (Agarwal & Farndale, 2017), few have directly linked psychological safety and the JD-R model to employee well-being outcomes. The proposed definition makes psychological safety a significant pillar of workplace well-being.

The proposed definition emphasises physical well-being by elevating ergonomic conditions as a significant pillar. Many definitions of workplace well-being often emphasise psychosocial over physical factors among the determinants of workplace well-being (Bartels et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2021). The reference to ergonomic well-being in the proposed definition reinforces the call for adequate attention in designing and making a healthy workplace.

Unlike most perspectives on workplace well-being, which tend to hold a productivity-centric view (Krekel et al., 2019), the proposed definition emphasises the importance of attaining organisational and employees' personal goals (Boskma et al., 2022). Although the self-determination theory stresses autonomy and purpose (Ryan & Deci, 2020) in contrast to other models that emphasise organisational outcomes, this proposition is one-sided and insufficient. The proposed definition aligns with the view of Nielsen et al. (2017), which suggests the co-dependence nature of both organisational success and employees' fulfilment on workplace well-being.

A further novel contribution of the proposed definition is its pitching of workplace well-being as a dynamic bidirectional interdependent system between work and non-work domains (Turner & Lingard, 2016; Reiman & Vayrynen, 2018). Many previous studies treated workplace well-being as the 'spillover ' effect of the work environment on the non-work environment (Staines, 1980; Hecht & Boies, 2009). This proposed definition aligns with and operationalises the work-life harmony perspective (Kelliher et al., 2019) in the context of workplace well-being.

The proposed definition aligns with Nielsen et al.'s (2017) view that workplace well-being is a multilevel issue by synthesising both macro organisational factors (processes, practices, and resources) and employee factors (abilities, make-ups, and coping strategies). The integration

of these multilevel factors brings together the strengths in both the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and Pfeffer's position on the possibility of work arrangements in ways that benefit the employer and employees (Osterman, 2019).

Lastly, the definition stresses the impact of social connections not being limited to organisational co-workers. External social networks, such as good relationships with family, community, and others, play important roles in helping employees achieve wholeness and live purpose-filled lives (Onnis, 2018; Caines & Treuren, 2023).

The proposed definition and framework of workplace well-being advanced in this study have multi-dimensional implications across various human endeavours. Organisations and employers can adopt this perspective by developing and aligning policies to achieve the organisation's and its employees' dual objectives. The dual-agenda policies will help the organisation achieve its productivity goals while simultaneously enabling the fulfilment of employees' personal goals. Another policy insight is introducing psychological safety training for all employees, including organisation managers. Such training and development policies will aim to engender a workplace that is not vindictive and does not seek to mete out punitive measures to subordinates for speaking up.

Government regulators and policymakers can also take cues from the definition and framework to introduce compliance standards and measures to promote workplace well-being. For instance, government regulators and policymakers can consider initiatives such as regular audits of workplace ergonomic conditions and tax incentives to encourage organisations to invest in programs to improve workplace well-being or introduce the measurement of well-being at the state or national level. These measures can engender positive outcomes that include reducing musculoskeletal injuries to employees and associated health costs, employee participation in well-being and work-life balance, consequently reducing work-life conflicts, and a basis for monitoring employee well-being at the state or national level.

Additionally, organisations must recognise the complexity and multifaceted nature and the influence of psychological, physical, social, and organisational factors on workplace/employee well-being. These imply that effective strategies should be more than simply preventing burnout, anxiety, and stress to actively promoting an agenda that helps employees flourish and thrive on and off the job. Organisational practices should be aligned with the diverse needs of employees in order to ensure that the organisation succeeds and guarantees meaningful lives for the employees.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for future studies

While this study may have provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of workplace well-being, it acknowledges its limitations. The limitations likely reflect shortcomings in its objectives, study design, methodology, scope, and other areas. Therefore, these limitations are potential areas that future studies can explore and address.

This literature-based literature-based study relied only on published scholarly articles as its input source. It did not incorporate empirical primary data in any form, thereby limiting the ability of the study to capture the perspectives of employees, managers, and even the owners of the organisation on their understanding of workplace well-being. The limited number of databases for sourcing literature further exacerbates this limitation. The sourcing of literature from only five databases may have resulted in the omission of valuable literature indexed in the excluded databases and impacted the conceptualisation and framework of workplace well-

being in this study. A similar limitation applies to the period of the literature that constitutes the inputs for the study; although the publication window covered fifteen years from 2010 to 2024, several older and possibly newer publications were not considered.

The selection criteria included the exclusion of publications not published in the English language. This criterion may have impacted the robustness of the study due to the exclusion of potential quality studies that were neither published in nor translated into English. The sampling method, the resulting sample size, and the adoption of thematic analysis impose specific limitations on the study. These limitations may not be limited to sampling bias, lack of representation of disciplinary areas, regions, diversity, and depth of studies on workplace/employee well-being. The lack of quantitative validation is another limitation of the study. Future research may incorporate empirical data by adopting an appropriate research design that enables the testing and validating of conceptual propositions and frameworks in a real-world context, ensures practical relevance, and enhances understanding beyond literature-based insights.

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