

Chapter 2

The Dynamics of Workplace Relationships, Employee Well-Being, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Perspectives of Workplace Relationships and Industry 4.0

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ABSTRACT

Employees globally are expected to flourish amidst the uncertainty, volatility, and complexities of the muddy waters of Industry 4.0. To identify changes in the perceived workplace relationships and consider initiatives that will improve interpersonal relationships at work in the 4IR. A review of literature will be conducted on the following key variables: 4IR. In the 4IR, provision of interpersonal other than digital means of communicating with employees, effectiveness in intra-organizational information sharing among employees, constant training on new and improved technological tools of working will be useful. Human resource practitioners should focus on designing strategies to improve IR at work, in order to minimize interpersonal conflicts, provide social support and improve organisational performance.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace relationship is the compound word for all interpersonal relationships in which employees engage themselves with in the process of doing their jobs including customer relationships, workplace friendships, supervisor-subordinate relationships, Professor-student relationships, client professional relationships, romantic relationships (Abe & Mason, 2016). Scholars have considered workplace relationships from different perspectives. For example, workplace relationship quality, (Sias, 2015); tradi-

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tional and emerging perspectives (Sias, 2008); Bullying in the workplace (Johnson, 2009); Millennial's organizational relationships and performance (Myers, & Sadaghiani, 2010); Innovative behaviour and workplace relationships (Xerri, 2013); Workplace culture (De-Lara, Ting-Ding, 2016). Each perspective is unique in concepts of organization, communication, and relationships, as they draw the attention of practitioners to various essentials in an organization situation (Sias 2008). The perspective that is relevant to this chapter is the communication aspects of workplace interaction in the era of industry 4.0. Bearing in mind that communication and relationships are like two sides of a coin.

Employee wellbeing is not a bad concept, but making the objective benefits of wellbeing a priority, and implementing its promotional policies in an organization is intense resource wise. Previous studies on employee wellbeing has been well documented. For example, employee wellbeing scholars wrote extensively on the circumplex model of affect (Russell, 1980); the components of employee wellbeing (Van-Horn, Taris, Scaufeli & Schreurs, 2004); Mental health, (Keyes, 2005), Subjective wellbeing at work (Warr, 2007); Core of wellbeing (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2005); affective employee wellbeing, (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011); Positive and negative concepts of employee wellbeing (Makikangas, Kinnunen, Feldt & Schaufeli, 2016) and human sustainability and employee wellbeing, (Kobayashi, Eweje, Tappin, 2018).

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) defined employee wellbeing as, "Creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organization." Employee wellbeing initiative at work is the balancing of the needs of the employee and that of the organization. The CIPD survey of 2018 suggested that the mental health awareness of workers has increased, and stress remain the dominant cause of employee ill health. "Although technology is viewed as a positive step forward, a whopping 87% of HR professionals reported that the most common negative effect is the inability of employees to switch off outside of work ". (Jimoh, 2016).

A new face of development has evolved in the fields of the digital technology, physical technology, and the biological technology. These three technological areas are the drivers of the Fourth industrial revolution. These technologies are impacting the global industrial, economic, and social development (Li, Hou & Wu, 2017).

Globally the labour markets are undergoing transformation as the consequence of globalisation, technological and demographic changes. The transformation is evident in the new forms of employment, different approach to workplace contracts and engagements, facilitated by online platforms which is because of the 4th industrial revolution (Brooks, 2016). Technology has accelerated the level of communication in workplace relationships. Employees are assessable through different forms of technological tools at any point in time. What effect does this have on the employee in a short and long run? Communication has widened the scope of interpersonal relationships among employees at work by the introduction of technology, scholars must search for new theories and concepts for workplace relationships. In this chapter, the initiative positioned to assist the wellbeing of employees in the face of the new industrial revolution is social support. The assessment of the growth in the characteristics of perceived support and the propensity of employee's behavioural interpretation as supportive. The assumption is that social support represents the positive interpersonal relationships among employees (Gibbs, 2017).

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