ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AS A DETERMINANT OF THE WELL-BEING OF MANAGERS

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to indicate the role of organizational support as an important factor influencing the well-being of employees. Building the well-being of key employees in the organization is a priority task for many companies today.

Design/methodology/approach: The aim of the literature research is to analyze the achievements to date in the field of the role of organizational support in creating a manager's well-being. The analysis of the literature on the subject was enriched with research based on interviews concerning the perception of the organizational support in the context of the tasks performed.

Findings: Managers expect more psychological support from specialists in psychology and sociology of work. This applies to the ability to deal with difficult, non-standard situations, solving unusual problems, conflicts, building appropriate relationships, atmosphere and cooperation. Out of concern for the safety and well-being of the manager and the team, there is an increasing need to pay attention to the behavior of people in the managed team and the ability to identify such behavior.

Research limitations/implications: The analysis is based on respondents' subjective declarations.

The research results and practical recommendations can be useful to the managerial staff and HR departments in the process of designing work and implementing programs that enhance the well-being of managers.

Social implications: The research results can help in creating a higher quality of life not only for managers but also for lower-level employees, indicating the role of organizational support in the process of creating employees' well-being.

Originality/value: The article is addressed to HR departments as well as managers who have an impact on management processes and procedures in the organization.

Keywords: organizational support of managers, well-being of managers, perception of organizational support.

1. Introduction

The negative consequences of the fast pace of life, a pandemic or a sense of uncertainty and threat affect the functioning of most employees. Emotional exhaustion, poor mental and physical condition of employees visible in the post-pandemic times resulted in a re-evaluation of the most important goals of many people, causing the so-called a *wave of great resignations*. This resulted in employers undertaking many activities aimed at consciously creating a high quality of professional life and well-being of employees at the workplace. Building the well-being of key employees in the organization is a priority task for many companies today. It allows not only for the retention of the key employees but also for innovation of the organization and the creation of added value. The group of managers is of particular concern to employers. This is the group of employees that is the most mobile and without which many employers are unable to carry out their activities, and at the same time the group that is most exposed to occupational burnout. Therefore, building the well-being of these employees seems necessary to keep them within the organization for longer time.

According to the model of Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker, Demerouti, 2007), well-being is understood as an appropriate balance between job demands and job resources. Organizational resources, including organizational support, play an important role in building employee well-being. In the literature, there is a scarcity of research concerning this matter in the context of the managerial work (Stańczyk, 2018). Thus, the aim of this paper is to indicate the role of organizational support as an important factor influencing the well-being of managers.

The first part of the article shows the existing literature on the role of organizational support in creating a manager's well-being. The theoretical analysis of the literature is enriched with the results of surveys on the managers' perception of the organizational support offered in the context of the tasks performed. The conclusions from the research are used to outline practical recommendations for employers.

2. Well-being of managers in the workplace

It is difficult to find out a single definition of employee well-being in the workplace which is shared by most researchers as the concept is multifaceted and complex (EU-OSHA, 2013). In the literature, considerations are most often conducted in the context of positive organization, care for the health of employees - especially the prevention of the negative phenomena - occupational burnout, and building a socially responsible organization (Puchalska-Kamińska, Łądka-Barańska, 2019). Workplace well-being is defined as a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of work or professional experiences (Locke, 1970 after:

Rożnowski et al. 2019). A similar definition focusing on job satisfaction and the quality of working life was presented by Mendryk and Rakowska (Mendryk, Rakowska, 2016). According to the World Health Organization, it is the state of an employee in which he or she understands his or her abilities, copes with life stress, works productively and contributes to the community (Misselbrook, 2014). The definition of the European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO, 2011) is also significant for understanding the phenomena - wellbeing at work means safe, healthy and productive work in an organization well run by competent employees and employee communities. The above definitions focus on the employee's job satisfaction, commitment and the ability to perform their tasks in the workplace.

Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders (2012) go a bit further, pointing out that well-being at work is determined by an appropriate balance between the psychological, physical and social resources of the individual and the challenges that the individual encounters in these areas at work. This understanding analyzes the well-being of employees as a relationship that depends on the attributes of both the individual employee and the employer. In this aspect, well-being at work is a particularly important issue in relation to managers whose work is burdened with high pressure and stress, and for whom the requirements of the environment and various stakeholders are constantly increasing. This perception of well-being is in line with the proposed Model of Requirements and Resources by Bakker and Demorouti (Job Demand-Resources) (2007, pp. 309-328). Disproportions between too high requirements and insufficient resources will lead to excessive workload and even professional burnout (Puchalska-Kamińska, Łądka-Barańska, 2019). High demands of work may lead to the draining of physical and mental strength, and thus to the decline in the well-being of managers. Among these factors related to high requirements at workplace are: physical workload, time pressure, recipient contact, physical environment as well as shift work. Those job demands can lead to exhaustion and lack of well-being.

Well-being in the workplace is closely related to the quality of working life (Rakowska, Mendryk, 2017). Therefore, the creation of well-being is primarily supported by activities aimed at increasing both the personal resources of employees and organizational resources. When increasing the managers' resources at work it is possible to offer, for example, various forms of trainings that will result in higher competences of particular manager and therefore allow him or her to cope better with the job demands. On the other hand, the employer may take actions leading to an increase in organizational resources. By improving procedures, implementing new technologies, ensuring greater independence, care for social relations and workplace equipment, as well as by appropriate organization of work, the employer will support the managers and build their well-being at work. Employer's activities aimed at increasing and improving organizational resources increase the well-being of managers in the workplace.

Among those job resources that influence managerial well-being are: feedback, rewards, job control, participation, job security as well as supervisor support (Bakker, Demerouti, 2007). These activities are understood as organizational support of managers.

3. Organizational support of managers

The topic of organizational support of managers has not been often addressed in scientific publications so far. Some authors underline its role and indicate that organizational support is important for: increasing engagement and job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986), reducing the workload of managers (Kossek et al., 2016) and influencing desired behavior in the organization (Wayne, McFarlane, 1993). However, researchers also show that organizational support is crucial for reducing the level of psychological and professional stress (Sawang, 2010; Gunkel et., 2015), stimulating the professional development of managers (Torun, 2013), building the autonomy of managers (Williams et al., 2014) as well as building the appropriate relationships in the organization (Gajdzik, 2012).

The organizational support of managers in the context of the safety of their work may be divided into dimensions, which include the following (Stańczyk, 2018):

- psychological dimension – psychological aid, mentoring, coaching, sociological aid, consulting relating to the evaluation of subordinates,
- structural - personal matching of managers to work positions, regulation of work, level of autonomy, allocation of tasks, forms of employment, designing organizational structures that have an impact on the work efficiency of managers, organizational consulting,
- relational – relation factors, organizational culture, communication, values,
- controlling – plans of employment structure, budget, controlling, utilization of new possibilities of organization, knowledge resources, competences in effective management of an organization and the accomplishment of goals,
- educational – improving the leadership competences, as well as entrepreneurial behaviour, the appropriate training, shaping the paths of education, programs of knowledge management, building career paths for subordinates, knowledge base,
- systems supporting the managerial decisions - technical systems, e.g. IT solutions, IT systems, Business Intelligence.

Supportive social-organizational environment at work is perceived as a key factor in healthy organizations that create employee well-being (Badarinarayan, Shankar, Pawar, 2020). This support, necessary in creating the involvement of managers, is more important than financial factors (Judge et al., cited in: Mendryk, Rakowska, 2017).

Despite the growing popularity of the well-being it is difficult to find research on creating managers' well-being. Organizational support is particularly important in building the manager's well-being in the workplace, as the demands at work are very high, hence they are particularly exposed to professional burnout.

4. Methodology

The aim of the research was to obtain information from managers on how the organization supports them in their daily work to build their well-being.

In order to find answers to interesting research questions, the diagnostic survey method was used with the use of semi-structured interviews (Thomas, James, 2006). The research took place in 2018. The interviews lasted in total 12 hours. The semi-structure interviews were conducted on the basis of the dimensions of organizational support identified in the literature.

The selection of respondents was purposeful, the respondents were representatives of the senior management staff who were directors of individual functional divisions in a chosen organization, so they were the main management staff (12 managers). They were representatives of the Krakow branch of an international company from the shared services industry, offering services in the field of HR, IT and finance. It employs over a thousand employees. The vast majority (9 managers) had 6 to 10 years of work experience in a managerial position; two employees had work experience from 11 to 20 years and one over 20 years. The age of the respondents is 31 to 40 years (11 people) and one is over 40.

5. Research results

The following results were obtained regarding the dimensions of organizational support for managers identified in the previous section in the context of building well-being at work in these positions.

As part of the psychological support, the managers had the opportunity to consult with an occupational psychologist, personal advisor, coach, mentor, in the case of emerging conflicts. From the presented aggregate results, it can be concluded that there is a possibility to obtain organizational support from the professionals. Such a situation is characteristic for outsourcing organizations, where branches of foreign enterprises are created that have already reached a certain maturity regarding the management of managers' competences. The employer shows the importance of psychological support, which seems essential in the light of the manager's well-being.

In terms of relational support, it was important to obtain information on those aspects that build healthy relationship according to the respondents. The interviewed managers had the feeling of professional success and career development opportunities. They also pointed that they manage employees who poses appropriate competences. Moreover, there is a set of corporate values and a code of ethics. In this area, a positive impact on the well-being of the manager's work can be noticed.

The questions regarding controlling support concerned the possibility of access and the influence of managers on individual indicators or cost items. Managers have access to and use budget planning capabilities for the managed organizational unit; affect the level of employment, its structure and the level of labor costs. They have the ability to use positive and negative reinforcement in their current job. The problem arises with obtaining an impact on the size of labor cost components - here it can be seen that, these levels are determined by the management board and distributed according to criteria selected in a given organization.

Structural support in the organization manifests in the possibility of help of specialists building organizational structures, solving problems regarding the form of task relations, documentation of division and settlement of tasks; whether and which specialists dealing with process optimization. In this regard, the loneliness of the manager in the search for appropriate specialists can be seen. Only his knowledge and good orientation in the organizational structure can help him find the right person. However, when the right specialist is identified, support is provided efficiently. Structural solutions are mainly dealt with by HR specialists, extended structures, e.g. of HR Business Partner. Such a situation may again indicate the type of management model employed in a given enterprise. However, systemic solutions are not used to quickly obtain immediate advice, e.g. internal hotlines. Changes are handled by the managers themselves and the team, and there is a special process optimization unit in the structure. In addition, the philosophy of Kaizen and Lean Management is implemented. Managers unanimously stated that they are overburdened with operational work - this area requires deeper consideration in the context of building well-being.

Educational support refers to organizational support before and after the manager takes up his or her position. The managers unanimously stated that they were selected for this position because they had the appropriate competences. They also had the opportunity to participate in external training on team management. Few attended the Manager's Academy. According to managers, workshops are organized to improve social skills. The second possibility of developing competences is post-graduate studies. Other types of professional development indicated in the table above are implemented sporadically.

According to the interviewed managers, support with managerial decision support systems is carried out on the basis of specially prepared internal information systems and a competency assessment system. When analyzing this dimension of support, one should pay attention to the lack of a management information system (SIK), which is dedicated only to the surveyed group.

The research results have been arranged thematically in the Table 1.

Table 1.
Analysis of the dimensions of organizational support

Support dimensions	Activities
Psychological support	- there are positions such as: coach, work sociologist; mentor - additionally: HR Business Partner, HR Manager
Relational support	- conflicts resolved mostly by themselves, sometimes by a work sociologist - employing people with appropriate competences - there is a need to care for employees with the highest competences - there is a set of corporate values, a code of ethics, an anti-mobbing code
Controlling support	- budgeting system - managers have an impact on budget planning for the unit they manage; on the level of the team's labor costs - have information on personnel controlling indicators
Structural support	- properly equipped workstation - the possibility of an individual work schedule - special teams are appointed to change the structure (HR+interested manager) - task and MBO cards
Development support	- dedicated workshops, training on the so-called "soft" competences - training on cultural differences - individual training, courses, coaching sessions - postgraduate studies
System support	- implemented Lean Management and Kaizen - a special organizational unit for process optimization - MBO - competency assessment system - budgeting system - business continuity management

Source: own research.

Summing up the dimensions of organizational support, it should be stated that most activities in the organization are standard. There are few interesting, innovative solutions characteristic of the surveyed company, which would increase the comfort of the manager's work and their well-being. Such as support for the manager at work on-line, work ergonomics workshops, personal training, minimizing stress at work, support related to the mental condition of the manager, building positive relationships in the team (https://raport.activy.app). During the research, managers were asked about the barriers they face while performing everyday tasks. According to the respondents, these barriers that affect wellbeing of the managers at work are:

- insufficient work-life-balance programs,
- lack of coherent policy of action in accordance with strategic goals, insufficient control of the implementation of tasks in accordance with the principles and rules,
- loneliness of the manager when making unpopular decisions,
- lack of sufficient psychological, systemic and negotiation support,
- insufficient support in the field of personnel consulting,
- insufficient support of the organization in dealing with a conflict situation or in crisis management.

6. Conclusions

Organizational support is one of the key aspects of building manager well-being at work. The results of the research allowed to indicate crucial dimensions of organizational support, important to the surveyed managers. The research conducted is novel, there is no reference to other research on organizational support of managers in this area. The topic undertaken is new to the Polish market. Respondents indicated that they were particularly interested in psychological support from specialists in the field of psychology and sociology of work. This applies to the ability to deal with difficult, non-standard situations, solving unusual problems, conflicts, building appropriate relationships, atmosphere and cooperation. There is also a need to increase support within personnel consulting, which will actually act as a business partner in relation to directors of a given division or function. Personnel consulting carried out at the appropriate level causes less psychological burden related to decisions made, faster coping with a crisis situation and affects the well-being of the manager and even the team. Increasing business awareness, improving leadership competences and the ability to create appropriate business models becomes one of the priorities in this particular organization. Another important aspect of building manager well-being is to reduce the operational workload of managers, which will certainly reduce stress at work and increase the comfort of decision-making. As part of improving the competencies of managers at higher management levels, it is appropriate to use non-standard methods (e.g. participation in conferences as panelists). The introduction of modern technological solutions, e.g. Business Intelligence, seems extremely important in the context of management efficiency and the feeling of work comfort and making appropriate decisions.

The indicated dimensions of organizational support, important to the surveyed managers, can significantly help to shape well-being at work in managerial positions. However, they require further in-depth research spread over time, so that changes in managers' behavior after receiving such support could be checked. Furthermore, research should be directed to more diverse organizations in terms of size, scope of operation or industries.

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