

# Healthy Workplace Practices, Self-Efficacy, Work Engagement, and Workload: A Conceptual Review of Employee Well-Being

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## Abstract

Employee well-being has emerged as one of the core areas of research because of its strategic importance for both organizational and individual outcomes. Despite its importance, it is not clearly explained the theoretical mechanisms that intervene and explain the link between job resources, work engagement, and employee well-being. Given the paucity of literature on this topic, this conceptual review demonstrates a model that indicates that a system of healthy workplace practices, namely employee involvement, health and safety, work-life balance, employee growth and development, employee recognition, along with self-efficacy on work engagement, which subsequently leads to improvement in employee well-being. Furthermore, workload, conceptualized as a demand, moderates the effect of healthy workplace practices and self-efficacy on work engagement. When workload is high, these resources have a stronger positive influence on engagement, whereas limited resources under high demand may lead to disengagement. Anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, this study offers actionable strategies for both researchers and practitioners to create a more conducive and balanced workplace, ultimately driving employee well-being and organizational performance.

**Keywords:** Employee well-being, Healthy Workplace Practices, Self-efficacy, Work Engagement, Workload, RMG

## Introduction

Employee well-being (EWB) has emerged as one of the core areas of research because of its strategic importance for both organizational and individual outcomes. While prior research shed light on why employees' well-being may fluctuate, the question of how organizations can promote EWB by resource-based intervening is comparatively scarce (Huang et al., 2016). Though a few empirical investigations identify certain factors that may influence organizational functioning and EWB, the area is relatively unexplored (O'Donnell et al., 2019). The present study hopes to contribute to this expectation of HRM researchers by examining the relationship between the alternative approach of HRM

practices, such as healthy workplace practices (HWPs), self-efficacy (SE), and EWB. Much of the existing literature has predominantly examined the direction between various organizational practices, with limited attention given to the psychological processes that mediate this relationship (Chen & Cooper, 2014). Managers and practitioners are increasingly using work engagement (WE) and well-being as a key tactic to improve company performance. Although the concept of WE has been thoroughly studied, there is still a lack of a systematic meta-analysis based on a consistent classification of engagement antecedents, outcomes, and well-being correlates (Mazzetti et al., 2023). Nevertheless, most of the research was largely conducted in developed countries context which restricts the generalizability and remains questionable (Mathushan, 2022). Few articles have particularly addressed win-win organizational strategies or initiatives that could enhance EWB (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020). The current study, therefore, tries to address the gap in the body of knowledge addressing the connection between EWB, WE, and HWPs, SE. Furthermore, workload (WL), conceptualized as a challenge demand, is expected to moderate the link between resources and WE, suggesting that employees may experience disengagement when faced with high demands and resources are limited.

### *Establishing Research Priorities*

Bangladesh's development is spurred by the ready-made garments (RMG) industry. Additionally, the "Made in Bangladesh" label has elevated the nation and made it a worldwide recognized brand. Bangladesh is now the world's second-largest exporter of clothing, demonstrating its rise to prominence in the global apparel market (BGMEA, 2024). There is scant research on EWB in RMG; for instance, only one study investigated how work-life balance (WLB) interacts with one's perception of his/her well-being (Bari et al., 2022). And two other studies determined EWB from the perspective of gender-based violence and harassment (Aktar & Islam, 2019), working conditions (Kabir et al., 2022). In the garment industry of Bangladesh, RMG workers' physical and psychological health and overall well-being are impacted by the conditions in which they work (Kabir et al., 2022).

An appreciable number of research papers have been reviewed on EWB; however, no study has been found within the Bangladeshi context. The prevailing body of research on the RMG sector of Bangladesh has hardly presented any methodical analysis of the well-being aspects, such as life, work, and psychological needs in both work and life domains, since its commencement and after the expansion of this industry. Employee dissatisfaction stems from a lack of concern and attention to their general welfare (Rubel et al., 2017). Businesses don't consider the welfare of their employees; instead, they focus solely on turning a profit (Russel et al., 2021). Researchers and politicians in Bangladesh have overlooked the well-being of the RMG industry's workers, even though it is the country's second-largest producer of ready-made clothing and has significantly reduced poverty through employment. The RMG sector plays a crucial role in generating employment for Bangladesh's low-skilled and uneducated labor force and significantly contributes to the country's economic growth, it is essential to identify the factors that influence workers' well-being. Workers in Bangladesh's RMG industry are troubled by challenging working schedules, hazardous and unhealthy workplaces, inadequate working environments, insufficient payment systems, and gender-based segregation (Sharma & Srivastava, 2020).

**Literature Review***Employee Well-Being*

EWB is the state of an individual's mental, physical, and general health as well as experiences of satisfaction both at work and outside of work (Nielsen et al., 2017). EWB is an accelerator for organizational success, saves the organization from lower productivity, and decreases poor health insurance costs. Progressive organizations have to ensure that their programs have health outcomes for the overall well-being of their employees (Rasool et al., 2021). It leads to high job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, effort, and reduced employee turnover and absenteeism (Krishantha, 2018). Research shows that EWB has an impact on employees' decisions, like the decision to quit or stay in the current job. It also exerts its influence on job satisfaction (Pradhan et al., 2019), employee engagement (Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018), and job commitment of an employee (Harter et al., 2002; Warr, 2012; Wright, 2006). Individuals high on psychological well-being tend to be good decision makers and exhibit better interpersonal behaviors, and high in-role performance (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). Positive EWB is most often associated with higher job performance, job satisfaction, productivity, and task efficiency, lower absenteeism, and other factors (Ponting, 2020).

*Healthy Workplace Practices*

Organizations must create a healthy workforce in the twenty-first century through effectively managed HWP, as these ensure employee commitment, performance, and well-being (Sparks et al., 2001). Reduces absenteeism, improving the retention of employees, fostering greater employee engagement, enhancing healthy habits, and productivity rises are identified as strengths of healthy workplace practices (Monteiro & Joseph, 2022). Research (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016; Pfeffer, 2018) shows that workplace practices, policies, and programs significantly impact both how well organizations perform and the well-being of employees, both at work and in their personal lives. Grawitch et al. (2006, 2007) defined "a healthy workplace as a workplace that emphasizes programs and practices that promote employee health and well-being as well as organizational effectiveness". This notion encompasses not only the physical health but also the mental and general well-being of the employee. Importantly, Grawitch and Ballard (2016) and Grawitch et al. (2006) noted that the five healthy workplace practices (employee involvement, health and safety, work-life balance, employee growth and development, employee recognition) are often interrelated and should not be viewed exclusively in isolation. Employee involvement (EI) refers to giving employees access to key organizational information and incorporating it into decision-making processes, which empowers more control over the work environment (Qi & Wang, 2018). Health and safety (H&S) refers to protecting the physical and psychological safety and health of workers by providing safe working conditions, e.g., prevention of accidents and injuries in the workplace, prevention of harassment in the workplace, diagnosis of psychosocial risks, and wellness programs (Aubouin-Bonnaventure et al., 2021). Work-life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's subjective appraisal of the accord between his/her work and non-work activities and life more generally (Brough et al., 2014). Employee growth and development (EGD) refers to the growth in one's career through the development of new knowledge and skills (Shockley et al., 2016). Employee recognition (ER) refers to the non-monetary rewards for employees, such as respect, status, appreciation, or approval, or being formally or informally acknowledged for work delivered (Shockley et al., 2016).

### *Self-Efficacy*

SE is perceived as an important component of individuals' work well-being and determines the motivation and effort devoted to tasks. SE is a kind of personal resource (Freire et al., 2019) that helps individuals retain resources, gain additional resources (e.g., optimism), or better withstand stressful conditions (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Employees with high SE believe that they have high levels of competence, have more resources, and are less likely to lose resources. Thus, they are more likely to set higher work goals and job roles and share their knowledge at work to help the organization grow. Conversely, employees with low SE have fewer resources, are more likely to suffer from resource loss, and prefer to reduce their work effort to conserve resources (Wang et al., 2021). Research has shown that SE is an important personal resource for the health and well-being of workers and can help prevent burnout and other work-related health problems (Cabrera-Aguilar et al., 2023).

### *Work Engagement*

WE, as employees, are an exceptional way to recognize how people feel about their jobs, motivated and immersed, with a desire to give, devoted, and absorbed (Bakker et al., 2008). WE is a feeling of fulfilment and is characterized as an ongoing, all-encompassing affective-cognitive state that is not influenced by any particular object, event, person, or activity but rather satisfaction with life, which is closely related to pleasure in its conceptualization, and can be anecdotal to forecast increased WE (Schaufeli et al., 2006). However, individuals with higher levels of well-being are likely to demonstrate elevated physical and mental energy, allowing them to fully engage at work (Telu & Potnuru, 2024). The encouraging impact of WE on EWB has been reported in previous studies as employees tend to be happier, reflecting positively on their well-being (Knight et al., 2017). A study assessed the role of WE on EWB, which showed a significant relationship among 461 nurses in the public hospitals of six provinces in South Africa (Mabe et al., 2024). Other findings from empirical studies in the general workforce literature suggest that there are positive effects of WE, including such as reduced depression and greater life satisfaction (Halbesleben, 2010; Lizano, 2021).

### *Workload*

"WL is a function of job demand and can be quantified by production level, working hours, or even the psychological strain of the job (Spector & Jex, 1998)". Literature has made a distinction between two types of occupational demands: challenges and hindrances (Crawford et al., 2010). Hindrance job demands can impede one's ability to grow personally and accomplish goals (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), which have been connected to elevated stress levels and decreased motivation (LePine et al., 2005). Workplace challenges such as WL allow employees to develop and learn, improving their skills and self-assurance. Crawford et al. (2010) claim that this categorization of occupational demands aids in elucidating discrepancies in research results about the connection between demand and outcomes connected to the job. A meta-analysis by Lepine Et al. (2005) demonstrated that, when motivation and stress are taken into consideration, hindrance demands hurt performance both directly and indirectly. JD-R theory assumes that job resources increase in importance and add to their motivational potential when workers experience greater challenge demands in their jobs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Employees tend to perceive challenge demands as opportunities to learn, achieve, and demonstrate the type of competence that tends to get rewarded and trigger positive emotions (e.g., eagerness, excitement, exhilaration) (Crawford

et al., 2010). These experiences of positive emotions and the experience of meaning originating from being challenged are both associated with greater levels of motivation and engagement (May et al., 2004).

### **Review of Major Existing Studies and Hypotheses Development**

#### *Healthy Workplace Practices and Employee Well-Being and Work Engagement*

HWPs are essential in the workplace as they exert a positive influence on EWB. According to (Grawitch et al., 2006), HWPs comprising EI, H&S, WLB, EGD, and ER are positively correlated to enhance EWB. Implementing comprehensive HWPs posits a secure and supportive environment that mitigates occupational stress and injuries, able to management of personal and professional responsibilities, and fosters a culture of continuous advancement and reinforcement of a sense of achievement, thereby promoting a healthy and engaged workforce that ensures overall well-being.

Workers who have a say in decisions about their jobs or work lives within their organisations in the form of EI report high levels of satisfaction and eventually extensively develop the well-being of employees(Freeman & Kleiner, 2000). Empirical research conducted on 1,503 employee responses gathered about participation practices and well-being identified a significant relationship between any form of participation and EWB (Uribetxebarria et al., 2021). Involved employees engage actively in decision-making processes through organising and managing, which allows them to feel empowered and satisfied and reduces feelings of isolation or stress.

The state of employee H&S is vitally important in any type of organisation because it focuses on overall wellness components(Bari et al., 2022). Improving workplace safety can influence EWB from various perspectives, such as prevention of occupational illnesses, reducing the risk of injuries, and prioritising fostering a sense of security and trust, which can be a representation of a healthy work environment. A survey of 400 French workers from public, corporate, and nonprofit organizations reported H&S practices to promote their psychological well-being(Aubouin-Bonnaventure et al., 2021). As it enhances employee performance, the quality of the work, and overall job satisfaction. Protecting employees from physical harm and creating a secure work atmosphere minimises the risk of injuries or illnesses, also reducing anxiety and promoting both physical and mental well-being.

WLB is essential because it gives individuals an opportunity to recover and replenish their energy, which in turn helps them cultivate a sense of well-being(Yang & Jo, 2022). A healthier WLB is associated with EWB(Fotiadis et al., 2019). It promotes a positive work environment since it increases WE and job satisfaction(Aruldoss et al., 2022). The well-being of employees and pointed out that job satisfaction from a job is an important determinant of the well-being of an employee(Ejaz et al., 2022; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009), and also develops over time with employee development opportunities(Jaskeviciute et al., 2021).

EGD offers opportunities for career advancement, skill development, and continuous learning, which make employees motivated, competent, and secure in their roles, which can ensure well-being. Recognition for contribution, effort, and achievements through verbal appreciation, rewards, or other forms of acknowledgement -EWB improves as it is closely tied to the positive psychological functioning of the workers(Monteiro & Joseph, 2022). On

the other hand, due lack of ER of staff members, employees experience psychological distress at work (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Also associated with negative variables such as burnout, moving, and low well-being. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between healthy workplace practices and employee well-being in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

This relationship posits that HWPs positively influence work engagement, which can be a key strategy to promote enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption in one's tasks. Importantly, the HWP shouldn't be considered in a vacuum because they are frequently. (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016). Based on a study involving 214 respondents from various organisations and functional areas, it was found that five key healthy workplace practices—namely, EI, H&S, WLB, EGD, and ER- were positively associated with WE (O'Donnell et al., 2019).

Employees who actively participate in decision-making processes, are given a voice in their job, and are given the authority to positively impact more likely to be emotionally and intellectually invested in turn increases their overall engagement. It is anticipated that increases in workplace H&S regulations will result in more engaged workers. H&S measures establish the circumstances, skills, and processes that enable employees and their organizations to perform their jobs effectively and in a way that prevents situations that could endanger them (García-Herrero et al., 2012). In particular, employees' well-being improves when they feel physically safe and secure in their surroundings, which in turn boosts their motivation, dedication, and general involvement with their work.

WLB is one of the antecedents of employee work engagement (Alvi et al., 2014). Employees frequently encounter variance between their working and personal lives when employers prioritise their employees' expectations, put their interests first, and offer flexibility. These elements serve as strong predictors of WE. Based on a study of a sample of 434 participants in 197 state-owned corporations in Kenya discovered that WLB significantly improves employee engagement, and vice versa (Kangure, 2014). The evidences underscore the balance between work and personal lives, likely enhancing WE.

EGD fosters opportunities to develop skills, and in turn, employees feel more valued, motivated, and committed, which enhances overall engagement. Career development and compensation have a favorable and important impact on WE. Furthermore, an important motivating factor, E&R can be expressed as a form of acknowledgement and appreciation; it boosts their sense of value and works as a reinforcement, which likely results in deeper emotional and cognitive commitment and leads to WE (Kong et al., 2015). WE is positively and significantly impacted by recognition as well (Sadilla & Wahyuningtyas, 2023). Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive relationship between healthy workplace practices and work engagement in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

#### *Self-Efficacy and Employee Well-Being and Work Engagement*

Research has shown that SE is an important personal resource for the health and well-being of workers and can help prevent burnout and other work-related health problems (Al Halbusi et al., 2023). Counting on the concept of conservation of resources and JD-R,

suggested that a high sense of SE can contribute to achieving balance among various demands on the employee, such as marriage, societal, parenting, and career (Cabrera-Aguilar et al., 2023). SE is posited to maintain a healthy balance between work and life and promotes health-promoting behaviours as they allocate time for rest, recreation, and self-care due to a sense of fulfilment and purpose through meaningful work, which contributes significantly to overall well-being. Fostering SE among employees can reinforce their belief in their abilities, which contributes to enhancing individual well-being. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and employee well-being in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

Research across various domains consistently supports SE as a predictor and has a positive relationship with WE (Chang et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). Individuals who possess high SE demonstrate active participation and commitment to achieve desired outcomes and demonstrate persistent resilience through difficulties, all of which contribute to greater WE. Strong SE suggests that workers possess the psychological and motivational abilities to persevere in challenging work environments (Al Halbusi et al., 2023). The dynamic interplay between SE and WE, driving a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement and growth, can also boost both employees' SE and engagement in the workplace. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and engagement in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

#### *Work Engagement and Employee Well-Being*

WE exhibit sustained energy and robust psychological toughness, involvement, and full concentration, which are likely to result in a range of positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and reduced stress levels. Additionally, engagement provides a sense of accomplishment and ensures work is meaningful, which could be a passageway to improving health, happiness, and productivity for enhancing. Furthermore, engaged employees tend to be happier, reflecting positively on their well-being (Knight et al., 2017). In other words, employees who are engaged are highly energetic, proactive, productive, and focused, and this affects their lives (Obbarius et al., 2021). And as it has a significant effect on health and life satisfaction, which are considered EWB. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 5:** Work engagement has a positive effect on employee well-being in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

#### *Work Engagement as a Mediator*

The JD-R model provides insight regarding WE's mediating role because resources often promote growth and produce favorable job outcomes (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). The JD-R model provides valuable insight into this process, as resources are the motivational feature in attaining work goals as well as nurturing workers' WE, and it presumes that this will produce beneficial results. A study proved that job resources were substantially effective in predicting WE (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Likewise, the five HWP's were positively related to WE (O'Donnell et al., 2019). Regardless of the sector or work context, prior studies postulate the positive impact of WE on EWB (Shimazu et al., 2015; Zheng et al., 2015). Furthermore, engaged employees tend to be happier, reflecting positively on their well-being (Knight et al., 2017). In other words, employees who are engaged are highly energetic, proactive,

productive, and focused, and this affects their lives (Obbarius et al., 2021) and has a significant effect on health and life satisfaction, which could be considered as employee well-being (Zheng et al., 2015). From a conceptual standpoint, WE represent a positive well-being condition distinguished by high energy levels and deep identification with one's work, illustrating the foundational role of well-being in WE. Upon the literature review, it is presumed that engagement may work as an explanatory variable in the relationship between healthy workplace practices and EWB. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 6:** Work engagement mediates the relationship between healthy workplace practices and employee well-being in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

Several studies support the positive effect of WE on well-being (Rasool et al., 2021). Engaged employees are not only productive but also likely to experience a greater sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, that energy translates into the physical and mental domain which significantly improving their well-being. It is evident in research that people with greater degrees of well-being are likely to demonstrate elevated physical and psychological energy, allowing them to completely engross themselves in effort (Telu & Potnuru, 2024). Engaged employees often experience a supportive and motivating work environment that leads to a positive outlook and enhances an individual's quality of life. The encouraging impact of WE on EWB has been reported in previous studies, as employees tend to be happier when positivity brings their well-being. SE enables individuals to feel more confident and creates positive feelings in doing their jobs, thus leading them to experience work engagement and higher performance (Bandura & Wessels, 1997; Hadi, 2023). Higher levels of SE lower stress and boost engagement, according to social learning theory (Musenze et al., 2022), and the WE model also shows that a factor like self-efficacy is significant in boosting engagement. According to the occupational literature and context, employees' engagement, motivation, interest, and achievement are likely to be significantly impacted by their beliefs in their ability to regulate their performance processes and results and to become adept in tough occupational conditions (Radic et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**Hypothesis 7:** Work engagement mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and employee well-being in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

#### *Workload as a Moderator*

"The original JD-R model, in which job demands have a moderating effect on the relationship between job resources and work engagement" (Crawford et al., 2010). In this present study, workload is considered a challenging demand. JD-R theory assumes that job resources increase in importance and add to their motivational potential when workers experience greater challenge demands in their jobs. Literature has made a distinction between two types of occupational demands: challenges and obstacles (Abualigah et al., 2021). The links between the phenomena vary depending on the professional sector; therefore, this two-way categorisation is not straightforward (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). Consistent with the distinction between challenge and hindrance demands, this study suggests that the interaction between job resources (HWP and SE) and WL, as a challenge demand, can amplify levels of WE (Abualigah et al., 2021).

The investigation between personal resources and job demands in predicting WE is very scarce (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). This present study proposes to examine workload as a moderator of the association between both job and personal resources, especially through

the lens of the psychological process. As it was suggested earlier, the inevitability of investigating the moderators for the job demands-resources relationship (May et al., 2004). In this regard, job resources and personal resources like SE can be comparable. A high SE person thinks they will have wonderful things happen to them and can handle unforeseen circumstances. WE is directly improved by personal resources (Bakker et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is anticipated that personal resources will both mitigate the negative effects of job demands on stress and enhance the positive effects of challenging job demands (workload) on motivation. This proposition has received little support from research, so further investigation is required to evaluate the resource interaction with job demands (Bakker et al., 2014). Hence, the following proposition is postulated:

**Hypothesis 8:** Workload moderates the relationship between healthy workplace practices, self-efficacy, and work engagement such that the association is stronger when the workload is high in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

### Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 depicts a research framework based on the problem statement, literature review, and the underlying theory. Research shows that EWB is influenced by factors such as HWPs and SE. As a result, the causal mechanism between independent and dependent variables is depicted through mediating factors. Mediating variables include WE; WL is the moderator. Thus, the theoretical framework is established using the JD-R theory. According to this study, using the JD-R theory, organisations should promote EWB by providing resources to manage the demands of their work, reduce stress and burnout, and maintain their engagement with their work. This study examines whether WL, as a challenging job demand, affects this association. Accordingly, it is proposed that WE mediate the relationship between resources and engagement. Contextual and individual characteristics are a concern for workers in the JD-R theory, which describes the motivational process that improves employees' WE and ultimately stimulates EWB.

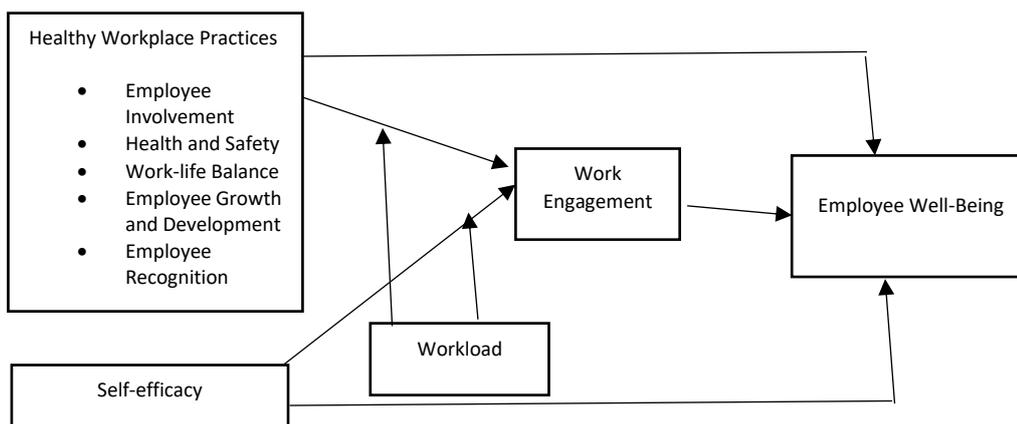


Figure 1: Framework of the Study

### Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This review has explored the relationships between HWPs, SE, WE, WL, and EWB in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. It highlights that HWP and SE will be able to enhance well-being, with WE serving as a key mediator. Employees who feel capable and supported tend to exhibit greater engagement, improving their overall well-being. Notably, the study conceptualizes

WL as a challenging demand, revealing its potential to positively influence engagement and well-being when maintained at manageable levels. As a motivating factor, workload encourages employees to effectively apply their skills and efforts, amplifying the benefits of HWPs and SE. In the high-work-pressure industry, like the RMG sector, this review offers critical insights into balancing workplace resources and demands to foster positive outcomes. By treating WL as a challenge rather than a burden, while supporting employees through effective practices, organizations will be able to enhance engagement and promote workforce well-being.

The current review can also serve as a valuable pathway for further exploration relating to EWB, and its distinctive findings serve as a foundation for future research. In this review, the model was conceptually proposed, which **should empirically validate the proposed conceptual framework using longitudinal and multi-source data** in order to better address project well-being. Future studies should continue to identify additional workplace practices, such as career management, organizational justice, and social dialogue, that can help to further establish a healthy workplace. Subsequently, research could examine other personal resources, such as positive work reflection and psychological capital, to identify which personal factors effectively buffer demands and enhance engagement and employee well-being. Future research may also consider alternative mediating or outcome variables, such as psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, or performance, to expand understanding of the JD-R motivational process in explaining EWB.

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