

Research on the Influence of Decent Employment on Occupational Well-Being Among New-Generation Employees

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ABSTRACT

In the digital economy, the concerns of decent employment and the well-being of new-generation employees have garnered significant attention from various societal sectors. Nevertheless, contemporary employees encounter numerous challenges, including inadequate working conditions, meager salaries and benefits, and insufficient safeguarding of their rights and interests, which significantly impede their occupational well-being. This study focuses on new-generation employees, constructs a moderated mediation model grounded in social exchange theory, and investigates the impact pathway of decent employment on occupational well-being through structural equation modeling and hierarchical regression analysis. This study offers insight into the living situations and developmental requirements of new-generation employees, facilitating a collective effort across all societal sectors to advance social equity, justice, harmony, and stability.

KEYWORDS

New-generation employees; Decent employment; Perceived responsibility; Psychological resilience; Occupational well-being

1 Introduction

As living conditions and quality of life increase, new-generation employees have established elevated expectations for their career advancement. Their requirements have progressively transitioned from an emphasis on material and safety concerns to the quest for respect and advantage. Nonetheless, the absence of satisfactory employment for the next generation of workers has emerged as a significant impediment to enhancing their occupational well-being. Owing to inadequate working conditions, meager compensation and benefits, and insufficient safeguarding of labor rights and interests, contemporary employees frequently do not attain the requisite dignity and protection in their employment. Simultaneously, they encounter challenges including elevated work pressure, restricted opportunities for career advancement, and obstacles to social integration, resulting in diminished occupational well-being. This detrimental work environment adversely influences their physical and emotional well-being, career progression, and significantly undermines social peace and stability. Consequently, examining the influence of decent employment on the occupational well-being of new-generation employees holds substantial practical importance.

The advancement of equitable work practices has led the academic community to increasingly see this as a significant research subject. Currently, research on decent labor predominantly emphasizes macroeconomic and public policy domains, with comparatively limited studies examining it from the micro-level perspective of human psychology. Despite existing studies demonstrating a positive correlation between decent employment and psychological capital, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being, as well as a reduction in turnover intention and emotional exhaustion, there remains insufficient focus on the relationship between decent employment and occupational well-being among new-generation employees. Consequently, it is imperative to undertake a comprehensive examination of the correlation between decent employment and the well-being of new-generation employees.

This study will provide a comprehensive analysis of the developmental trajectory and internal mechanisms by which decent employment influences the occupational well-being of new-generation employees. The specific research inquiries encompass the following three facets: Initially, examine the direct influence of decent employment on the occupational well-being of new-generation employees; subsequently, elucidate the internal mechanism through which decent employment affects their occupational well-being, while assessing the mediating role of perceived responsibility; Finally, validate that psychological resilience moderates the relationship between decent employment and the occupational well-being of new-generation employees.

2 Theoretical basis and hypothesis deduction

2.1 The impact of decent employment on occupational well-being of the new-generation employees

Decent employment is a significant notion proposed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). It underscores that employees must operate in conditions of liberty, equity, safety, and dignity, encompassing several aspects such as

working conditions, social security, career advancement, and labor rights and interests (Duffy et al., 2017). According to social exchange theory, individuals assess the worth of social ties by weighing the costs and benefits of interactions, and they sustain the equilibrium of these relationships through the concept of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2017). For the new-generation workforce, urban labor is fundamentally a process of resource exchange. By contributing their labor, they receive different benefits from the organization, including cash incentives, social prestige, respect, and recognition. Consequently, decent labor fulfills the fundamental material requirements of the new-generation workforce by offering equitable remuneration, secure working conditions, and legal safeguarding of rights and interests. This reciprocal exchange of resources can augment individuals' perception of equity (Gallo et al., 2020), thereby enhancing workplace well-being.

H1: decent employment of the new-generation employees has a positive impact on their occupational well-being.

2.2 The mediating role of perceived responsibility

Perceived responsibility denotes the degree to which individuals feel compelled to exert greater effort and engage in constructive activities to enhance organizational functioning (Fuller, 2006). The social exchange hypothesis posits that individuals determine their behaviors and attitudes in social interactions by evaluating the trade-off between costs and rewards. When individuals recognize the support and benefits provided by society or an organization, they typically exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2017). For contemporary employees, the attainment of satisfactory work encompasses not merely financial compensation, but also psychological reinforcement, which can augment their understanding of personal obligations and tasks, so enhancing their felt accountability. Consequently, when new-generation employees perceive equitable treatment and respect afforded by dignified labor, they will develop a heightened sense of their responsibilities and obligations in the workplace. This perceived obligation will enhance their work engagement and excitement, consequently boosting their occupational well-being (Mendoza-Ocasal et al., 2022).

H2: Perceived responsibility plays a mediating role in the relationship between decent employment and occupational well-being of the new-generation employees.

2.3 The moderating role of psychological resilience

Psychological resilience denotes an individual's capacity to sustain a positive outlook and manage effectively in the face of pressure, adversity, or problems (Wu & Fauzi, 2025). Employees possessing robust psychological resilience can more effectively navigate uncertainty and pressure in the workplace, thereby sustaining a high level of occupational well-being despite a low standard of decent employment; Conversely, employees with diminished psychological resilience may experience frustration and helplessness in the face of work challenges, resulting in restricted occupational well-being even when the standard of decent employment is elevated. Consequently, psychological resilience significantly contributes to enhancing the perceived accountability of the new-generation workforce. Decent employment typically entails elevated job demands and a more intricate professional milieu, necessitating enhanced professional competence and a greater sense of responsibility among new-generation employees. Currently, new-generation professionals exhibiting robust psychological resilience may sustain a pleasant demeanor and emotional stability when confronted with workplace difficulties and challenges, while continuously recalibrating their career trajectories and objectives (Lampkin-Sanders, 2024). They value their employment possibilities more, exert greater effort to accomplish their responsibilities, and enhance the organization's growth. This profound feeling of duty and purpose not only elevates the professional and overall quality of new-generation employees but also strengthens their cohesion and loyalty to the business, creating a positive feedback loop grounded on accountability and reward.

H3: Psychological resilience moderates the relationship between decent employment and occupational well-being of the new-generation employees. The higher the psychological resilience, the stronger the positive impact of decent employment on occupational well-being.

H4: Psychological resilience moderates the relationship between decent employment and perceived responsibility of the new-generation employees. The higher the psychological resilience, the stronger the positive impact of decent employment on perceived responsibility.

Based on the above, the following research model is proposed:

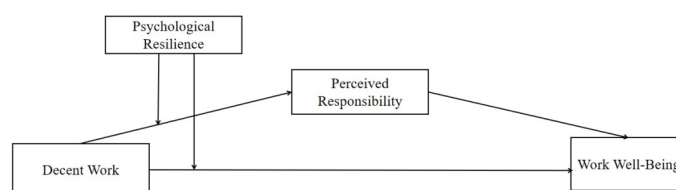


Figure 1 Research model

This figure shows the foundational model for this study.

3 Empirical analysis

This study focuses on new-generation employees as the subjects of the survey, gathering and organizing data pertaining to their decent job, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being, followed by an analytical examination. The questionnaire employed in this study is bifurcated into two sections: the initial section pertains to the respondents' fundamental information, encompassing gender, age, years of employment, educational attainment, and job position; the subsequent section comprises scale items associated with decent employment, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being. The items are derived from established scales both domestically and internationally, demonstrating strong reliability and validity. Human resource management professionals have meticulously selected and refined the questionnaire items to create the preliminary version of the questionnaire. Five hundred surveys were disseminated to the new-generation employees. Subsequent to the collecting of the questionnaires, all submitted questionnaires were reviewed. Questionnaires containing issues were discarded based on the reverse items present in the survey. Simultaneously, surveys with implausible response times (excessively lengthy or excessively brief) and those with uniform item selection were discarded. Sixty-three invalid surveys were discarded, leaving 437 valid questionnaires. The questionnaire's effective recovery rate in this study is 87.4%.

3.1 Sample analysis

This research employs SPSS 24.0 software to evaluate the gathered sample data. Descriptive statistical analysis reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution within the sample, with males constituting 48.5% and females 51.5%. The majority of respondents are aged between 20 and 25 years. Educational attainment is evenly distributed across most levels, with a limited number of individuals holding postgraduate degrees or higher. A significant proportion of respondents possess over five years of work experience. Employment is predominantly in production roles, technical positions, and general management. The enterprises represented are primarily state-owned and private entities.

3.2 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis primarily assesses the stability and consistency of test outcomes. This research employs Cronbach's α coefficient to assess reliability. A Cronbach's α coefficient exceeding 0.7 is deemed indicative of strong reliability. The research findings indicate that the Cronbach's α coefficients for decent employment, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being among new-generation employees are 0.893, 0.912, 0.924, and 0.918, respectively. All coefficients exceed 0.7, signifying that the scales employed in this study possess strong reliability.

3.3 Validity analysis

This study employs SPSS 24.0 software to perform KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity on the data to verify the scales' validity. The findings indicate that the KMO values for decent employment, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being among new-generation employees are 0.878, 0.908, 0.895, and 0.884, respectively, all exceeding 0.7. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0.000, demonstrating that the scales utilized in this study possess strong validity.

3.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

This study employs Mplus 7.0 software to do confirmatory factor analysis on decent employment, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 1. The analysis table demonstrates that the four-factor model (decent employment, perceived responsibility, psychological resilience, and occupational well-being) outperforms the three-factor, two-factor, and single-factor models, signifying its strong fitting validity and discriminant validity. ($\chi^2/df = 2.612 < 3$; CFI = 0.938 > 0.9; TLI = 0.926 > 0.9; RMSEA = 0.076 < 0.08; SRMR = 0.054 < 0.08)

Table 1 Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Variables	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Four-factor model	2.612	0.938	0.926	0.076	0.054
Three-factor model a	8.222	0.818	0.763	0.184	0.145
Three-factor model b	7.313	0.844	0.798	0.167	0.104
Two-factor model	12.465	0.712	0.623	0.224	0.173
Single-factor model	21.488	0.454	0.332	0.308	0.186

3.5 Verification of the relationship between decent employment and occupational well-being

This study employs Mplus 7.0 software to analyze and evaluate the developed model, aiming to assess the beneficial effects of decent employment on occupational well-being. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 2. The table

analysis demonstrates that decent employment positively influences occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$), hence confirming H1.

Table 2 Results of regression analysis

Variables	occupational well-being	
	Model 1-1	Model 1-2
Control Variables		
Gender	-0.062	-0.121
Age	0.060	0.042
Educational Level	-0.033	-0.032
Working Years	0.014	0.023
Position	0.132**	0.126**
Nature of Enterprise	0.016	0.008
Independent Variables		
decent employment		0.289***
R ²	0.074	0.135
ΔR^2	0.074	0.062
F	3.594**	6.036***
ΔF	3.594**	19.245***

3.6 Verification of the mediating role of perceived responsibility

This study examines the mediating role of perceived responsibility between decent employment and occupational well-being, utilizing the mediation verification method established by Baron and Kenny (1986), as presented in Table 3. Model 2-2 indicates that respectable work significantly enhances occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$). Model 2-3 indicates that the inclusion of the mediating variable perceived responsibility renders the effect of decent employment on occupational well-being insignificant ($\beta = -0.016$, $p > 0.1$), whereas perceived responsibility exerts a significant positive influence on occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.463$, $p < 0.001$). Consequently, perceived responsibility serves as a full mediator between decent labor and occupational well-being, confirming the validity of H2.

Table 3 Results of regression analysis

Variables	occupational well-being		
	Model 2-1	Model 2-2	Model 2-3
Control Variables			
Gender	-0.062	-0.121	-0.028
Age	0.060	0.042	0.065
Educational Level	-0.033	-0.032	-0.007
Working Years	0.014	0.023	0.004
Position	0.132**	0.126**	0.054
Nature of Enterprise	0.016	0.008	-0.035
Independent Variables			
decent employment		0.289***	-0.016
Mediating Variables			
Perceived Responsibility			0.463***
R ²	0.074	0.135	0.299
ΔR^2	0.074	0.062	0.165
F	3.594**	6.036***	14.528***
ΔF	3.594**	19.245***	64.237***

3.7 Verification of the moderating role of psychological resilience

This study examines the moderating effect of psychological resilience by creating an interaction term between perceived responsibility and psychological resilience, analyzing data with occupational well-being as the dependent variable (results are presented in Table 4). Model 3-4 reveals that the interaction term significantly influences occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.258$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that psychological resilience moderates the effect of decent employment on occupational well-being, hence confirming H3.

Mplus 7.0 was subsequently employed to examine the moderating impact, as illustrated in Table 5. When psychological resilience exceeds one standard deviation, the direct effect of decent employment on perceived responsibility is 0.811 ($p < 0.001$); Conversely, when psychological resilience is below one standard deviation, the direct effect is 0.352 ($p < 0.01$). The 95% confidence intervals for the two cases are [0.557, 1.060] and [0.103, 0.611], none of which encompasses 0. The direct effect of the high-low difference is 0.459 ($p < 0.05$), with a 95% confidence interval of [0.025, 0.849], which does not encompass 0. Consequently, psychological resilience influences the effect of decent employment on perceived responsibility, thereby validating H4.

Table 4 Results of regression analysis

Variables	occupational well-being			
	Model 3-1	Model 3-2	Model 3-3	Model 3-4
Control Variables				
Gender	-0.098	-0.136	-0.131	-0.142
Age	0.054	0.026	-0.029	-0.028
Educational Level	0.052	0.045	0.018	0.021
Working Years	-0.022	0.013	0.055	0.057
Position	0.198***	0.154**	0.125**	0.124*
Nature of Enterprise	0.121**	0.066	0.074*	0.065*
Independent Variables				
decent employment		0.641***	0.572***	0.553***
Moderating Variables				
Psychological Resilience			0.354***	0.365***
Interaction Term				
decent employment × Psychological Resilience				0.258*
R ²	0.118	0.375	0.431	0.440
ΔR ²	0.118	0.256	0.051	0.016
F	4.602***	17.348***	18.588***	17.526***
ΔF	4.602***	82.766***	17.465***	5.601*

Table 5 Results of moderating effect analysis

Moderating Variables	Value of Moderating Variables	Effect	SE	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Psychological Resilience	High	0.811***	0.127	0.557	1.060
	LOW	0.352**	0.103	0.103	0.611
	Difference	0.459*	0.208	0.025	0.849

4 Conclusions

This study focuses on new-generation employees, examining the influence mechanism of decent employment on occupational well-being, while using perceived responsibility as a mediating variable and psychological resilience as a moderating variable to develop a moderated mediation model. The research findings indicate that satisfactory employment for new-generation employees significantly enhances their occupational well-being. This research suggests that when new-generation employees receive equitable compensation and benefits, a secure work environment, ample career advancement chances, and social respect, their overall occupational well-being will markedly enhance. Decent employment fulfills not only the material requirements of employees but also addresses their psychological and social needs, hence improving their overall occupational well-being. Subsequent research indicates that perceived responsibility partially mediates the relationship between decent employment and job well-being. When new-generation employees perceive the dignity and worth associated with respectable labor, they will more effectively align with their professional duties and cultivate a heightened sense of duty and purpose. This perceived obligation encourages them to participate in their work more vigorously, resulting in an elevated sense of occupational well-being.

Furthermore, psychological resilience directly influences the effect of good employment on occupational well-being. New-generation employees possessing high psychological resilience can more effectively manage workplace pressures and obstacles associated with decent job, resulting in an elevated level of occupational well-being. Conversely, the advantageous impact of new-generation employees with low psychological resilience may be constrained when they benefit from the advantages of good employment. Ultimately, psychological resilience not only mitigates the direct effect of decent employment on occupational well-being but also influences the effect of decent employment on perceived responsibility. The study reveals that new-generation employees exhibiting elevated psychological resilience are more inclined to experience a feeling of duty and mission in their job when presented with decent employment; hence, psychological resilience amplifies the beneficial effect of decent employment on perceived responsibility.

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