

INSEAD

Promoting organizational well-being

A systems psychodynamic model

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Executive Summary

Organizational health and well-being is often used in conjunction; health implies an end state without symptoms, while well-being encompasses the organization in its full context. This thesis will use the term ‘organizational well-being’ to take a more holistic view. Despite a vast amount of research in the area of organizational well-being, there still lacks a theoretical structure, composition and definition that reflects the true complexity of organizational life. A key proposition put forward in this thesis is that understanding the concept requires an understanding of the conscious and unconscious behavior that can influence the psychosocial work environment. The thesis reviews existing literature around the various definitions of organizational well-being and uses the systems psychodynamics paradigm as the theoretical container for this thesis to define key enabling conditions that can contribute to the development of organizational well-being.

This thesis proposes a definition of organizational well-being as the *connective flow in the organization*. It requires the congruence between the needs and values of individuals and the organization and enabling conditions include providing a safe and supportive environment for shared meaning-making, effective boundary management, and engaging, invigorating and inspiring employees.

This thesis puts forward a theoretical model on organizational well-being, and at the core, is the notion of leadership providing a holding environment to contain anxieties and promote adaptive functioning. This environment promotes a sense of congruence in work life. At an individual level, it means they consider work as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful; at the group level, development of shared meaning, gives the members a sense of confidence and empowerment to achieve the organizational goals. To facilitate this, leadership effectiveness implies a sense of personal mastery. This thesis suggests that a degree of healthy narcissism will help top leaders to effectively perform their role of

engaging followers, invigorating and inspiring opportunities for growth and change that can contribute to organizational well-being.

This model vindicates that leaders' of the future need to be extraordinarily mature to cope with the demands placed upon them. The thesis recommends a review of leadership development programs is required to incorporate more of a systemic perspective on organizational life and the unconscious forces at work. Finally, this thesis suggests ideas for future researchers aimed at identifying the key drivers of organizational well-being from a systems psychodynamics perspective.

Key words: individual health, individual well-being, organizational health, organizational well-being, effectiveness, adaptive behavior, healthy workplace, flow, congruence, psychosocial work environment, theoretical model, systems psychodynamics.

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Introduction

Within the context of making an organization healthy, alignment is about creating so much clarity that there is as little room as possible for confusion, disorder, and infighting to set in.

— Patrick Lencioni

As companies try to grow and survive in an increasingly competitive and changing environment, strategic reorientations are required. These often involve changing many facets of the organization, including structures, procedures, technologies, mergers, role design and cultural patterns. Such changes present new challenges and demands for everyone, from top management to the front-line worker. All members of an organization must learn to cope with change. Employees often respond negatively toward change despite its positive intentions and display a natural unwillingness to change (Abrahamson, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2011). As a consequence, organizational change typically generates workforce uncertainty, fear and resistance, which can create interpersonal conflict, work sabotage, low morale, loss of focus and low performance leading to an unhealthy organization (Czander, 1993). Gowing, Kraft and Quick (1998) looked at the human costs and dilemmas of this emerging battle.

So what factors play a role in enabling organizations to thrive in today's world? There is a growing body of literature on the importance of organizational health (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; Grawitch, Ledford, Ballard & Barber, 2009; Mikkelsen, Øgaard & Landsbergis, 2005; Noblet, 2003; Quick, Macik-Frey & Cooper, 2007; Van Veldhoven, Taris, de Jonge & Broersen, 2005). Most of the research focuses on underlying conditions, including programs, policies and practices through which a workplace can be psychologically and physically healthy for employees.

The concept of organizational health needs to be more clearly defined to ensure that the right interventions are proposed (Driver, 2003); it is also necessary to continuously specify and refine frameworks of health and well-being in the workplace (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Researchers and practitioners are eager to learn more about the broadly defined concept of organizational health. Varying definitions relate to physical (Cooper, Kirkcaldy & Brown, 1994), psychological (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993) and cognitive perspectives (Anderson & Grunert, 1997), as well as to the financial health of a business (McHugh & Brotherton, 2000). Several theoretical frameworks have helped expand the study of occupational stress to the promotion of health and well-being in the workplace (e.g., MacIntosh, MacLean & Burns, 2007; Quick, 1999; Salanova, Llorens, Cifre & Martinez, 2012).

In the context of continual change, stress is symptomatic; change always induces a high degree of stress (Lichtenstein, 2000). Despite organizational efforts, individuals and teams may still be unable to restore psychological balance to their work lives (Hirschhorn, 1990). This is because individuals as well as organizations are not necessarily what they seem on the surface. They behave irrationally, pursuing unconscious as well as conscious goals to defend themselves against stress and conflict (Vince, 2002). A key proposition put forward in this thesis is that understanding organizational health in the workplace requires an understanding of both the conscious and unconscious behavior that underpins organizational life. Armstrong (2005) refers to consciousness as objectivity and rational behavior, while unconsciousness is the “*organization in the mind*” that contains a system’s unconscious defenses and irrational behavior. If organizations want to be effective, they need to pay attention to these processes (Kets de Vries, Ramo & Korotov, 2009). Based on this premise, this thesis will use the systems psychodynamics paradigm (Gould, Stapley & Stein, 2006;

Hirschhorn 1990; Neumann, 1999) as a theoretical framework to better understand the conditions that promote organizational health.

Systems psychodynamics ‘‘provides a way of thinking about energizing or motivating forces resulting from the interconnection between various groups and sub-units of a social system’ (Neumann, 1999, p. 57). Using the lens of systems psychodynamics, I will attempt to enhance the understanding of organizational health and to identify the individual and organizational conditions that increase adaptive functioning. Adaptive functioning is an important mental health outcome and can be referred to as the domain that includes work functioning and productivity, the ability to actively participate in relationships and manage appropriate roles, and the ability to care for one's needs (Bacon, 2002). It implies the capacity for individuals and organizations to adapt and learn. On this basis, a model of organizational health will be constructed that focuses on the deeper unconscious levels of health and well-being at an individual and organizational level. I will draw on the available literature to propose key enablers for organizational health. Finally, this thesis and model suggests ideas for future researchers aimed at identifying the key drivers of organizational well-being from a systems psychodynamics perspective.

Defining organizational health

If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you'll never get it done. Make at least one definite move daily toward your goal.

— Bruce Lee

The first chapter of this thesis will review the varying definitions of organizational health or ‘health and well-being in the workplace,’ as it is also referred to. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), a psychologically healthy workplace fosters employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance and productivity (APA, 2013). The definition used by the World Health Organization (WHO), developed in consultation with industry, defines a healthy workplace as ‘one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace’ (WHO, 2010, p. 6). Cooper and Cartwright (1994) characterized a healthy organization as having both financial success (profitability) and a physically and psychologically healthy workforce, able to maintain a healthy and satisfying work environment and organizational culture, particularly during periods of turbulence and change. Sauter, Lim and Murphy’s (1996, p. 250) definition of a healthy workplace is any organization that ‘maximizes the integration of worker goals for well-being and company objectives for profitability and productivity.’ Organizational health has also been defined by Keller and Price (2011) as the ability of an organization to align, execute and renew itself faster than competitors. Kets de Vries (2006a) characterizes a healthy workplace as one in which the employees’ positive view of themselves and their endeavor contributes to and reinforces adaptive functioning.

Lowe (2004) differentiates between concepts of a ‘healthy workplace’ and ‘healthy organization,’ which seem to be used interchangeably in current literature. He sees the term ‘healthy workplace’ as emphasizing the physical and mental well-being of employees, whereas a healthy organization has ‘embedded employee health and well-being into how the organization operates and goes about achieving its strategic goals’ (p. 15). The latter definition supports Lim and Murphy’s (1999) definition of a healthy organization: ‘one whose culture, climate and practices create an environment that promotes employee health

and safety as well as organizational effectiveness' (p. 64). All of these definitions recognize the need to adapt to the changing environment and to integrate employee health and well-being with organizational performance and effectiveness.

There is some philosophical debate about the considerable overlap between 'health' and 'well-being' (Ryff & Singer, 1998). They are often used in conjunction, although Danna and Griffin (1999) suggest that 'health' should be used when the focus is on the absence of physiological or psychological symptoms and morbidity, while 'well-being' should be used as a broader and more encompassing concept that takes account of "the whole person" in his or her context. In support of this view, the WHO (2010) suggests that mental health should be conceptualized as 'a state of well-being' in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. For the purpose of this thesis's consideration of organizational health, I will use the term '*organizational well-being*.' I believe this term focuses more on the adaptive functioning of individuals and organizations and how these two processes interweave as opposed to achieve a state of health.

In applying this notion of organizational well-being, I support that it is a process not a static state (MacIntosh, MacLean & Burns, 2007) and argue that a systems psychodynamics perspective can offer relevant insights, since individual and organizational well-being are interdependent (Czander, 1993). By using a systems psychodynamic perspective as the main organizing, interpretive and analytical framework (Gould et al., 2006; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), this thesis seeks to further contextualize the notion of organizational well-being. The systems psychodynamic perspective can be understood as a balanced combination of 'working outside in' and 'working inside out' (Gould et al., 2006). Subsequent sections will look at the individual and organizational dynamics that must be considered before initiating improvement or development measures to achieve organizational well-being. At a minimum,

such an understanding can encourage organizations to reflect on the emotional processes that help to reduce stress and conflict and enable development (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). In turn, this can contribute to both individual and organizational well-being.

Current frameworks and perspectives

Much of the research on this topic tries to identify the key elements in an organization that foster well-being in the workplace. For example, Hillier, Fewell, Cann and Shephard (2005) suggest that conducive, welcoming and supportive environments enable staff to form social networks and, more importantly, to create trusting relationships and develop a sense of control over their own working practices, contributing to a well-being culture. Similarly, Beehr (1995) found that high social support and trust between co-workers can promote a sense of identity, group cohesion and improved well-being. Another body of research looks at preventive measures aimed at improving employees' ability to cope, rather than reducing environmental stressors (e.g., Cartwright, Cooper & Murphy, 1995).

Another broad base of research has concentrated on how job characteristics can promote employee well-being. Such studies have looked at how sufficient information and predictability, clear expectations and challenging yet manageable work can have a positive effect on morale and job-related well-being (e.g., Beehr, 1995; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Hillier et al. (2005) acknowledge that many factors undermine wellness in the workplace, including a poor working environment (air quality, noise, crowding, lack of personal space) and an organizational culture of bullying. The challenge for organizational leaders is to identify the interventions needed to promote positive characteristics, remove negative characteristics, or both.

The APA (2013) acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to organizational well-being. Successful companies are creating workplaces that do more than just manage stress and improve productivity; they are investing efforts into instilling a shared

responsibility for building a strong, vibrant organizational culture that values well-being and high performance and delivers results for both the individual and organization. The WHO's (2010) healthy workplace model proposes four *content* areas (or 'avenues of influence') that need to be addressed alongside the process of continual improvement to ensure the success and sustainability of organizational well-being (see Appendix, Figure A1).

This thesis will focus on the psychosocial work environment avenue of influence, which includes the organization of work and organizational culture (WHO, 2010). The psychosocial domains studied by occupational health researchers typically include psychological job support, job demand, job control and job environment and emphasizes the interplay between the organizational and internal processes that occur within individuals (Kanji & Chopra, 2009). However, there is more to the psychosocial work environment than meets the naked eye. Emotional and unconscious psychodynamics shape what happens in the workplace (Amado, 1995). Therefore this thesis will look at the psychosocial work environment as it relates to the emotional experience and unconscious psychodynamics of organizational life. To this end, I propose that the psychosocial work environment includes the 'experiential reality of the organization-in-the-mind' (Armstrong, 2005, p. 8) thus it goes below the surface level of working conditions. Therefore, the systems psychodynamics approach that provides the theoretical container for this thesis will help provide insight. After an initial review of the historical contributions of systems psychodynamics, the thesis will review literature and propose a set of enabling conditions that can contribute to organizational well-being.

Systems psychodynamics:

Theoretical background and bearing on organizations?

Many say exploration is part of our destiny, but it's actually our duty to future generations and their quest to ensure the survival of the human species.

— *Buzz Aldrin*

Within a theoretical context, a paradigm is a set of beliefs, assumptions and principles that shapes a view of reality. 'It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To understand the systems psychodynamic paradigm, it is important to look at its origins and the key concepts that influence this school of thought.

The systems psychodynamics perspective influences how organizational functioning is considered, promotes inquiry and encourages the creation of conditions to facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008). It 'provides a way of thinking about energizing or motivating forces resulting from the interconnection between various groups and sub-units of a social system' (Neumann, 1999, p. 57). This chapter reviews the theoretical basis to systems psychodynamics and the contribution of elements from psychoanalysis, group relations theory and systems thinking.

Psychoanalytic contribution

Central to psychoanalytic theory is the idea that much of our mental life is unconscious; its developmental perspective emphasizes the formative effect of early relationships (Milton,

Polmear & Fabricius, 2011). Psychoanalytic theory provides valuable insight into each individual's unique way of seeing and relating to the world.

Sigmund Freud established the psychoanalytic approach and devised theories based on his clinical experience. One of his key concepts was the structural model of personality, which replaced his topographical model of the mind as divided into conscious, preconscious and unconscious. According to the structural model, the building blocks of personality are the id, ego and superego, which work together to create complex human behaviors. The id is made up of uncoordinated instinctual needs and acts according to the 'pleasure principle'; the super-ego plays a critical and moralizing role and is referred to as our 'conscience'; while the ego is the organized, realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego, acting according to the 'reality principle' (Snowden, 2006). This model provides a representational framework for understanding the dynamic interactions between the conflicting forces of the id, ego and super-ego. Freud suggested that ego was able to manage the demands of the id and super-ego by deploying a variety of defense mechanisms (Milton et al., 2011). Defense mechanisms are used by the individuals to counteract anxiety and gain a sense of safety and security. While more than 100 defense mechanisms have been identified in the literature (Blackman, 2004), the three defenses that have the greatest impact in the working environment are projection, introjection and projective identification (Kets de Vries, 2006a). The construct of 'social defenses' is central within systems psychodynamics (Gould et al., 2006). They allow the organization to hold together but limit its ability to change and learn by distorting reality and environmental forces, and constrain its members' capacity for creativity (Hirschhorn, 1990).

Another key contributor to psychodynamics is more concerned with the object relations theory developed by Melanie Klein. Unlike Freud, who explained personality development as a result of a dynamic interaction between three parts of the psyche based on

instincts, Klein believed that the superego developed in infancy and development was a result of the child internalizing his or her relation with others as ‘internal objects’ and being able to experience both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ feelings (Sayers, 1991). According to Klein, the first object with which infants internalize a relationship is the mother’s breast. She viewed development from the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position. The ‘paranoid-schizoid’ position is characterized by persecutory anxiety and splitting processes based on the notion of good and bad, in contrast to the ‘depressive’ position, which is characterized by being able to see oneself and others as who they really are and involves the process of mourning lost illusions (Milton, et al., 2011).

Klein’s concept of the psychic positions of ‘paranoid-schizoid’ and ‘depressive’ was adopted psychodynamic theory, along with the defense mechanisms of splitting an object into good and bad aspects; projection of aspects of self onto an external object; or introjection of an external object into self, and projective identification (Fraher, 2004). The term ‘project identification’ was introduced to describe a very complex, subtle process whereby a part of the self is expelled and ‘deposited’ into someone else, changing their behavior (Kets de Vries, 2006b). It involves a process of splitting by keeping bad parts of the self at a safe distance without losing them.

While these processes are said to be established in early infancy, they form the basis for how we relate to and develop relationships with others in adult life and in the workplace. For example, in a work context, projection can allow for an internal conflict to be passively endured, i.e., projected onto aspects of the job that can be actively controlled and mastered (Czander, 1993). Another example is operating from a depressive position in which members of an organization are able to manage their experiences in a more integrated frame of mind and assess reality from multiple perspectives rather than projecting unwanted parts into the environment (Krantz, 2001). On the other hand, operating from a paranoid-schizoid position

can lead to ‘highly compromised functioning because it engenders rigid, concrete thinking, blame idealization, massive projection, persecutory frames of mind and diminished capacity for reality testing’ (Krantz, 2001, p. 3).

Donald Winnicott built on Klein’s work in object relations, focusing more on the maternal environment and the emergence of self, and less on the individual’s perception of the conflict between good and bad (Milton et al., 2011). His concepts of a ‘holding’ environment and ‘transitional object’ are relevant in the systems psychodynamic paradigm. During times of change, when the environment is perceived as not ‘good enough’ to provide a holding space for anxieties and security, members often project bad objects onto their leaders (Stapley, 2006). Winnicott’s transitional concepts can be used in organizations to maintain security during times of flux and uncertainty. James and Huffington (2004) suggest that containment is an important factor for organizational change being smoothly implemented. For example, de Gooijer (2009). describes key features of ‘containment/transitional space’ during times of change as comprises of ‘time, physical space for people to meet and interact for spontaneous transitional learning, sanction for the space from organizational management, and group toleration, among those who meet, for free expression of thoughts and feelings’ (p. 226) and if these are not provided for, the business’ survival is at risk.

Another key concept is transference which occurs in almost every human relationship—it involves the unconscious repetition of an emotion relating from one person to another person as it has occurred in the past (Gould et al., 2006). It can distort the here and how reality of the relationship. In promoting adaptive functioning it is important to help individuals understand what these feelings represent and what have become for them in present day relationships.

Group relations contribution

Building on the psychoanalytic contribution, Wilfred Bion's *Experience in Groups* laid the foundation for group relations theory (in Czander, 1993). He provided a lens for understanding the dynamics of groups and organizations and focused on the unconscious functioning that distracts groups from their purpose (in French & Simpson, 2010). He hypothesized that groups have two modes of operation. One mode he called the 'work group,' a productive sophisticated group focused intently on the group's task and maintaining close contact with reality. The other mode of group operations Bion called 'basic assumption,' and its primary task was to ease anxieties and avoid the pain or emotions that further work might entail. He identified three basic assumption modes (dependency, fight-flight and pairing) which operate at an unconscious level and create a dynamic that makes it difficult for groups to perform with optimum effectiveness (French & Simpson, 2010). If a group spends too long in basic assumption activity it will perform ineffectively.

Bion noted that when a group operates in the basic assumption of dependency, it relies on one leader or member, selected formally or informally, to solve all its problems, while the rest of the group remains powerless and dependent. The basic assumption of pairing is evident in a group that invests 'an air of hopeful expectation' in two of its group members, expecting them to save it from unacknowledged internal conflicts and tensions (French & Simpson, 2010). While focusing on the pair, other members become passive and uninvolved in work. The third basic assumption of fight-flight assumes that the group only knows two techniques of self-preservation: to either 'fight' something or flee from it—'flight.' Bion acknowledges that the basic assumptions of a group may change during a group session; one basic assumption mode can be used to divert or contain another basic assumption, potentially supporting the development of a work-group mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). Building on Bion's methods for working with groups, the Group Relations or Leicester Conference

model was developed (Gould et al., 2006). The essential element of this model, which influences systems psychodynamics today, is its design approach as a temporary learning institution for the experiential study of group and organizational behavior (Miller, 1993). More recent contributions to group relations theory include community systems events and the introduction of organizational role analysis (Newton, Long & Sievers, 2006).

Systems thinking contribution

The third and final element in systems psychodynamics is the task and boundary awareness derived from open systems theory. Open systems theory refers simply to the concept that organizations are strongly influenced by their environment. The idea of boundaries, as Rice (in Miller, 1993) described it, describes the extent to which an open system exchanges materials with its environment and survives through a process of importing, converting and exporting materials across system boundaries. Rice also used open systems theory and its notion of external influences to reconceptualize Bion's notion of the group's task, arguing that an organization must interact with its environment in order to survive. A primary function of leadership is to manage boundaries to ensure organizational survival. 'Failure to do so will precipitate internal stress and disharmony, and will make it difficult for the organization to adapt to its environment in an efficient and effective manner' (Czander, 1993, p. 209). During the workday, an employee crosses many boundaries—departments, meetings, interactions with other organizations, authority and more—and every boundary offers opportunities for collaboration or conflict. How well these interfaces are managed is a key to organizational success (Czander, 1993).

Summary

These conceptual contributions to the systems psychodynamic paradigm can provide insight into organizational life. They acknowledge that individuals, groups and organizations are

complex. Based on this theoretical foundation, in the next three chapters I will review the role of the individual, leader and propose enabling conditions through a systems psychodynamic lens that can contribute to organizational well-being. Specifically, I will explore the motivational needs of employees that make them behave the way they do, the role of the leader as well as look at some of the more covert processes that can enable adaptive functioning in an organization, thus can contribute to organizational well-being.

The role of the individual in organizational well-being

The search for what it is that makes organizations vibrant—makes them great places to work—begins with an understanding of the well-functioning individual.

—Manfred Kets de Vries

The only way to get people to like working hard is to motivate them. Today, people must understand why they're working hard. Every individual in an organization is motivated by something different.

—Rick Pitino

All definitions of organizational well-being emphasize the importance of an individual's psychological well-being for effective organizational functioning and performance. Given the changing nature of work and the implications of these changes for the psychological well-being of employees, it is critical for organizations and leaders to address individual well-being as a first step toward promoting organizational well-being. Unless management is psychologically aware of and attentive to the multi-dimensional nature of worker motivation,

it is highly unlikely that employees will feel adequately taken care of and the result will be a negative impact on individual well-being (Diamond, 2003). Therefore, leaders need to pay attention to the underlying forces that contribute to and reinforce adaptive functioning which is shaped around his or her motivational needs system (Kets de Vries, 2006a).

What makes a person function well?

Winnicott (in Czander, 1993) suggests that the relationship between an individual and his/her environment should ideally lead to:

- (1) a deeper, more gratifying inner self (true self);
- (2) a greater degree of spontaneity, creativity and appreciation of being alive; and
- (3) the capacity for empathy.

Given the complexity of organizations, it is extremely difficult to attain these outcomes. The reality is that employees experience rejection, disappointment and other intrapsychic conflicts that induce anxiety and stress (Czander, 1993) in the workplace. Levinson (1980) described stress as the increase in the gap between the ego ideal and the self-image, which then results in feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, thus limiting their full potential and sense of well-being and negatively impacting organizational performance.

However, people are motivated to close or minimize this gap (Levinson, 1980). Therefore, to understand what makes a person function well, we must start with motivation, the basic driver of all actions. People's motives or reasons for doing something are the key to developing both individual and organizational well-being.

Understanding the motivational needs system

One of the most widely upheld theories relating to motivation is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This is a theory of psychological health predicated on fulfilling innate human needs, the highest point in the hierarchy being self-actualization. Maslow saw his list of needs as

important motivators of human behavior and distinguished between growth (higher-level) and deficiency (lower-level) needs (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Ghent (2002) suggests that needs are an organized motivational system that can be felt subjectively as needs, wishes or longings. So, what motivational needs must be considered to promote individual well-being in the workplace and thus contribute to organizational well-being?

Every individual has a fundamental need for physical and psychological health, as these promote personal growth (Ghent, 2002). Sylvia and Hutchinson (1985) claimed that true job satisfaction is derived from the gratification of higher-order needs, i.e., social relations, esteem, achievement and self-actualization, rather than lower-order needs.

Kets de Vries (2006a) and Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy and Korotov (2011) suggest that two particular high-level needs systems are pertinent to organizational life: attachment/affiliation and exploration/assertion. The former describes the way an individual longs to be part of a community, which can serve an emotional balancing role by confirming the individual's self-worth and sense of self-esteem. The latter is the need for creativity and thinking; within a systemic view, it implies a notion of exploration and manipulation of the environment to produce a sense of personal mastery, autonomy, initiative and industry (Kets de Vries, 2006a; Kets de Vries et al., 2011).

Greenberg (1994), however, points out that formulations of need for contact, attachment or object-seeking describe inadequately the nature of a fundamental need. He proposes a dual-drive model of needs—safety and effectance—that encourage well-being and development. In his model, the 'safety drive' involves a sense of physical or emotional well-being—'freedom from the pressure of any urgent need and the absence of unpleasure affects of which anxiety is the prototype' (p. 129). The 'effectance' drive involves a sense of vitality and the vigor of being alive and active—'when we have achieved a goal, overcome an obstacle, felt that we have used ourselves well' (p.130).

Greenberg's dual-drive model implies that autonomy, positive stimulation and achievement are satisfied when an individual becomes a productive and well-adjusted contributor to a group. Lather and Jain (2007) found that employees who rate significantly higher with regard to a need for achievement, order and autonomy also rate low on organizational stress, role conflict and absenteeism and have high scores for work motivation, work performance, and job satisfaction.

Development theorists similarly describe needs related to the growth of separation, stimulation, autonomy and individuation. Erikson identifies the following developmental stages: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus stagnation (in Berzoff, 2008). Apart from the first stage, all involve separation; in adulthood, intimacy reappears. Attaining each development stage requires stimulation; each stage must be mastered before the individual can move to the next and become well-functioning.

Levinson directs managers to pay attention to three primary needs: ministrations, maturation, and mastery (Diamond, 2003). An organization needs to provide for gratification, closeness, support, protection, and guidance for the need of ministrations to be served. In support of development, maturation needs for creativity, originality, self-control and reality testing to be supplied. And a sense of mastery is required for individual demands of achievement and self-competence to be satisfied (Diamond, 2003).

According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), people do well and feel their best when the socio-cultural conditions of their lives (i.e., family relationships, friendships, workplace culture, the political system and cultural norms) enable them to meet innate needs by engaging freely in interesting activities (autonomy), using their capacities to produce valued outcomes (competence) and feeling closely and securely connected to

significant others (relatedness). These three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence and relatedness—have been linked to better performance and greater vitality in the workforce (Baard, Deci & Ryan, 2004).

Positive psychology, another branch of psychodynamics, represents a popular perspective within the wider discipline of positive human functioning. It complements models that emphasize a deficit-centered, ‘repair shop’ emphasis that have the return to health and normal functioning as their goal (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Approach (Ryff & Singer, 1998) is one of the most well-known theories of eudaimonic well-being¹. It contains six dimensions for well-being:

- 1) Self-acceptance: holding positive attitudes toward oneself and one’s past life;
- 2) Positive relations with others: having warm, trusting interpersonal relationships;
- 3) Autonomy: possessing qualities such as self-determination, independence, self-regulation of behavior and an internal locus of evaluation;
- 4) Environmental mastery: having the ability to choose and/or create environments that suit one’s own psychic condition;
- 5) Purpose in life: having beliefs that give the individual the feeling that there is purpose in and meaning to life; and
- 6) Personal growth: developing one’s potential, growing and expanding as a person.

Seligman’s (2011) theory of well-being consists of the pursuit and attainment of one or more of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA). No one element defines well-being per se, but each contributes to it. Some aspects of these five elements are measured subjectively by self-report, but others are measured objectively. For example, positive emotion is a subjective variable, defined by what one thinks and feels. Meaning, relationships and accomplishment have both subjective

¹ Eudaimonic well-being focuses on the meaning of self-realization, and describes well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully operational. (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

and objective components, since an individual can believe in meaning, good relations and high accomplishment but be wrong, even deluded (Seligman, 2011). Thus, well-being is a combination of feeling and being. This congruence between inner and outer reality is what Kets de Vries (2006a) suggest creates an even higher level of motivation as it affirms an individual's sense of authenticity, accomplishment and personal competence.

Summary

In summary, motivational needs systems are the operational code that drives personality and behavior and are the starting point for understanding and managing individual well-being (Kets de Vries, 2006a; Kets de Vries et al., 2011). While this section has not provided an exhaustive list of motivational needs relating to individual well-being in the workplace, it highlights those with particular relevance to the adaptive functioning of an individual. A interconnecting theme that has come across is that every individual has an inherent motivation to grow and develop. Therefore, individual well-being at work and organizational well-being require a continual dialog between employer and employee that acknowledges the dynamics of motivational needs and mutual expectations, both conscious and unconscious (Diamond, 2003) that help to fulfill one's 'true self' (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The key role of leadership

Even though worker capacity and motivation are destroyed when leaders choose power over productivity, it appears that bosses would rather be in control than have the organization work well.

—Margaret J. Wheatley

If a leader doesn't convey passion and intensity then there will be no passion and intensity within the organization and they'll start to fall down and get depressed.

— *Colin Powell*

Within the psychosocial work environment, management style is one of the key influences for individual and organizational well-being (Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001).

Kets de Vries (2006a) introduced the notion of an ‘authentizotic organization,’ described as an organization with ‘a compelling connective quality for its employees in its vision, mission, culture and structure’ and a place where employees are ‘invigorated by their work’ (p. 254-255). This description is relevant to the defining elements of organizational well-being. One basic tenet proposed in this thesis is that effective leaders build and strengthen the ‘connective quality’ by instilling confidence, being visible and passionate in making the case that the business needs to grow and change. Leaders need give members of the organization an understanding of what has to be done and then create the belief and conviction that they have all the tools necessary to be successful (Kilts, 2007, p. 61). In such (authentizotic) organizations, the need for exploration and assertion are met, producing ‘a sense of effectiveness and competency of autonomy, initiative, creativity, entrepreneurship and industry’ (Kets de Vries, 2006a, p. 255).

This chapter proposes that that a healthy level of narcissism within top leadership can establish the ‘connective quality’ and help ‘invigorate’ the organization. In the workplace, healthy narcissists influence by empowering and enabling others and providing a positive vision (Humphreys, Zhao, Ingram, Gladstone, & Basham, 2010)—in turn, can contribute to organizational well-being.

Healthy narcissism

The key role of leadership is to develop a vision that the organization can realistically achieve and to deploy resources efficiently in pursuit of this primary task (Krantz & Gilmore, 1989). In order to achieve this effectively, the leader must have a certain feeling of potency (Lapierre, 1989). A leader's confidence and assuredness can be sources of psychological comfort for followers, increasing team cohesion and synergy (House & Howell, 1992). Hiller and Hambrick (2005) suggest that some leaders may have a strong self-concept built on a true sense of self-confidence, while others have a more fragile self-view, masked by demonstrations of grandiosity and arrogance. The latter qualities are those of a narcissistic individual who tends to be boastful, aggressive, elitist, highly distrustful and self-involved, and will eventually cause harm (Maccoby, 2003). However, narcissism can be healthy if it is not used in such a defensive fashion.

Narcissism can be either healthy/constructive or destructive/reactive (Lubit, 2002; Kets de Vries, 2006b). Lubit (2002) compared the long-term impact of 'healthy' and 'destructive' narcissism on organizations (see Appendix, Table 1). At an individual level normal narcissism is correlated with good psychological health due to elevated levels of self-esteem (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, Rusbult, 2004). Healthy narcissism has been associated with supporting others, being prepared to take risks and having the confidence to outline a new vision or accomplish great change (Maccoby, 2003). It can also generate an impression of dynamism and positive energy among followers; such leaders take into account significant environmental factors to ensure reality is not distorted (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). Being able to read your environment builds the capacity of 'reality testing' which enables objective decision making and allows one to tune into the potential emotional dynamics below the surface (Stein & Book, 2011) which is important to effective organizational functioning. Such leadership effectiveness has been linked to what Senge

(2006) terms personal mastery. He suggests ‘personal mastery [···is the···] the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively’ (p.7).

Narcissistic traits, including the desire for power, self-sufficiency and a dynamic personality, have been found in many charismatic leaders (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985; Maccoby, 2003). Individuals who view a leader as charismatic will see the leader in a positive light and will be willing to engage in behaviors in support of the leader and the leader’s vision, resulting in improved organizational performance (DeGroot, Kiker & Cross, 2000; Howell & Shamir, 2005). Such traits can benefit organizations as well as individuals (Maccoby, 2003). These are desirable leadership traits that can help invigorate members and contribute to organizational well-being.

At a group or organizational level, narcissism is reflected in the organizational ego ideal, which represents power and serves as a defense against the anxiety of its limits, vulnerability and mortality (Hirschhorn & Barnett, 1993). Such narcissism is based on a set of identifications such as heroic stories of an organization’s achievements, which start with one individual and are then shared (Kets de Vries, 2006b). Through an organizational ideal, a vision can become collective, create shared commitment and motivation. Preliminary evidence indicates the pervasive influence of narcissism on a wide variety of organizational processes (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011). At an organizational level, Duchon and Burns (2008) have illustrated cases of extremely high (Enron), unduly low (Salomon Brothers) and healthy (Liz Claiborne) narcissism and have commented on the performance implications of each. They noted that in between the extremes an organization can remain reality-based and institutionalize a healthy sense of self-worth and value.

I propose that healthy narcissism is important for leadership effectiveness as it promotes self-esteem and can have positive effects on organizational well-being by energizing and

engaging followers. Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) support this statement by explaining that constructive narcissism may in fact be a fundamental element of leadership effectiveness. Kets de Vries promotes that, in its mature form, narcissism is the ‘the engine that drives leadership’ and that it compels assertiveness, self-confidence, tenacity, and creativity (in Coutu, 2004). However, narcissism needs to be managed closely to ensure that it remains on the healthy continuum. This requires leaders to have a self-reflective capacity to identify how their emotional style influences the prevailing climate of the workplace and limit ‘stagecraft’ to be able to respond to employees with sincerity and sensitivity (Kets de Vries, 2006b). Lubit (2002) recommends managing narcissism effectively by introducing 360-degree appraisal systems and offering a mixture of confrontation, coaching, emotional support and psychotherapy, particularly when the destructive narcissism trait is prevalent. This helps build self-awareness. Crossan & Mazutis (2007) noted that an astute leader is self-aware and attuned to the nature of his or her relationship with followers; in making behavioral adjustments to maintain and improve interpersonal relationships (Church, 1998) he or she can contribute to organizational well-being. This also implies that leaders need to be encouraged to display behaviors associated with emotional intelligence for them to be effective in working with the ‘organization in mind’. Emotional intelligence is also seen to contribute to effective leadership. George (2000) has specifically suggested that leaders high on emotional intelligence are likely to be better at influencing genuine employee excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism.

Summary

I do not claim that healthy narcissism is the only leadership trait capable of promoting organizational well-being. Other research suggests there are some universal traits leaders’ possess that are associated with effective leadership, including drive, leadership motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, knowledge of the business,

extraversion, openness and conscientiousness (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Judge, Bono, & Locke, 2000). Also studies have found that transformational leadership style is effective in developing employees (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2012), reducing employee stress (e.g., Sosik & Godshalk, 2000) and can have a positive influence on followers' behavior and performance (Walumbwa, Avolio & Zhu, 2008). However, I propose that, to enhance the motivation and performance of followers, a healthy level of narcissism generates conviction, energizes and inspires followers, contributing to organizational well-being. This is important to emphasize because narcissism is usually considered a dysfunctional personality trait. Being able to balance authority and power leads to effective task management in a well-run organization (Hirschhorn, 1990). A prerequisite of this proposition is that a healthy level of narcissism implies that a leader can use his or her desire for power and superiority without abusing it due to their stable sense of self-esteem. Deci and Ryan (1995) refer to it as true self-esteem; self-esteem that develops when people act in ways that satisfy their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Having high, authentic, and stable self-esteem has also been found to be associated with various benefits (Kernis, 2003).

Enabling conditions for organizational well-being

The people who are doing the work are the moving force behind the Macintosh. My job is to create a space for them, to clear out the rest of the organization and keep it at bay.

—Steve Jobs

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible - the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

—Virginia Satir

There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that so effectively helps one to survive even the worse conditions as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life.

— Viktor E. Frankl

If you have been trying to make changes in how your organization works, you need to find out how the existing culture aids or hinders you.

— Edgar Schein

Informal and affectionate bonds between workers and their supervisors help to explain effective, physically safe and emotionally healthy management performance in the workplace (Diamond, 2003). However, with change as the only constant in today's turbulent world, the traditional psychological contract that afforded stability no longer exists (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997), therefore becoming increasingly difficult for organizations or management to provide a container for work anxiety as they did in the past (Krantz, 2001). One of the most powerful and constructive ways for leaders to help their teams succeed is to get the basic conditions in place, since their presence will increase the probability that a team will evolve naturally into an effective performing unit (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). In this chapter, I will propose key enabling conditions to contribute to organizational well-being in light of the current work environment. A key proposition put forward is that the role of management (across all levels) consists of helping a group define its primary task, regulating and

negotiating the boundaries to ensure group survival, reinforcing structure to contain anxiety, and facilitating a safe & supportive environment to help 'work through' the complexities of organizational life.

Boundary management

Boundaries refer to the physical and psychological borders around the system that contain its anxiety, thus making life controllable, safe and contained (Czander, 1993; Gould et al, 2006). Boundaries are also defined as the 'break point between one element and another,' be it task, role, authority, sub-groups or between one organization and another or its environment (James & Huffington, 2004, p. 213). Boundaries can become associated with anxiety and defensive responses during periods of change and in boundary crossing (Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004). To support organizational well-being, organization members must be integrated into the group dynamics and have clear roles and tasks. Therefore, it is critical for leaders to maintain the boundaries to ensure that the organization's 'integrity and standards of effectiveness and efficiency' (Diamond et al., 2004, p. 34) are maintained and help facilitate the formation of the group-as-a-whole (Newton, Long & Sievers, 2006).

On a group level, boundaries help define group membership and a sense of identity; they provide a structure within which tasks can be carried out, and help contain anxiety (Czander, 1993). In terms of needs addressing process, boundaries have the capacity to enrich organizational members' lives in various ways; they allow for a source of personal security, social companionship, emotional bonding, intellectual stimulation and collaborative learning (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes & Haslam, 2009).

Primary task

In the context of boundary management, it is the CEO's primary function to mediate relationships between the internal world of the organization and its external environment

(Czander, 1993). It starts with defining the primary task—that is the reason for its existence—how it survives, or what it designs itself to do (Hirschhorn, 1990; Lawrence, 1999). The concept of the primary task is significant for the survival, health and well-being of the organization (Chapman, 1999). Organizational members need to know what the stated primary task of their organization is, for example, at Dell it is to research, design and manufacture desktop computers; at Shell it is the exploration and production, refining, distribution of oil, and so on. In Obholzer's view one of the core elements of the task of leadership is 'to see the concept of primary task of the organization is not only uppermost in the minds of all members of the organization, but that it is constantly reviewed in the light of the external environment and the functioning, structure, and staffing of the organization changes in accordance with the changing of the primary task and its cluster of subtasks' (in Gould et al. 2006, p. 199).

Schein (2010) equates organizational survival with the ability of organizations to adapt externally and integrate internally. According to Schein (2010) this is achieved by members of organizations continuously creating shared meaning about how the organization should respond to external forces (external adaptation) and how different sub-systems of the organization should be connected to each other (internal integration)—the key mechanisms that create organizational culture. This notion of a primary tasks sense of meaning/purpose will be discussed in section 6.3.

Lawrence (1999) identified different forms of primary task: the normative primary task (the defined, formal or official task); the existential primary task (the task the work group members believe they are undertaking) and the phenomenal primary task, (the task that can be inferred from work group members' behavior). The phenomenal primary task is what Bion would have termed a basic assumption (Gould, et al. 2006) and it can also act as a social defense against anxiety during change. If the disparity among these three forms of primary

task is too great then the effectiveness will be compromised (Lawrence, 1999) and it impacts impact the alignment of roles in the system (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Because every boundary is permeable, it is important for management to regularly discuss the ‘experiential reality’ with regard to the task, role and structural boundary—the emotional undertow of boundary crossing—to ensure effective organizational performance (Armstrong, 2005). This in turn can contribute to organizational well-being.

Taking up a role

Newton, Long and Sievers (2006) suggest the organization is a system of interrelated tasks, roles and role-holders. The concept of ‘role comprises the ‘place’ or ‘area’ that is the interface between a person and an organization or between personal and social systems’ (Sievers and Beumer, 2006, p. 67). It represents the space impacted by the organization and its definitions of system boundaries (such as tasks, roles, authority, resources, etc.) and also, the way in which specific individuals (role holders) fill up and shape this space, which are influenced by the specific needs, aspirations, values of that individual. This space reflects an individual’s own idea of how to enact their role—their ‘role idea’ (Newton, Long and Sievers, 2006). This determines how an individual takes up his or her role and can influence individual well-being.

The notion of ‘taking up a role’—referring to the conscious and unconscious boundary around the way to behave in context to the primary task—is useful in the management of individual and organizational well-being. Research shows that the more employees understand, support and engage with the primary purpose of an organization, the more effective they are in their own role (Grant, 2008). Reed and Bazelgette (2006) refer to the notion of ‘taking up’ a role as a regulating principle that enables individuals to manage their own behavior to achieve the primary task within which the role exists. They discuss how

individuals relate their own desire to carry out that primary task, take ownership of the task and choose the action or behavior that achieves it (Reed & Bazelgette, 2006). If different perceptions of tasks and roles are not aligned or revealed, and this can lead to disconnected behaviors and potentially undermine performance. In this thesis, I suggest that it is important to map out how employees (role holders) interpret their own as well as one another's roles to ensure effective functioning of the organization; because roles influence the required level of motivation and behaviors that are expected and contribute to employee satisfaction and well-being (Czander, 1993). When there are weak boundaries in terms of clearly defined roles, tasks and authority, conflict and tension can arise (Newton, Long & Sievers, 2006).

Therefore, to promote organization well-being, leaders and group members need to regularly reflect on the task, role definitions and individual role ideas. This will help group members know their own cognitive and emotional contributions they offer to the system as well as bringing into awareness the context in which the system operates (Turnbull & Arroba, 2005). This requires role awareness and role dialogues (Long, Newton and Chapman, 2006) to be facilitated in the psychosocial work environment.

Providing a holding environment

Bion's concept of the 'container' is also applicable in an organizational context (Gould et al., 2006). An organization needs to provide a space where anxiety can be contained and be 'good enough' if it is to protect its employees from the dangers associated with power, authority, termination, loss, deprivation and the employees' own internal conflicts (Czander, 1993). Containment involves a process of re-own projections of employees, modifying and processing them to a more depressive (developmental) state involving integration and cooperation (de Gooijers, 2009). When individuals receive adequate containment their capacity to manage emotions is increased, allowing them to function effectively and develop. The resulting containment establishes a 'holding environment' (Gould et al., 2006).

Vansina and Vansina-Cobbaert (2008) describe containing and holding as two different but overlapping concepts. They describe 'holding' as something one does for someone (for example, creating a facilitating structure where people feel safe and can perform), whereas 'containing' is a purely psychological process (involving containment of the unpleasant, destructive and anxiety-provoking characteristics of work). In psychoanalytic therapy, Winnicott's concept of holding environment provides structure, consistency, and a routine that helps to filter out excessively stimulating occurrences (Brown, 1981). It ensures a set of clearly defined principles, including respect for others, truthfulness, keeping promises, causing no harm and confidentiality (Wallwork, 1994). Containment on the other hand, occurs when people absorb, filter and manage difficult emotional material that can then be worked with effectively (Kahn, 2012). These interrelated processes should be guaranteed in an organization. Therefore, one key role of the leader is to provide a psychological safe / holding space where anxieties can be contained. Leaders can achieve this by being constant, reliable, non-critical and empathic, while at the same time showing patience and setting limits (clear boundaries) (Czander, 1993).

Fundamentally, holding environments provide two key actions for organizational members: containment and interpretation (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). I described containment earlier; interpretation involves working with ideas and meanings in ways that enable members to make sense of their experiences (Kahn, 2012; Shapiro & Carr, 1991). A holding environment is an active and dynamic process, orientated towards growth and change, which needs to be internalized by members so that they can discover not only what it means for themselves, but also how they can provide it for others (Ward, 2008). A holding environment supports the effective management of change and organizational performance by providing a facilitative structure for learning and development (Ward, 2008). Hogget and Thompson (2002) point out that it can also allow the transformation of emotion and adaptive

functioning. While Baer and Frese (2003) refer to it as a climate for psychological safety, they found that such a climate promotes initiative and can enhance organizational performance in terms of both on return on assets and goal achievement. Jarrett and Kellner (1996, p. 65) found that a holding space and containment is particularly useful in facilitating change by ensuring:

- 1) anxiety can be managed;
- 2) temporary and transitional structures are set up, maintained and developed;
- 3) processes are established to allow top teams to learn from acting and seeing things differently;
- 4) teams are able to work with process, task and the accompanying anxiety.

I propose that the organization needs to serve as a containing and holding environment to contribute positively to organizational well-being. It is the responsibility of the leader to provide for this containment and holding environment to minimize the risk of their team or organization regressing to basic assumption behaviors, ego defenses and social defense routines in the form of collusive coalitions and rituals (Jarrett & Kellner, 1996). This implies that they have clear performance expectations and appropriate boundaries and structures to ensure adaptive functioning. At the same time, it also implies that the members of the organization are compassionate and empathic toward each other, ensuring no-harm and keeping commitments to each other.

Heifetz & Linsky (2002, p.102) describe this fundamental role of a leader in this regard:

'When you exercise leadership, you need a holding environment to contain and adjust the heat that is being generated by addressing difficult issues or wide value differences. A holding environment is a space formed by a network of relationships

within which people can tackle tough, sometimes divisive questions without flying apart. Creating a holding environment enables you to direct creative energy toward working the conflicts and containing passions that could easily boil over.'

Leadership practices such as critical self-reflexivity, dialog about future possible identities and the 'wise' cultivation of the desire to explore ego-threatening issues (Brown & Starkey, 2000) can also help to facilitate the provision of containment and a holding environment.

Kahn (2012) reviewed the relevant research and theory on useful processes for establishing effective holding environments (see Appendix, Table 2). He summarized these working from the outside to the inside and suggested that system members first need goals and structures that join them together, Over time, these structures hold the members together well enough to manage anxiety in their work environment and make sense of their experiences through containment and interpretation. Kahn found that such holding environments 'help members find common ground in their experiences of their tasks ... and bring themselves more fully into collaborative work' (Kahn, 2012, p. 238).

Stacey (1996) brings together the concepts of boundary and containment to promote creativity in organizations. In his model, containing anxiety to allow creativity to emerge can be achieved through a number of mechanisms. The first is trusting, compassionate and empathic relatedness between group members and the ability to retain cohesion on the edge of chaos (change). The second is allowing the group to reflect collectively on themselves as a system, so that learning can contain the anxiety. The third is leadership that avoids authoritarianism but assists in the containment of anxiety.

In sum, I propose that the concept of containment and holding environment in relation to organizational well-being is about 'holding' the group by providing a safe and supportive

environment. It is a key role of management to facilitate this and also implies mutual respect for the environment by members. In terms of meeting the motivational needs systems of members, a 'good enough' holding environment allows for security, enjoyment, mastery, self-esteem and ego-relatedness (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987, p. 527).

Meaning-making

Boundaries, as mentioned earlier, provide the structure that groups need to carry out the primary task. They can also serve as an unconscious mind-set that organizational members use to gain cognitive and emotional coherence about "who we are" (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005), and thus helping to develop shared meaning (Schein, 2010). Levinson (1980) describes the task of leadership as the ability to understand the need to define the nature of leaders' own ego ideals, which are to be pursued in work, and 'help followers to define and integrate theirs into a statement of purpose, then that gives psychological meaning for people to be together' (p. 506). Fundamentally, individuals have an innate desire to live from what has been called 'the highest self' and to develop and refine personal vision, values and meaning (Dhiman, 2011). The proposition I advance is that organizational leaders need to provide meaningful work to its members to help them live from their 'highest self.' If work has no meaning, it will have negative effects on organizational well-being. For example, Armstrong (2005) argues that a primary task that is only about survival and devoid of meaning can ultimately lead to emotional denigration. Chapman (1999) contends that people need to believe that they are doing something worthwhile and are engaged in something more than survival. Hillier et al. (2005) also argue that a job should be much more than simply a way of earning a living. And in terms of the needs addressing process, Baumeister (1991, p. 610) concluded that the quest for meaning can be understood in terms of four main needs: a need for purpose, a need for values, a need for self-efficacy and a need for self-worth.

This notion of one's quest for meaning is also supportive of Seligman's (2011) ideas about an individual's pursuit of meaning and the need to connect with endeavors larger than one's self. Doing something because one understands its importance and because the action reflects one's self-chosen values can lead to what Deci and Ryan (1995) called "true self-esteem." Steger and Dik (2010) suggest that "people have been summoned to meaningful, socially valued work by a transcendent call....the common core of these concepts includes both the sense that one's work is meaningful and purposeful and that it serves a need beyond one's self and one's immediate concerns' (p. 132). Csikszentmihalyi depicts humans as having an 'evolving self' whose growth hinges on attaining fuller consciousness of their inner nature and of the world that surrounds them (in Schwartz, 1987). Thus, at an individual level, it suggests that a capacity for growth expands as they gain a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in what they do and connect it to the processes at work.

Unfortunately, however, leaders often fail to recognize humankind's search for meaning and do not provide circumstances that allow people to do tasks that are experienced as personally meaningful (Kets de Vries, 2006a). In broad terms, meaningful work refers to the amount of significance people perceive to exist in their work (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Meaningful work has been described as an important psychological state that mediates between the job characteristics of skill variety, task identity and task significance and the outcomes of internal work motivation, work performance, satisfaction with work, and absenteeism and turnover (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). According to Schein (2010), managing the shared meaning system of the organization is a primary task of leadership. Hatch and Shultz (2002) similarly suggest that leaders are responsible for facilitating conversations aimed at creating shared meaning. Bain and Bain (2002) introduced the notion of the primary spirit—"that which breathes life into an organization; the animating principle" (p. 2) and fundamentally, involves building the capacity ('potentiality') for

something new to be brought into being that also helps create shared meaning with the group. Therefore, leaders need to institute a collective system of meaning, in a way that makes sense to individual members; the resulting congruence will contribute to individual as well as organizational well-being (Kets de Vries, 2006a), and create 'flow' moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Csikszentmihalyi (1999) refers to the notion of 'flow' as 'how people feel when they are thoroughly involved in something that is enjoyable or meaningful . . . separate from the routines of everyday life.' Hirschhorn (1998) draws on Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' to develop an argument that passion is central to people's capacity to deal with the anxieties and challenges that are intrinsic to meaningful work because it enables people to pursue a goal single-mindedly. Vallerand and colleagues (2003) define passion as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one likes, finds important, and in which one invests time and energy on a regular basis. Hirschhorn (1998) also argues that the leader's passion about work plays a crucial role in containing normal disruptions to group life, particularly competitiveness and envy. In sum, engaging in meaningful work can result in enhanced motivation, work performance, effort, efficiency, self-efficacy, understanding of the organization, psychological and physical well-being, satisfaction with work, happiness, faith in management, team functioning, attitudes at work, intrinsic motivation to work, mentoring and motivational skills, and sense of self-transcendence (Steger & Dik, 2010).

Therefore, a key proposition in this thesis is that work needs to entail a process of collective meaning-making if it is to contribute to organizational well-being. The search for meaning is a positive psychology construct that results from the alignment of an individual's inner needs and outer realities (Kets de Vries, 2006a). A good fit between individual and organization contributes to motivation and job satisfaction (Hirschhorn & Barnett, 1993).

Engagement in meaningful work will help to create more 'flow' moments contributing to organizational well-being.

Culture

To promote organizational well-being, current research emphasizes the importance of understanding the prevailing culture, climate and leadership (Dextras-Gauthier, Marchand & Haines, 2012; McHugh, 2011). Sauter, Lim and Murphy (1996) identified management practices, organizational culture or climate and organizational values as key factors for health and well-being. It plays a major factor in enhancing a sense of congruence (Feldt, Kinnunen and Maunao, 2000). In other words, the social norms and values within an organization can either promote individual and organizational well-being or have a detrimental effect. Survey measures of organizational culture have shown that it can impact upon organizational performance and affect both attitudes such as job satisfaction and well-being (Guerra, Martinez, Munduate, & Medina, 2005). Adkins and Caldwell (2004) found that job satisfaction was positively associated with the degree to which there is a fit between the employee and the overall culture and subculture in which they work.

There are many varying definitions of culture. For the purpose of this thesis, Schein's (2010) views on organizational culture are used, as he is one of the more renowned thought leaders in organizational culture. He defined organizational culture as a multilayered construct that includes artifacts, shared values and basic assumptions. Artifacts such as behaviors, structures and processes form a first level. At a more latent level, organizational culture is observed in the values and ideals shared by members of the organization revealed in symbolic mechanisms such as rituals and stories, as well as in corporate objectives and strategies. At an even deeper level are the underlying assumptions that determine values that are internalized by new members of an organization, involving the integration of external and internal realities (Schein, 2010).

The underlying values of an organization can have a significant influence on organizational well-being. Dextras-Gauthier et al., (2012) suggest that culture is more influential than any formal policy or practice as core values and beliefs are the antecedents of organizational policies and practices. Kets de Vries (2006a) and Kets de Vries et al, (2009) suggests three meta-values that reflect the two priority order needs of attachment/affiliation and exploration/assertive motivation are of critical importance in terms of creating a great place to work; a 'sense of community' built on trust, belonging and mutual respect, 'sense of enjoyment' encouraging fun, play, and creativity and a 'sense of meaning' about the activities in which they are engaged in. Research suggests that higher-order, intrinsic and growth-related values, such as openness to change, self-development, stimulation and cooperation in the workplace play an important role in organizational well-being (Schneider, 1990). On a management practice level, Santos, Hayward, & Ramos (2012) suggest the values of accountability, fairness of rewards, and development and promotion from within contribute to organizational well-being.

Schönborn (2010) studied the key variables of corporate culture based on Schein's model to identify corporate success or lack of success. He found that, compared to less successful companies, successful companies tend to put a higher value in corporate citizenship and responsibility, an explicit orientation toward competence, involvement, and employees' job satisfaction. He also found employees tend to be more motivated and satisfied, their personal limits are respected more overtly, and their health seems to be supported more actively. Calori and Sarnin (1991) found positive links between corporate performance and cultural values such as the possibility of self-fulfillment, mutual attention, team spirit, responsibility, trust, open mindedness, quality, consistency, an entrepreneurial attitude, adaptability, and anticipation.

What I propose here is that congruence between an individual's values and those of the organization can promote organizational well-being. For example, Bouckenooghe, Buelens, Fontaine and Vanderheyden (2005) found that value conflict is a predictor of stress and strain in the workplace; on the other hand, value congruence leads to greater job, career and family satisfaction, reduction of stress and strain, greater emotional well-being and fewer psychosomatic symptoms. Another study found that when organizational members' values are congruent with those of the organization, they tended to react to change more positively (Smollan & Sayers, 2009). Supporting the proposition of the need to provide meaningful work proposed earlier, Knoop (1994) found a direct correlation between job satisfaction and the intrinsic value provided by a job in terms of meaningful work or skill and knowledge application. It is the social processes within an organization's culture that help enact the values and 'endow them with meaning' (Rosen, 1991, p. 6).

Another proposition I advance is the notion of 'organizational cultures as holding environments' (van Buskirk and McGarath, 1999). Culture and the concept of a holding environment discussed earlier are connected. van Buskirk and McGrath (1999, p. 812) used the term 'holding environment' to describe the 'practices and symbols characteristic of a local organizational culture which supports (either well or poorly) the identity development process of organizational members. Thus culture shapes group identity and defines the values that provide self-esteem to group members (Hatch & Schultz, 2004 in Schein, 2010, p. 29). Furthermore, the culture acting as a holding environment can enhance organizational success and individual growth (van Buskirk & McGarth, 1999). By holding the developing identity, culture allows for the internalization of positive values and qualities thus offer the opportunity for learning and in turn, improving energy and focus to do work (van Buskirk & McGarth, 1999). Therefore a supportive organizational culture is a precondition to

organizational well-being and it is important for interventions to address the values that promote well-being in the workplace.

Summary

To summarize this chapter, a key proposition is that a holding environment is a pertinent condition to be considered in the promotion of organizational well-being. Through effective boundary management, the leader can ensure the authenticity of the primary task as a powerful motivator. To ensure effective functioning, there needs to be space set aside for understanding the person in role dynamics (Hutton, 2000; Armstrong, 2005). Ensuring that there is a sense of meaning in one's work gives license to ask for engagement (Chapman, 1999), creating a feeling of belonging to the organization and serving something larger than oneself. An organization's values also plays an important part. Corlett & Person (2003) state that the reasons organization members' 'are willing to invest so much of their creativity and agency in organizations—is bound up by the collectively held values at the heart of an organization's culture' (Corlett & Person, 2003, p. 14). Therefore culture is an important part to play in promoting organizational well-being.

Conclusion

The purpose of models is not to fit the data but to sharpen the questions.

— *Samuel Karlin*

Organizational practitioners increasingly express the need to understand and address the deeper levels of individual, group and organizational behavior that manifest 'below the surface' (Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle, & Pooley, 2004). This is particularly

pertinent in understanding and managing organizational well-being. One difficulty is that the lack of any clear definition of organizational well-being and a varied set of practices to clinical grounded (systems psychodynamic) consultation which result in potentially inappropriate or non-systemic interventions (Driver, 2003).

There is still a gap in current research and practice that adequately integrate systems psychodynamics into a model that can explain the deeper levels of organizational well-being. The purpose of this thesis has been to review existing literature and pull together key enabling conditions to construct an interpretative model that can promote organizational well-being.

An organizing framework for organizational well-being

In this thesis, I have sought to define organizational well-being within the psychosocial work environment and to develop a framework of enabling conditions through a systems psychodynamic perspective. The literature review on the definitions of organizational well-being reveals a balanced perspective between the well-being of an individual and that of the organization in terms of effectiveness and performance; acknowledging their interdependence (Czander, 1993). Building on this fundamental premise and in an effort to synthesize the definition of organizational well-being, I propose the following definition:

Organizational well-being is about creating a connective flow in the organization. It requires the congruence between the needs and values of individuals and the organization and enabling conditions include providing a safe and supportive environment for shared meaning-making, effective boundary management, and invigorating and inspiring employees.

Figure 1 presents the organizing framework that summarizes the preceding discussion and tries to illustrate the definition proposed. The model is a theoretical construct based on my literature review and interpretative understanding of the systems psychodynamic perspective as it relates to organizational well-being within the psychosocial work environment.

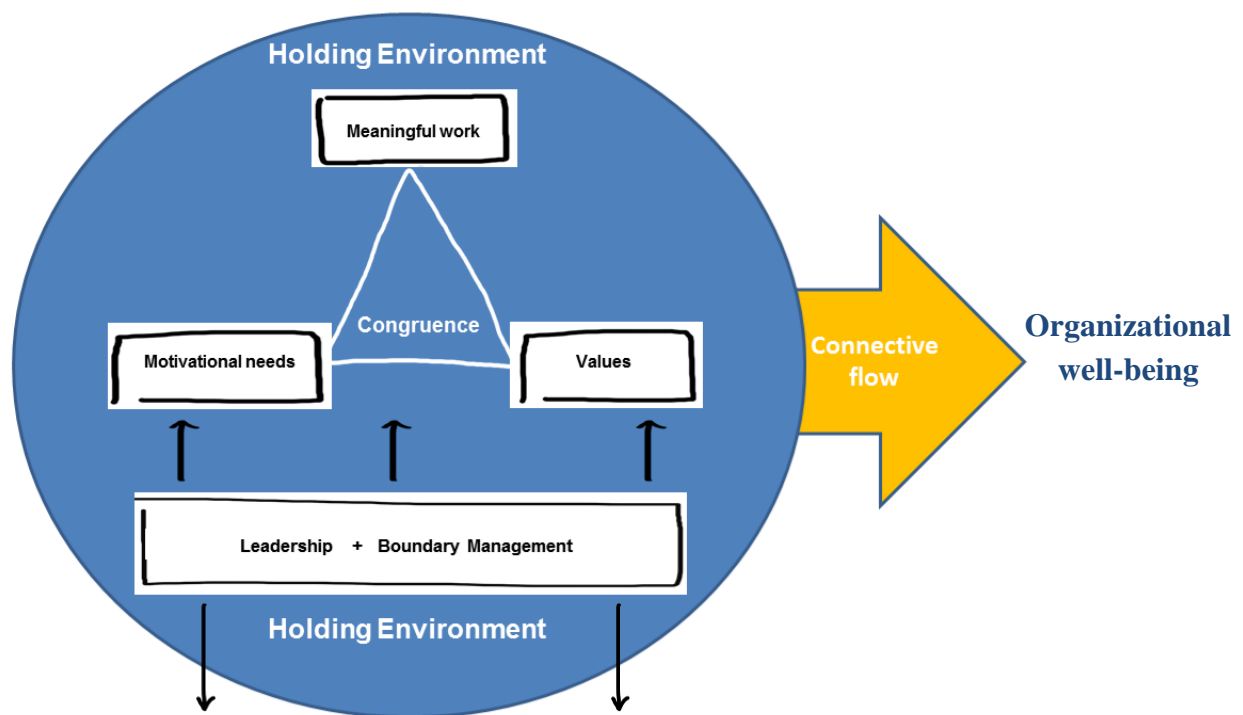


Figure 1 Framework for the development of organizational well-being

The model illustrates that the provision of a holding environment lies at the core of organizational well-being. This is a critical success factor in containing anxieties and promoting learning and adaptive functioning. It also acknowledges the need for congruence in work life between ensuring individual and organizational needs are met, cultural values distinguishing how members should act and the pursuit of meaningful work within the group-as-a-whole. Meaningful work will make employees more motivated and passionate about the task, and enable them to invest more focused energy in its achievement. It is the role of a

leader to ensure congruence between these three dimensions to ensure authenticity of the primary task and engagement in work. It requires leaders who can create an environment that stimulates and exhilarates, fosters excitement that leads employees to become absorbed in their task (Kets de Vries 2006a; Kets de Vries et al., 2009). Csikszentmihalyi asserts that the task of good leaders is creating working environments that facilitate as many moments of 'flow' as possible (Vogt, 2005); "a universal condition of flow...is that the person feels that his or her abilities to act match the opportunities for action...when challenges are in balance with skills, one becomes lost in the activity and flow is likely to result" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 825).

The model applies the sense of congruence (SOC) concept based on Antonovsky's (1991) definition and considers that a person's work provides a basis for comprehensibility, a good load-balance for manageability, and participation in decision-making for meaningfulness. This SOC is a critical success factor in the psychosocial work environment. Many studies have supported the hypothesis that persons with high SOC would experience greater well-being and less stress than people with low SOC (e.g., Feldt, 1997; Ryland, 1991). From a practical point of view Feldt et al., (2000) longitudinal study on the mediational model of SOC in the work context found that well-being in the workplace can be increased if there is an adequate understanding of the ways in which work characteristics shape individuals' SOC. Research has illustrated that SOC at a group level acts as a facilitating condition in learning (Cillers, 2001). The study reported groups who reported a high SOC had the confidence to venture their own interpretations of the group dynamics, were able to frame an the event as a challenge, trusted their own resources to turn the challenge into a manageable learning experience, and reported increased commitment and engagement which led to a sense of empowerment in shaping their own experiences. Therefore, SOC as a group is another contributing factor to organizational well-being.

To facilitate this congruence and enabling many 'flow' moments, a primary role of the leader is to be seen as managing boundaries to ensure effective and efficient performance (Diamond et al., 2004). Effective boundary management is very important to the needs-addressing process and ensuring alignment. The needs addressing process requires continually dialogue to ensure congruence. I also propose healthy narcissism within top leaders is required to engage followers, invigorate and inspire opportunities for growth and change to can contribute to organizational well-being. A healthy level of narcissism, promotes a sense of separateness—an awareness of boundaries whereby the leader can distinguish inner and outer worlds, fantasy from reality and self from others. Such a leader is willing to use power in the best interests of his or her followers and organization (Zaleznik, 1977). These types of leaders address not only the external forces impacting their organizations, but also the undertow of their own characters (Kets de Vries, 2006a; 2006b). Such leadership effectiveness has been linked to what Senge (2006) terms personal mastery; 'truly effective leaders come to a shared appreciation of power of holding a vision and concurrently looking deeply and honestly at current reality' (p. 340). This sort of personal mastery entails having a sense of self-awareness contributing to leadership effectiveness.

This model has attempted to conceptualize key enabling conditions of organizational well-being, as summarized above. At the same time acknowledging the limitation that it focuses only on the psychosocial environment from a systems psychodynamic perspective, it should not therefore be used alone. Other stress and well-being models should be consulted such as the Person-Environment Fit (e.g. Edwards & Cooper, 1990). The usefulness of this model should be in providing another lens for identifying areas that may need to be addressed in the promotion of organizational well-being, and then ultimately focusing efforts or interventions below the surface of the psychosocial work environment.

Recommendations

I recommend that practitioners use the proposed organizational well-being model as ‘a model in the mind’ (Armstrong, 2005) to guide and generate discussion about underlying issues or areas to be addressed in the psychosocial work environment. In this way, the model may assist in determining whether a new policy or practice is likely to be worth the effort, or whether an issue could be better managed by group or individual coaching or cultural intervention. Intervention strategies that assist individual’s in identifying and interpreting their own perceptions will give them greater personal awareness and understanding of self (Bovey & Hede, 2001) which can help improve their own well-being, thus contribute to organizational well-being. At the same time, this model could assist organizations in reviewing their leadership processes, such as the practices that support the provision of a holding environment and effective boundary management and alignment of task and role dynamics to ensure that it encourages congruence between individual and organizational needs.

In support of this, one key recommendation that I would like to advance is that of the need to redesign leadership practices so that they pay attention to a systemic perspective on organizational life and the unconscious forces at work (Turnbull & Arroba, 2005). The role of leaders has become very complex; they have to deal with extremely high ambiguity levels (Plowman, et al., 2007), while at the same time being expected to give followers a degree of confidence and security. Future leaders need to inspire others to learn more about themselves (Kuczarski & Kuczarski, 2007). Leaders need to influence beyond mere survival. Leadership should strive to restore hope, optimism, resilience and meaningfulness (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). This supports the propositions put forward in this thesis that rely a lot on the effectiveness of the leader in navigating the complexities of organizational life and having the capacity to provide for the enabling conditions. This is a

challenging task. The reality is the leadership role is expanding and needs to be viewed as a function of the whole organizational system for which the systems psychodynamic approach to leadership could potentially address today's leadership challenges. At the heart of this approach is the disciplined attention to the emotional experience of the organization, requiring the attention to and interpretation of, to ensure appropriate action can be taken (Armstrong, 2005).

Huffington et al. (2004) capture the essence of the 'Wise leader' who works effectively at their role in the emotional life of the organization. They suggest leaders' capabilities need to include: identifying adaptive challenges, regulating distress (creating a holding environment, a place for processing thoughts, clarifying assumptions), stopping old initiatives in order to enable new ones, being responsible for direction, protection, orientation, managing conflict and shaping norms, having the emotional capacity to tolerate. Successful managers of the future will have to understand their emotional, irrational sides, and those of others (Kets de Vries, 2006b).

All this implies that leaders of the future need to be extraordinarily mature to cope with the demands placed upon them (Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004). I argue that leadership development programs need to have an appreciation of the systems psychodynamics within organizations and address the difficulties in leadership development programs. From a practical point of view, Turnbull & Arroba (2005) suggest a week long leadership development program based on their Reading/Carrying framework—having ability to 'Read' the context, combined with the ability to manage what is personally being 'Carried' into the situation—which is set around systems psychodynamic perspective (of taking up of a role) and uses cognitive, reflective and experiential sessions to provide a leadership development opportunity encompassing an understanding of emotion and emotionality in organizations. This will help leaders and organizational members understand the 'person-in-role' dynamics

(Armstrong, 2005). Kets de Vries & Korotov (2010) suggest a range of teaching/learning tools and processes to encourage a systemic approach to leadership development and create a supportive environment and culture for doing so. In their 'leadership toolbox' they propose: creating self-awareness, action learning, and building of networks, role models (both formal and informal), leadership coaching/mentoring, multi-party feedback (e.g. 360 degree feedback) and debriefing. Therefore, further consideration on how leadership development practices can have an influence on organizational well-being is required to ensure long-term success of interventions.

Possible limitations

The topics addressed in this thesis reflect the complexity of organizational well-being. The conceptual usefulness of this model depends to some extent on the reader's understanding of the systems psychodynamic paradigm. As Schwartz (in Driver, 2003, p.54) cautions: 'More and more people are approaching organizations with what they think is psychoanalysis, yet without that sense of limitation.' Such an approach runs counter to its real purpose. Due to its descriptive nature, the major limitation of this thesis is that the model has not been subjected to action research to validate its reliability or relevance. Having said this, there is still a need for literature that explores explicitly the development of organizational well-being from a systems psychodynamic perspective. Future research should examine the propositions put forward in this thesis to directly assess organizational well-being. One key aspect of systems psychodynamics that was not addressed in this thesis is that of the defensive dynamics and regressive tendencies of groups which can be detrimental to organizational well-being. This was a conscious decision as it is an extensive topic on its own. Instead I choose to focus on enabling conditions that promote organizational well-being and if these are taken care of adequately, they should reduce the likelihood of maladaptive behaviors. Notwithstanding this, examination of defensive dynamics may provide a basis for deeper insight into the

organizational system (Jarrett & Kellner, 1996), and can support the identification potential sources of anxiety and stress that are hindering organizational well-being.

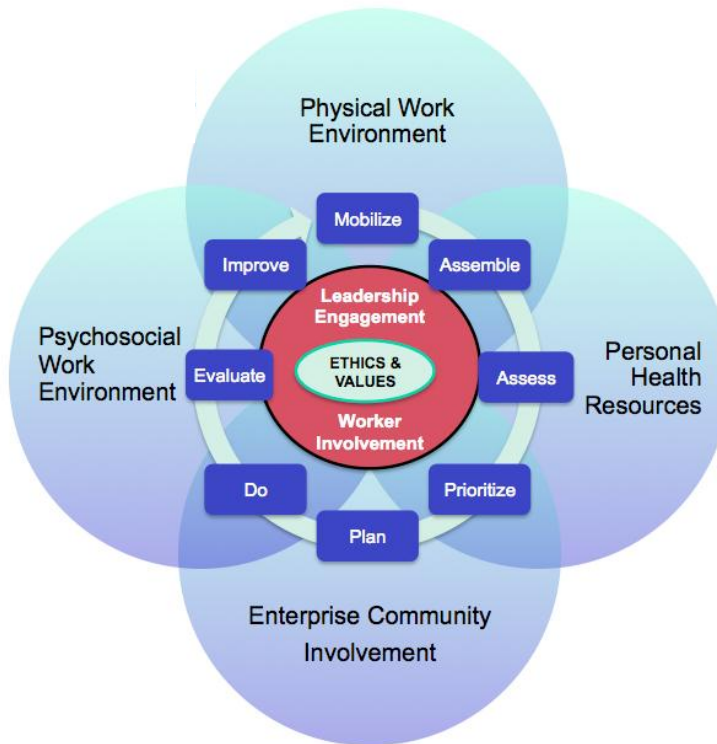
Suggestions for further research

Despite the limitations of this thesis', the model opens the door for further discussion about organizational well-being using a systems psychodynamic perspective. Future research possibilities include qualitative and quantitative studies to validate the model. These could be carried out from a diagnostic or consultative point of view. It would be of interest to study whether the level of congruence between organizations' cultural values and its employees' motivational needs is a predictor of organizational well-being. More research is also needed to determine to what extent healthy narcissism in leaders can contribute to organizational well-being. One possibility would be to study the relationship between the personality traits of CEOs of the best companies to work for and the culture of those companies. This thesis also invites supporting studies to identify the key drivers of organizational well-being from a systems psychodynamics perspective. This would help provide practical insights on whether programs, practices or interventions are used most effectively.

As a last remark, this thesis serves as a first step toward discussing the set of conditions or variables that can contribute to organizational well-being from a systems psychodynamics perspective. The model should be further investigated and tested to confirm and enhance its validity and offer additional practical implications and recommendations.

Appendix

Figure A1: WHO healthy workplace model: avenues of influence, process, and core principles



Extracted from World Health Organization (2010). *Healthy workplaces: a model for action— for employers, workers, policy-makers*, Retrieved May 5, 2013 from the World Health Organization website: http://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplaces/en/, p. 13.

Table 1: Characteristics of healthy and destructive narcissism

Characteristic	Healthy narcissism	Destructive narcissism
Self-confident	High outward self-confidence in line with reality	Grandiose

Desire for power, wealth and admiration	May enjoy power	Pursues power at all costs, lacks normal inhibitions in its pursuit
Relationships	Real concern for others and their ideas; does not exploit or devalue others	Concerns limited to expressing socially appropriate response when convenient; devalues and exploits others without remorse
Ability to follow a consistent path	Has values; follows through on plans	Lacks values; easily bored; often changes course
Foundation	Healthy childhood with support for self-esteem and appropriate limits on behavior towards others	Traumatic childhood undercutting true sense of self-esteem and/or learning that he/she doesn't need to be considerate of others

Extracted from Lubit, R. (2002). 'The long-term organizational impact of destructively narcissistic managers.' *Academy of Management Executive*, 16(1), 127-138.

Table 2: Processes for creating holding environments in intergroup relations

Process	Rationale
Shared tasks and superordinate goals	Structure that enables members to work together across groups, departments, functions, and other divisions that inevitably press for their disconnectedness from one another. [...]
Specific structures that hold people together as they work on joint tasks	[...] These structures include joint meetings led by leaders authorized to focus on the superordinate goals, reward systems that support collaborative behavior and outcomes, and hierarchical structures and reporting relationships that press toward expansive collaboration.
Role clarity	Clearly specified roles, responsibilities, and authority in the context of newly configured collaborative work enables members to have shared understandings of the rules by which they need to engage one another. The lack of such clarity enables individuals to act upon their own biased understandings, self-interested agendas, assumptions and beliefs, politicized relationships, and historical precedents.
Containment and interpretation	Members need to develop the capacity to verbalize, directly and appropriately, their emotional experiences to others, and join with them to make sense of those experiences. This is the action of the holding environment—containment and interpretation—that substitutes for the defensive actions of group members acting out against those defined as “other.” While shared tasks and superordinate goals, buttressing structures, and clarity about the newly configured system help re-define the nature of the “other” in the organization, members must be

	educated, trained, reinforced, and led toward engaging one another in ways that offer compassionate understanding.
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Extracted from Kahn, W.A. (2012). 'The functions of dysfunction: Implications for organizational diagnosis and change.' *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research*, 64(3), 225-241.

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