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A Study to Analyse the Impact of Organizational Culture on the Mental Well-Being of the Employee

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how an organization's culture shapes the mental well-being of its employees, focusing on the key factors that drive this relationship. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative research, the study investigates how workplace culture impacts employee mental health, job satisfaction, engagement, and turnover. The findings offer new insights into the role of a supportive and inclusive culture in promoting employee wellness and performance. Specific elements—like strong peer support, collaborative teamwork, and a sense of autonomy—emerge as vital contributors to positive mental health outcomes. These insights are particularly relevant for organizations looking to reduce issues such as absenteeism and employee turnover by creating healthier, more balanced work environments. Ultimately, this research aims to guide the development of practical, evidence-based strategies that help organizations build cultures where mental well-being is genuinely prioritized and embedded into daily operations.

Introduction

Organizational culture reflects the shared values, beliefs, and behaviors within a company that influence how employees interact, make decisions, and perform their work. It shapes the way they collaborate, express creativity, and view their workplace. Employee mental well-being, which includes emotional, psychological, and social health, is deeply tied to how meaningful and fulfilling their work feels within this cultural framework.

A supportive work environment plays a critical role in shaping employees' mental wellness. Research highlights that the culture of an organization can significantly impact both the happiness and job satisfaction of its workforce. When employees feel content, they are more likely to enjoy their roles—and satisfied employees, in turn, are generally happier. This positive loop benefits both staff and employers. Cultivating a healthy culture that values employee wellbeing often results in higher engagement, better collaboration, and improved retention rates. A sense of purpose and belonging at work enhances not only productivity but also overall morale.

Positive work cultures promote professional growth, recognition, and a better work-life balance—all of which contribute to happier, healthier employees. In contrast, toxic cultures marked by stress, conflict, or lack of support can severely damage morale and mental health. High-stress environments can lead to burnout, absenteeism, poor job satisfaction, and reduced productivity. Without support systems in place, employees may feel overwhelmed and disconnected from their roles, leading to higher turnover and disengagement.

These issues can ultimately harm an organization's performance and reputation. As awareness grows, many companies are acknowledging the importance of mental wellness in the workplace and are taking active steps to improve it. Organizations are increasingly relying on data to understand employee needs and make informed decisions. Through analyzing trends and behaviors, companies can design more tailored strategies that support well-being and align with employee preferences.

Investing in wellness programs—like stress management workshops, mental health resources, or flexible working models—can foster a more resilient workforce. While progress has been made, there's still work ahead to ensure employees have consistent access to mental health tools and support. This is especially important in today's evolving work environment, shaped by remote work, increased workloads, and social isolation post-pandemic.

A proactive approach to workplace mental health not only boosts individual well-being but also strengthens organizational resilience. Ongoing research is vital to understanding how workplace culture affects employee mental health. Insights from such studies help guide employers in creating more positive, supportive environments where both individuals and businesses can thrive.

Organizational norms—often unwritten but widely understood—shape expectations and behaviors. Leaders play a crucial role in shaping these norms and the broader culture. Job satisfaction, in turn, is influenced by how employees perceive their responsibilities and workplace conditions. When employees align positively with company values and policies, satisfaction and productivity increase.

Today's work environment has transformed dramatically, with evolving demands, technologies, and workforce expectations. Amid these shifts, workplace culture has become a key factor in employee mental health. A toxic culture may increase stress and anxiety, while a supportive culture can provide meaning, fulfillment, and resilience. Despite increasing attention to this issue, more in-depth studies are needed to understand the mechanisms behind this link.

This study seeks to fill that gap—examining how workplace culture influences mental health and identifying strategies organizations can adopt to create more nurturing environments. By understanding these dynamics, businesses can build healthier workplaces that support employee well-being and drive long-term success.

Review of Literature

Extensive academic research underscores the strong connection between organizational culture and employee mental well-being. A supportive work environment plays a critical role in boosting health, satisfaction, and productivity (Schneider et al., 2013; Kelloway & Day, 2005). Numerous studies highlight that organizational culture significantly influences psychological outcomes. A positive and inclusive culture correlates with lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, while negative environments often lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and increased turnover intentions (Karanika-Murray & Weyman, 2013; Giorgi et al., 2017).

Leadership style is a core component in shaping organizational culture. Transformational leaders—those who motivate, provide individual support, and encourage personal growth—foster higher levels of employee well-being (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Skakon et al., 2010). In contrast, transactional leadership, with its focus on performance outcomes and task completion, can increase stress levels and diminish job satisfaction (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Cultural elements such as autonomy, recognition, internal collaboration, and open communication are central to improving workplace mental health (Burke & Cooper, 2008; Harter et al., 2002).

Mental well-being is a multifaceted concept. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), mental health is a state where individuals can realize their abilities, handle everyday stress, and contribute meaningfully to their community. Workplace factors like psychological safety, clear communication, equitable treatment, and support networks enhance employees' ability to maintain good mental health (LaMontagne et al., 2014; Nielsen & Daniels, 2012).

With mental health concerns on the rise globally, workplaces are increasingly viewed as strategic points for prevention and intervention. In 2008, the European Commission highlighted workplace well-being as a major priority for EU nations (European Commission, 2008). Although different cultures interpret well-being differently, common contributors include empathetic leadership, flexibility, meaningful work, and fair compensation (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Warr, 2002). Perceived organizational support and a strong sense of belonging are repeatedly identified as protective factors (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

Organizational culture refers to the shared beliefs, behaviors, and assumptions that shape how people interact and work. It evolves from leadership, past experiences, and internal social dynamics (Schein, 2010). Culture offers behavioral guidelines, encourages unity, and helps organizations navigate external challenges (O'Reilly et al., 1991).

A well-structured culture is grounded in consistent principles, values, and expectations. These factors influence communication styles, innovation, role clarity, and emotional responses to workplace stressors. One of the most established frameworks for analyzing culture is the Competing Values Framework (CVF), which classifies cultures along flexibility vs. control and internal vs. external orientation axes (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). It results in four types: Clan (team-based), Adhocracy (innovation-driven), Market (goal-oriented), and Hierarchy (structure-focused).

Hierarchical cultures emphasize order and formal procedures, offering stability for some but limiting input and creativity for others. Market cultures, while results-focused and driven by competition, may increase performance pressure (Hartnell et al., 2011). In contrast, clan cultures promote belonging, teamwork, and loyalty—leading to better job satisfaction and retention, especially among educated professionals (Laschinger & Finegan, 2005). A study of hospital staff found that cultures focused on shared values and collaboration had the most favorable impact on satisfaction and well-being.

Similar findings were observed in the Saudi Arabian banking sector, where institutions favoring clan and adhocracy cultures saw higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates. Meanwhile, hierarchical and market cultures were less effective in promoting mental wellbeing (Alasfour et al., 2016).

In conclusion, organizational culture is a decisive factor in shaping mental well-being. Dimensions such as leadership style, communication, recognition, and flexibility directly impact employee health and performance. As mental wellness becomes a central concern in modern organizations, fostering positive cultural environments is essential for sustainable growth and engagement.

Data analysis

Following pie charts represents part of my data collection through survey done on the A study to analyse the impact of organisational culture on the mental well-being of the employee

A notable 28.7% of employees feel leadership is genuinely supportive, actively prioritizing mental health and offering help during tough times—an encouraging sign of empathetic and proactive leadership. However, the larger portion—47.5%—views leadership as caring but inconsistent, revealing a

gap between good intentions and tangible actions. Meanwhile, 18.8% remain neutral, suggesting their experiences vary based on specific leaders or situations, possibly due to the lack of uniform mental health policies. Interestingly, no respondents marked leadership as rarely or not supportive, which may reflect either a generally positive culture or hesitation to express criticism openly. These findings indicate that while the foundation for mental health support exists, there is a clear need to build consistency through structured programs, leadership training, and ongoing feedback mechanisms.

Only 23.5% of employees feel truly valued and included, suggesting that while some experience respectful, transparent, and engaging communication from leadership, many others may not feel heard or appreciated. The largest group—29.4%—feels informed but not necessarily recognized, indicating that communication may be functional but lacks personal connection or acknowledgment. A significant 40.2% remain neutral, which may point to communication that feels routine or disengaging. Encouragingly, no respondents felt completely ignored or undervalued, which shows that extreme dissatisfaction isn't present. Still, the data highlights a need to move beyond just sharing information—leaders should focus on building two-way communication, recognizing employee contributions, and creating more engaging, personalized interactions. This shift could help more employees feel connected, appreciated, and aligned with the organization's goals.

Recognition plays a positive role for most employees, with 33% saying it significantly boosts their mood and motivation—proof that when done well, acknowledgment has a powerful impact. However, the largest group (39.8%) reports only a slight uplift, suggesting that recognition may feel too general, infrequent, or misaligned with personal preferences. Meanwhile, 15.5% feel no noticeable difference, possibly due to recognition seeming routine or lacking sincerity. Notably, 8.7% say they rarely receive recognition at all, which highlights a critical gap that could lead to disengagement if left unaddressed. Encouragingly, no one felt worse due to recognition, implying it's generally fair and non-damaging. To strengthen this area, leaders should personalize recognition, deliver it more consistently, and ensure even less visible contributions are acknowledged. By doing so, the organization can deepen motivation, make more employees feel valued, and create a stronger culture of appreciation.

Roughly 26.9% of employees feel a deep cultural alignment, describing the organization as a place where they can be their true selves—an encouraging sign that the values and environment resonate well with them. Another 32% report a mostly positive fit, though they may occasionally adjust parts of their identity to match expectations. Meanwhile, 22.3% feel only somewhat aligned, which could lead to disengagement if their personal values continue to feel underrepresented. Notably, no one selected the most negative responses, which suggests the culture isn't widely seen as harmful, though leaders should ensure this isn't due to reluctance to share honest feedback. Overall, while the cultural foundation is strong, there's room to grow. Creating more inclusive spaces, celebrating diverse perspectives, and ensuring open, anonymous feedback can help more employees feel genuinely connected and at home in the workplace.

About 38.8% of employees feel genuinely supported in maintaining work-life balance, crediting leadership for thoughtful practices like flexible scheduling, mental health resources, and manageable workloads. This is a solid foundation, but it also means that over 60% of employees experience less-than-ideal support. For 17.5%, the backing exists but feels inconsistent or insufficient—highlighting an opportunity for clearer policies and more proactive manager involvement. A notable 34% remain neutral, suggesting leadership's efforts aren't visible or impactful enough to influence their well-being, which could become problematic if workplace stress increases. Most concerning is the 9.7% who feel poorly supported or even negatively impacted, pointing to possible burnout or unrealistic demands. To improve, leaders should focus on making support more consistent, reaching out to those who feel unseen, and urgently addressing the needs of employees facing the highest stress. By doing so, the organization can foster a culture where well-being is not just encouraged but genuinely experienced by all.

Around 70% of employees feel their personal background—such as culture, upbringing, or values—influences how they experience the workplace. For 21.4%, this impact is strong, suggesting they may face unique challenges or find a powerful alignment between their identity and the company culture. Nearly half (48.5%) report a moderate effect, indicating the culture is somewhat inclusive but still has blind spots. These employees may adjust to fit in but don't always feel fully seen. Meanwhile, 18.4% feel neutral—perhaps viewing the culture as generic or choosing to keep their personal identity separate from work. A small portion (around 11.7%) feel no impact at all, which could reflect a culture where conformity is the norm or where some hesitate to speak up. To build a more inclusive environment, the organization should focus on amplifying diverse voices, offering tailored support, and encouraging open conversations about identity—turning difference into a source of strength, not division.

Over half of employees (55.3%) find that transparent communication helps reduce their anxiety at work—especially the 38.8% who say it *greatly* improves their sense of security. For them, clear and consistent messaging fosters trust and stability. However, 39.8% report no impact at all, likely because the information they receive feels irrelevant, generic, or disconnected from their day-to-day roles. Another 16.5% feel only slight relief, often due to updates that lack timeliness or emotional reassurance. While no one reported communication making things worse, that absence may reflect survey hesitancy rather than a flawless reality. To deepen the impact of transparency, leaders should not only share facts but also explain the *why* and *how*—showing empathy, linking updates to individual roles, and creating space for two-way feedback. True clarity isn't just about sharing information—it's about making people feel heard, supported, and included.

Conclusion

This study underscores the significant impact that organizational culture exerts on the mental well-being of employees. The findings clearly illustrate that a positive and inclusive organizational culture contributes greatly to enhanced employee morale, reduced stress levels, and increased job satisfaction. Throughout the research, it became evident that organizations with strong value systems, open communication channels, empathetic leadership, and a genuine commitment to employee development tend to foster healthier work environments.

The role of organizational practices such as team-building activities, recognition systems, mental health support mechanisms, and work-life balance initiatives cannot be overstated. These practices contribute not only to improving the psychological health of employees but also to boosting their productivity, loyalty, and overall engagement with their work. Moreover, leadership emerged as a key factor in shaping the mental climate of the organization. Leaders who demonstrate emotional intelligence, transparency, and support for mental health set a standard for the entire workforce, thereby cultivating trust and psychological safety.

This research also brought to light the darker side of organizational culture. A toxic culture characterized by excessive pressure, micromanagement, lack of appreciation, and poor communication leads to burnout, emotional fatigue, and high turnover rates. When employees feel undervalued or overworked, their mental resilience diminishes, adversely affecting both their performance and personal life.

In summary, organizational culture acts as both a catalyst and a cushion — it can drive employee performance while simultaneously protecting mental health, or it can erode psychological well-being if neglected. Organizations must, therefore, recognize that cultivating a healthy culture is not just an HR initiative but a strategic imperative that affects all aspects of the business.

Recommendation

To nurture and enhance employee mental well-being, organizations must adopt a holistic approach to building a positive and sustainable organizational culture. First and foremost, fostering open communication is crucial. Employees must feel psychologically safe to voice concerns, share feedback, and engage in dialogue without fear of negative repercussions. This can be achieved through transparent leadership practices, regular feedback mechanisms, and open-door policies that reduce hierarchical barriers. When communication flows freely across all levels, it helps in identifying stressors early and builds trust throughout the organization.

Equally important is the promotion of empathetic leadership. Leaders and managers must be trained to develop emotional intelligence, active listening skills, and compassionate decisionmaking. Leaders serve as role models; their behavior sets the tone for the entire organization. When leaders demonstrate empathy, understand employee struggles, and offer timely support, it fosters a mentally healthy and engaged workforce. This leadership style significantly reduces feelings of isolation, burnout, and emotional exhaustion.

Organizations should also invest in formal mental health support systems. This includes providing access to professional counselling services, employee assistance programs, stressrelief resources, and designated mental health days. Such initiatives demonstrate an organization's commitment to employee wellness beyond productivity metrics. Making mental health support a part of corporate policy also helps in destigmatizing the subject, encouraging employees to seek help when needed.

Creating a work-life balance culture is another critical recommendation. Employers must implement flexible work arrangements, respect boundaries outside of office hours, and discourage presenteeism. Overworking not only affects mental health but also reduces longterm productivity. Providing adequate rest, supporting parental or caregiver roles, and allowing time for personal commitments can significantly boost employee satisfaction and retention.

Employee recognition is a powerful yet often overlooked tool for promoting well-being. A culture that consistently acknowledges and celebrates employee achievements, both big and small, reinforces positive behavior and instills a sense of worth. Recognition programs— whether formal or informal— contribute to higher morale and foster a greater sense of belonging within the organization.

Inclusivity and respect must form the bedrock of organizational culture. Embracing diversity, ensuring equitable treatment, and cultivating a respectful environment help in building emotional safety. Employees are more likely to thrive when they feel accepted and valued, irrespective of their background or identity. Organizations must enforce anti-discrimination policies, support diverse hiring, and provide training to prevent unconscious bias.

Regular organizational culture audits are recommended to assess the internal environment. Surveys, feedback forums, and mental wellness assessments can reveal emerging stressors and help organizations tailor effective interventions. This continuous monitoring ensures the culture remains adaptive and responsive to the changing needs of the workforce.

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