

TOXIC WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT AFFECTS EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH

* Prof. Vaishnavi Jagdish Sahu ** Prof. Payal Ramesh Bhansali

ABSTRACT

Within this context, this study examines the relationship between a toxic work environment and the mental health of employees by examining the actual ethology of toxicity and understanding how this condition affects mental health and employee productivity. This research adopts a mixed-methodology framework, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data. The incidence of these workplace hazards and their relationship with common mental health problems were examined by asking 100 employees from a range of industries to complete a survey. These conducted in-depth interviews with 30 participants helped provide the qualitative understanding about coping strategies and personal experiences. The principal driver of these statistics was the significant correlation between toxic work environments and a decrease in mental health. The major toxic elements included poor management techniques, lack of support, being over worked, and workplace bullying. Suffering such conditions over a long period of time has been associated with chronic mental health disorders, as well as declines in workplace productivity. Such conditions also led to increased levels of anxiety and depression among stressed employees. The study says a good work- life balance, solid anti-bullying measures and a supportive workplace culture can mitigate the harmful impacts. Establishing a positive work culture, providing availability of resources for mental health support, and educating leaders to recognise and manage toxicity are some of the ways organizations are advised to prioritise mental health. It is recommended that Company Culture and Employee Morale are continually analysed and addressed in order to detect problems at an early stage, which can be corrected. This all- inclusive strategy attempts to address and reduce workplace toxicity in order to improve employee mental health and job performance.

Keywords: Toxic Workplace, Employee Mental Health, Workplace Bullying, Stress, Organizational Culture, Mental Health Resources.

Introduction

Employee mental health is greatly impacted by toxic work environments, which can show up in a number of negative ways. Workplace bullying, excessive workloads, poor

management techniques, and a lack of support are common indicators of a toxic workplace. As per the American Psychological Association (APA), approximately 75% of workers encounter stress at work, and half of these



Author
Vaishnavi Sahu
Assistant professor
G.S College, Khamgaon
vaishanvisahu110@gmail.com



Author
Payal Bhansali
Assistant Professor
G.S College, Khamgaon
payalbhansali90@gmail.com

instances are associated with unfavourable work environments. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that poor mental health and workplace stress are the main contributors to decreased productivity, which costs the world economy about \$1 trillion a year. Furthermore, Gallup's 2022 survey indicates that 23% of workers experience burnout frequently or always, and 44% experience burnout occasionally, highlighting the pervasiveness of workplace toxicity.

Extended periods of time spent in these kinds of settings can cause long-term mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, which negatively impact workers' well-being and productivity. It is imperative that organizations aiming to preserve a fit and efficient workforce take action on these concerns. To mitigate these negative effects, it is imperative to implement strategies such as work-life balance promotion, strong anti-bullying policies, and supportive work cultures. Toxic behaviours can be found and corrected with the support of regular evaluations of workplace culture and employee well-being, resulting in a more productive and healthy work environment.

Definitions

- **Toxic Workplace:** A toxic work environment is one that can be detrimental to employees' productivity, morale, and general well-being. It is defined by unfavourable behaviours, attitudes, and circumstances. Poor management techniques, a lack of support, an overwhelming workload, bullying at work, and an environment that is generally unfriendly or unsupportive are all important indicators of a toxic workplace.
- **Employee Mental Health:** The psychological and emotional well-being of individuals in the workplace is referred to as employee mental health. It includes all of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that affect an employee's capacity to manage stress, interact with others, and make decisions. Overall productivity and job satisfaction at work depend heavily on mental health.
- **Workplace Bullying:** Bullying at work refers to the persistent, harmful treatment of one or more employees by one or more of the perpetrators. It covers actions like verbal mistreatment, offensive language, intimidating, threatening, or humiliating acts, as well as work-related disruptions or sabotage that keeps tasks from getting completed.
- **Stress:** Tension in the body or mind can be caused by a physical, mental, or emotional stressor. Stress can be brought on by internal or external factors, such as illness or internal conflicts, as well as external factors like job demands and personal relationships. Stress at work is frequently brought on by high expectations, constrained deadlines, and performance pressure.
- **Organizational Culture:** The common values, attitudes, customs, and behaviours that influence how employees behave and interact with one another within an organization are referred to as organizational culture. It affects how workers view their positions, approach their work, and communicate with supervisors and other staff members. Collaboration, creativity, and employee well-being are all encouraged by an encouraging corporate culture.

- **Mental Health Resources:** Tools, services, and supports for maintaining or enhancing mental health are known as mental health resources. This can include having access to mental health days, employee assistance programs (EAPs), counselling services, stress management instruction, and policies that support a good work-life balance in the workplace.

Objectives

1. To Recognize Particularly Hazardous Behaviours
2. To Evaluate the Results of Mental Health
3. To comprehend the impact techniques;
4. To look into the moderating factors
5. To Encourage Advocacy and Increase Awareness

Hypothesis

H₀: - A hazardous work environment has no effect on an employee's mental health.

H₁: - A hazardous work environment has an impact on workers' mental health.

Research Methodology

No.	Variables (Factors)	Definition	Item (Subfactors)
1	Poor Management and Leadership	When managers are unable to inspire their teams to succeed, it has a detrimental effect on both the company and the workers. It includes a variety of underperformance behaviours, including failing to give credit to staff members, micromanaging, a detached demeanour, low emotional intelligence, and excessive negativity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Micromanagement: Having too much control over little things. 2. Lack of Support: Supervisors' inadequate help and comprehension. 3. Inconsistent Policies: Explicit or dynamic guidelines and standards.
2	Negative Work Culture	An organization with poor work habits, norms, and expectations that result in failures and inefficiencies is said to have a negative work culture. It is typified by unhealthy working conditions, inadequate communication, and incompetent leadership. Low morale, high employee turnover, and decreased productivity can arise from this. Cliques, gossip, passive-aggressive behaviour, fear of failure, and a lack of clarity are typical indicators of a bad work culture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anger and Bullying: Anger directed towards subordinates or superiors. 2. Gossip and Rumors: Disseminating uncorroborated information regarding coworkers. 3. Lack of Trust: A lack of trust exists between staff members and management.

3	High Job Demands	High job demands are defined as prolonged or intense physical, mental, or emotional exertion necessary to complete a task. This includes assignments that are beyond the capabilities of the workforce, like lengthy workdays, heavy workloads, and severe time constraints. If high job demands are unreasonable, excessive, or consistently exceed workers' capabilities, they can cause psychological and physical harm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An excessive workload is defined as having too much work without enough resources. 2. Unrealistic Expectations: The stress of having to fulfil impossible deadlines or goals. 3. Long Working Hours: Due to prolonged working hours, there is a lack of work-life balance.
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- **Statistical Analysis**

Various tests are used to analyse the various variables in different ways. The t-test is thus applied to the provided data to support the research because the sample size in this case is 100 from the population. The "t-Test: Two Sample for Means" was employed by the authors to investigate their theories. If the p-value is less than 5% (0.05), there is a significant influence. If the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 in a two-tailed test with a 95% confidence level, it indicates that the computed p-value is less than or equal to 0.05. This suggests that there is enough data to reject the null hypothesis and come to the conclusion that the variables under investigation differ or are related in a statistically meaningful way.

1. Poor Management and Leadership

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Rate the following: - [I feel depressed while working]	To what degree do you feel micromanaged when completing tasks?
Mean	2.98	2.59
Variance	1.918787879	1.193838384
Observations	100	100
Pearson Correlation	0.381612599	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	99	
t Stat	2.787510571	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.003184341	
t Critical one-tail	1.660391156	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.006368682	
t Critical two-tail	1.984216952	

Source: Calculated by Author

A statistically significant difference was found in the paired t-test between the means of feeling micromanaged when completing tasks and the means of feeling depressed while working. With variances of 1.9188 and 1.1938, respectively, the mean rating for feeling depressed while working was 2.98, and the mean rating for feeling micromanaged was 2.59. A moderately positive relationship between the two variables is indicated by a Pearson correlation of 0.3816 with 100 observations. For both the one-tail (1.6604) and two-tail (1.9842) tests, the t-statistic of 2.7875 is

greater than the critical values; the corresponding p-values (one-tail: 0.0032, two-tail: 0.0064) are both less than the significance level of 0.05. **We conclude that there is a significant difference between employees' feelings of depression and micromanagement, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no mean difference.**

2. Negative Work Culture

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Rate the following [Manager delegate work for improving skills of employees]	Rate the following: - [I feel depressed while working]
Mean	2.21	2.48
Variance	0.915050505	1.363232323
Observations	100	100
Pearson Correlation	0.514780665	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	99	
t Stat	-2.541764651	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.006290312	
t Critical one-tail	1.660391156	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.012580624	
t Critical two-tail	1.984216952	

Source: Calculated by Author

Significant findings are obtained from the paired t-test used to compare the means of two related samples: the rating of managers assigning work for skill development and the rating of employees experiencing depression at work. Manager delegation has a mean rating of 2.21 and feeling depressed has a mean rating of 2.48. Given that the two ratings have a t-statistic of -2.54 and a two-tailed p-value of 0.0126, both of which are less than the significance level of 0.05, **we reject the null hypothesis that there is no mean difference.** This suggests that issues related to work delegation may be associated with employee depression levels **because there is a statistically significant difference between how employees rate their managers' delegation skills and their feelings of depression at work.**

3. High Job Demands

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Rate the following [I work a manageable number of hours]	Rate the following: - [I feel depressed while working]
Mean	2.59	2.98
Variance	1.193838384	1.918787879
Observations	100	100
Pearson Correlation	0.381612599	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	99	
t Stat	-2.787510571	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.003184341	
t Critical one-tail	1.660391156	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.006368682	
t Critical two-tail	1.984216952	

Source: Calculated by Author

Employee assessments of their feelings of depression at work and their ability to work a reasonable number of hours. The findings showed that there was a substantial difference between the two means. The average score for working a reasonable number of hours was 2.59, whereas the average score for experiencing depression at work was 2.98. We reject the null hypothesis that there is no mean difference because the calculated t-statistic was - 2.79 with 99 degrees of freedom and the two-tailed test's p-value was 0.0064, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two ratings, suggesting that employees' feelings of depression are significantly correlated with the number of manageable working hours.

Limitation

1. There are various limitations to this study on the relationship between toxic workplace environments and employee mental health. The results might not be sufficiently generalized given the small sample size of 100.
2. Accuracy may be impacted by bias in self-reported data. The cross-sectional design makes it impossible to evaluate causality or changes over time.
3. Factors that could cause confusion, such as individual stressors, are not taken into consideration. Results are influenced by individual differences in subjective measures.
4. Other important factors, like job security, might be missed by the study. Reactions might not accurately reflect long-term conditions but rather be influenced by recent events at work.
5. Disparities in mental health perceptions and workplace norms across cultures are not taken into account. Lastly, the results might not be applicable to a large industry or organization if they are narrowly focused.

Findings

1. A t-test was utilized in the statistical analysis because it had a sample size of 100 and was one of several tests used to analyse different variables. If the p-value was less than 0.05, a significant influence was assumed, and at a 95% confidence level, a t-statistic larger than 1.96 indicated statistical significance.
2. A paired t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between employees' perceptions of micromanagement and their feelings of depression in the area of poor management and leadership. The two variables also showed a moderately positive correlation.
3. A paired t-test revealed a significant difference between employees' assessments of managers' skill development delegation abilities and their feelings of depression at work in the context of negative work cultures, pointing to a possible correlation between problems with work delegation and employee depression levels.
4. A paired t-test was used to compare employees' ratings of manageable working hours and feelings of depression at work in order to assess high job demands. The results showed a significant difference between the two ratings, pointing to a possible

relationship between the quantity of manageable working hours and employees' feelings of depression.

5. These results highlight how crucial it is to deal with harmful workplace elements in order to promote a more wholesome and effective work environment.
6. To help employees feel less depressed, managers should concentrate on encouraging supportive leadership practices and cutting back on micromanagement tendencies.
7. In order to lessen the detrimental effects of workplace toxicity on employee mental health, organizations should make an effort to foster a positive work culture that is marked by effective communication, trust, and support.
8. Employee depression can be decreased and general wellbeing can be improved by putting work-life balance and demand management strategies into practice.
9. It is essential to regularly assess workplace culture and employee well-being in order to spot and deal with toxic behaviours and foster a productive work environment.
10. Organizations can improve employee productivity, mental health, and overall effectiveness by proactively addressing workplace toxicity.

Conclusion

1. Significant correlations between workplace factors and employee mental health were found through statistical analysis using t-tests on a sample size of one hundred.
2. A paired t-test revealed a significant correlation between depressive symptoms

and perceptions of micromanagement in the context of bad management and leadership, emphasizing the necessity of supportive leadership techniques.

3. In a similar vein, a paired t-test conducted within unfavourable work cultures found a significant correlation between employees' evaluations of managers' delegating skills and their depressive states, underscoring the significance of creating supportive work environments.
4. A paired t-test also revealed a significant difference between manageable working hours and depressive symptoms in assessing high job demands, highlighting the significance of work-life balance and demand management techniques.
5. To improve productivity and mental health, these findings emphasize the need for organizations to address toxic workplace elements, foster positive work cultures, and conduct regular well-being assessments of their workforce.
6. Organizations can create environments that support employee well-being, productivity, and overall effectiveness by proactively addressing workplace toxicity.

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