


More than Just Tension: Work related Factors affecting the Mental Health of Employee at Workplace-An Empirical Study in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Employee mental health has emerged as a key issue for organizational strategy and policy development since it is one of the most urgent issues facing governments and institutions in industrialized countries. Earlier studies have examined a variety of employee mental health-related topics, such as stress, burnout, and toxic work environments. Aim: Our study aims to examine several mental health related issues that can affect employees in Saudi Arabia. Methods: To support our study, we carried out a cross-sectional quantitative analysis and administered our survey from June 2025 to August 2025 in 37 companies in Saudi Arabia. Data were analysed based on Cohen's Standards for Correlation Coefficient using R language. Results: The results shows that stress, job instability, fair treatment, and help from organizations influence workers' psychological well-being. Additionally, these findings correspond to actual human experiences i.e. First, anxious workers who worry about losing their jobs may also have mental health issues. Secondly, better support is probably experienced by the supported worker who obtains fair treatment. Lastly, a successful professional frequently experiences several pleasant circumstances that reinforce one another. Conclusion: This study examined mental well-being of workers in Saudi Arabia and have pointed out major factors such as stress, unfair treatment and organizational support contributing to mental health of workers.

Keywords: Mental Health, Cohen's Standard, Fair Treatment, Human Experiences, Stress, Workplace Tensions.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined mental well-being as a condition in which a person can comprehend his or her own abilities, manage everyday stressors, perform well, and make a positive contribution to society.^[1] It stresses the importance of having healthy working conditions and defines "healthy work" as employment when there are sufficient and adequate conditions to promote health. A variety of work-related factors, such as stress, expectations, and shift work, may raise an employee's risk of mental health problems. This poses a serious threat to employees' mental health. Its effects include cardiovascular problems, musculoskeletal issues, sleeplessness, inability to concentrate, and other mental disorders.^{[2][3]} According to WHO, anxiety and depression are thought to generate 12 billion lost working days annually, and indirect costs, such as decreased productivity. While promoting individual well-being, a supportive work environment also helps maintain

productivity and improve performance outcomes.^[4] Employees report higher job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and enhanced emotional resilience when they receive the right kind of assistance, tools, and techniques to manage their mental health. This in turn leads to a better overall quality of life, a more satisfying career, and a healthier body and mind. There are several factors that affect the mental wellbeing of employee at their workplace.^{[5][6]} This research investigates the connection between workplace health and employee engagement at Saudi Arabia.

Background Study

Several studies examined various factors that contribute to the social impact.^{[7][8][9]} Employee mental health in organizational settings has received a lot of attention lately from academics. Employee mental health has emerged as a key issue for organizational strategy and policy development since it is one of the most urgent issues facing governments and institutions in industrialized countries. Wu et al. ^[10] emphasizes the widespread yet frequently disregarded problem of mental health in the workplace. According to the findings, encouraging good mental health in work environments is a complex process that calls for cooperation from leaders at all levels. Employment can improve well-being, but psychological suffering may be made worse by a hostile workplace culture and a lack of social support. According to authors, fostering a healthy corporate culture, offering reasonably priced mental health services, putting stress management techniques into practice, and lowering physical and psychological stressors are all ways to enhance workplace mental health. Lecours et al.^[11] used a qualitative methodology that included 22 interviews and a template analysis approach to investigate managerial responsibilities in fostering workplace mental health. The results showed that managers may encourage staff participation in mental health programs by adopting straightforward practices including facilitating social connections, allowing for mistakes, and conducting inclusive consultations. Rasool et al.^[12] looked on how employee engagement was affected by hostile work settings. The study found that unfavourable employee attitudes, mental health issues including anxiety and depression, and disengagement are all directly correlated with toxic workplace conditions. Furthermore, it was discovered that the association between engagement and working conditions was mediated by employee well-being, supporting the idea that motivated workers are more likely to be effective and favorably impact company objectives. Lukan^[13] investigated the impact of everyday work dynamics on employees' stress levels. According to this study, stress is an affective reaction, and work intensity is the most commonly mentioned environmental risk factor. These two variables have statistically significant associations, indicating that employees' daily stress levels are significantly influenced by their level of work intensity. Qiu et al. ^[14] investigated the connection between employees' mental health, job dissatisfaction, and stress at work. According to the results, a huge number of employees reported work-related stress. The significance of organizational and individual initiatives to enhance the psychosocial work environment was also highlighted. Burnout's moderating effect on the connection between perceived productivity and Quality of Work Life (QWL) was examined by Leitão et al.^[15] Important conclusions highlighted that while burnout can either exacerbate or mitigate the impact of QWL on performance, depending on the situation, a safe workplace and fair pay boost productivity. In order to investigate the connection between work related stress and job performance, Sari et al. ^[16] studied 93 staff-level individuals in Indonesia's manufacturing industry. The findings showed that irregular work schedules and strained interpersonal ties were major causes of work-related stress and poor performance. Herr et al. ^[17] underlined that when evaluating how workers view workplace demands and resources, personality characteristics must be taken into account. The study found that personality type influences the association between mental health outcomes and perceptions of the workplace setting. Therefore, tailored approaches to resource allocation and work design may result in increased psychological well-being. Lu et al. ^[18] concentrated on the Chinese setting, emphasized the favourable correlation between employee mental health and organizational performance by identifying job engagement and creativity as mediating factors. Buregfurt et al.^[19] emphasizes that physical workplace factor such as illumination, auditory levels, and air quality can profoundly affect employees' stress, weariness, and susceptibility to depression. It was shown that there is a high correlation between the quality of indoor environmental conditions (IEQ), especially elements like light and daylight exposure, and mental health outcomes including stress and cognitive function (e.g., focus).

The background study leads us to the conclusion that the earlier studies have examined a variety of employee mental health-related topics, such as stress, burnout, and toxic work environments.^{[20][21][22]} It can also be inferred that employee motivation and mental health are significantly influenced by organizational characteristics;^{[23][24][25][26]} however, a significant knowledge gap exists how Saudi Arabian employees view these elements as affecting their performance and well-being. Keeping this in view, this study will focus on work related factors that may affect the mental health of employee working at companies in Saudi Arabia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Our primary research focuses on factors effecting the employees' mental health in various Saudi companies. We used four factors (Fair Treatment at workplace, Support by management, Job Security, and Stress) at the

workplace that contribute to employees' mental well-being. The selection of these four factors is based on the "Mind the Workplace – MHA Workplace Health Survey 2017" empirical validation.^[27] The following hypotheses were developed for our research study:

- **H1:** Fair Treatment in Organizations and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.
- **H2:** Job Security and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.
- **H3:** Organizational and Management Support and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.
- **H4:** Workplace Stress and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.
- **H5:** Employees who trust their team members to support work activities will report better mental health outcomes.
- **H6:** Employees who miss more work due to stress report worse mental health outcomes.

To validate our hypothesis, we carried out a cross-sectional quantitative analysis and administered our survey from June 2025 to August 2025 in 37 companies in Saudi Arabia. The survey items were based on questions already validated by Mental Health America (MHA)^[27]. The link to the questionnaire was sent through social networking sites and applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram. All participants who took part in the survey were volunteers. We chose the snowball sampling method^[28], which began with 30 persons as referrals and were requested to distribute the survey to their networks. 1600 respondents took part in the survey, with 1240 valid replies collected. 68.95% of employees were full-time workers, while 31.05% were part-time workers. Data were analysed based on Cohen's Standards for Correlation Coefficients using R language.^[29]

RESULTS

This section presents the results of our findings:

Finding Based On Hypotheses:

H1: Fair Treatment in Organizations and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.

We tested the hypothesis that employees experiencing greater fair treatment report better mental health than those experiencing less fair treatment. The analysis revealed (Figure 1) a statistically significant positive relationship between fair treatment and mental health scores ($r = 0.129$, $p < .001$). A follow-up linear regression confirmed this positive association ($\beta = 0.129$, $p < .001$). Although the effect size suggests the association is small in scale, the hypothesis supports the theory.

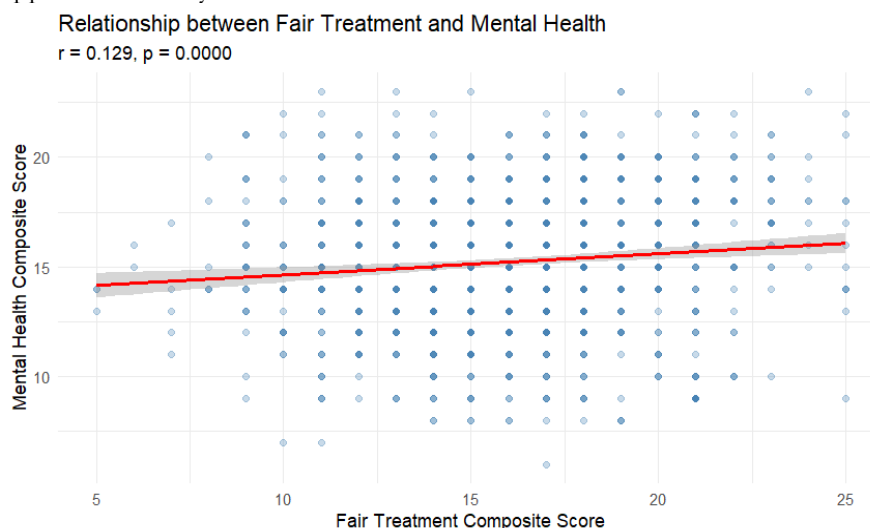


Figure 1: Relationship between Fair treatment and mental health

H2: Job Security and the Mental Health of Employees have a significantly positive relationship.

We tested the hypothesis that employees experiencing greater job security report better mental health than those experiencing less job security. The analysis revealed (Figure 2) a statistically significant positive relationship between job security and mental health scores ($r = 0.343$, $p < .001$). A follow-up linear regression confirmed this

positive association ($\beta = 0.343, p < .001$). The statistics clearly support the hypothesis, and the effect size shows a medium-sized association, indicating that job stability plays a significant role in employee mental health.

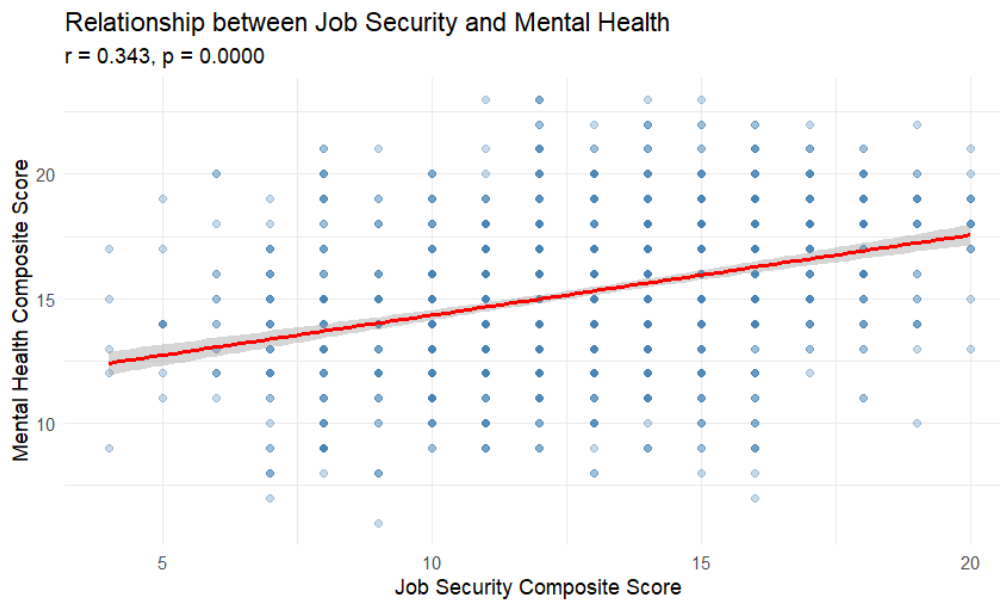


Figure 2: Relationship between Job Security and mental health

H3: Organizational and Management Support and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.

We tested the hypothesis that employees perceiving greater organizational and management support would report better mental health. The analysis revealed (Figure 3) a statistically significant positive relationship between organizational/management support and mental health scores ($r = 0.060, p = .034, N = 1239$). Even while the correlation was in the expected direction, the effect size was quite little, suggesting that although management and organisational support may have an impact on employee mental health, this impact is not very strong on its own.

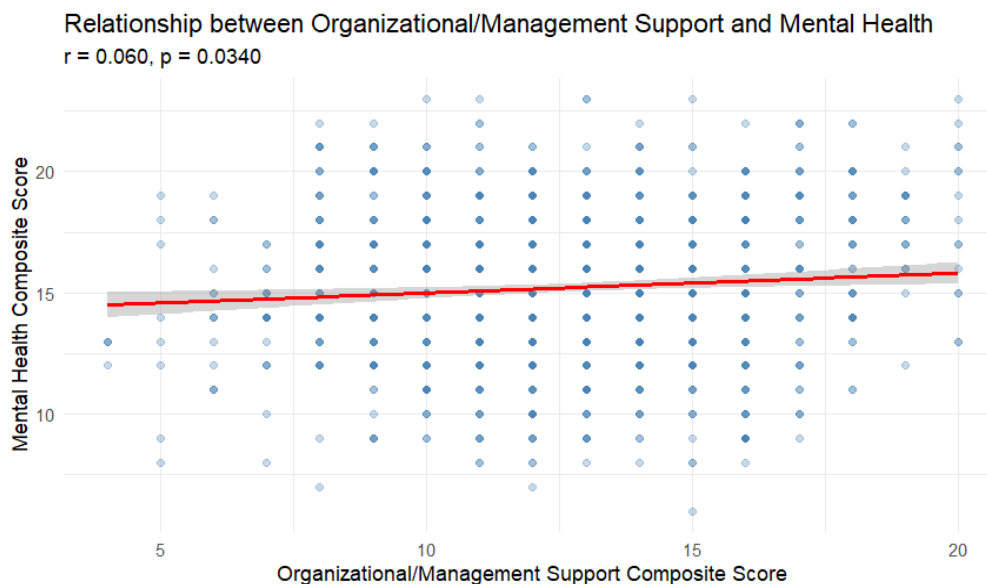


Figure 3: Relationship between Organisation support and mental health

H4: Reduced Workplace Stress and the Mental Health of Employees have a significant positive relationship.

We tested the hypothesis that employees experiencing less workplace stress report better mental health outcomes. Reduced job stress was found to have a notable, statistically significant positive link with mental health ($r = 0.865, p < .001, N = 1,239$). With a large effect size suggesting that reduced stress is significantly linked to improved mental health, the results strongly support the hypothesis (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Relationship between reduced workplace stress and mental health

H5: Employees who trust their team members to support work activities will report better mental health outcomes.

We tested the hypothesis that employees who trust their team members to support work activities report better mental health outcomes. The analysis revealed (Figure 5) no statistically significant relationship between team trust and mental health ($r = -0.013$, $p = .656$, $N = 1,239$). The hypothesis is not supported by the data, suggesting that team trust does not significantly influence mental health outcomes in this population.

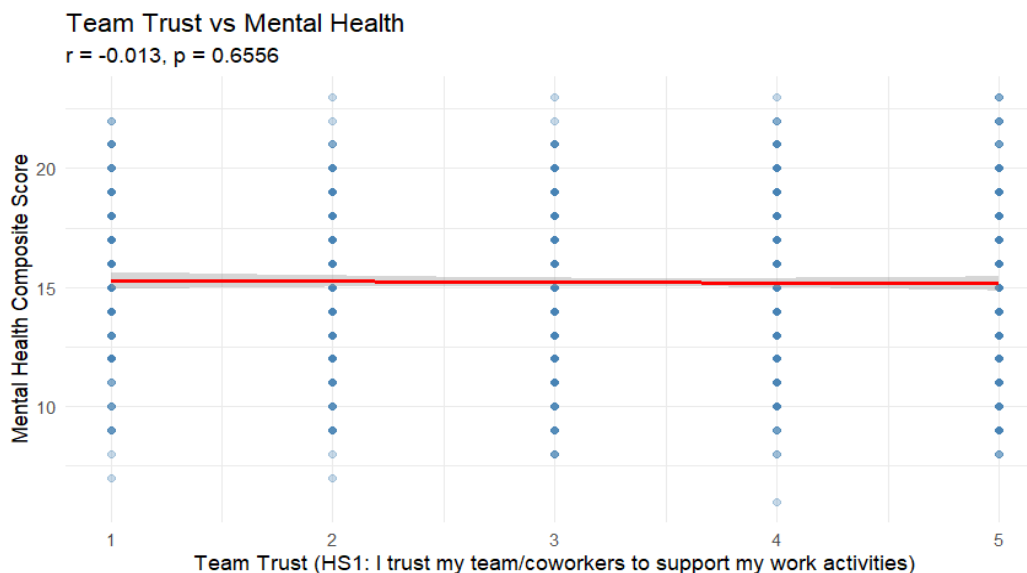


Figure 5: Relationship between team trust and mental health

H6: Employees who miss more work due to stress report worse mental health outcomes.

We tested the hypothesis that workers who miss more work as a result of stress have lower mental health outcomes. Self-reported frequency of missing work due to job-related stress was used to quantify absenteeism; higher scores indicated more frequent absences. Work absenteeism and mental health were found to be strongly statistically significantly correlated negatively ($\rho = -0.623$, $p < .001$, $N = 1,239$). The data clearly supports the data, with absenteeism accounting for 38.8% of the variation in mental health outcomes. (Figure 6)

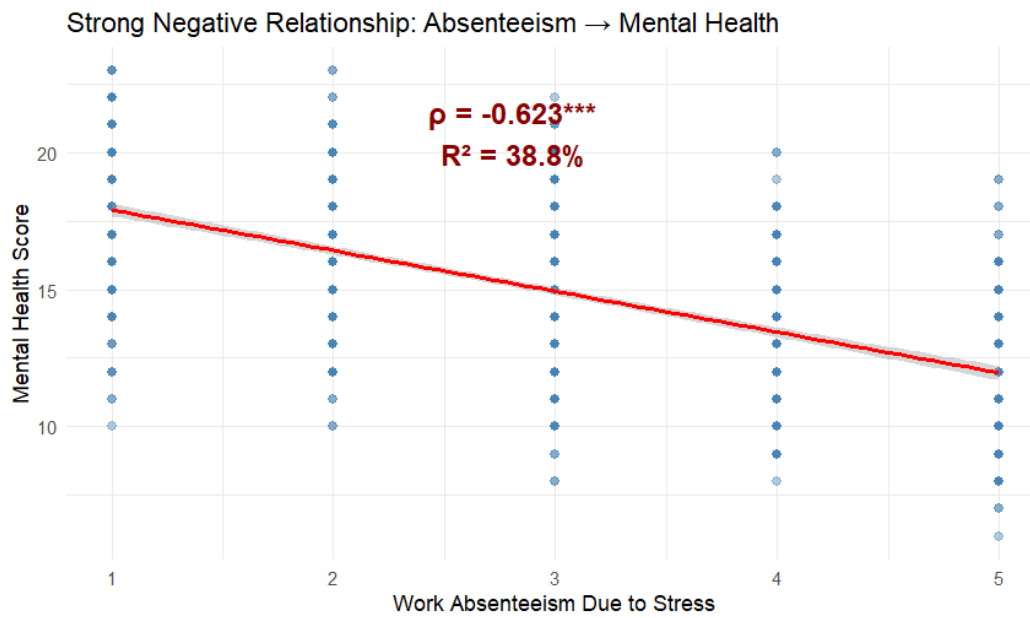


Figure 6: Relationship between work absenteeism and mental health

KEY FINDINGS

The predictors used in the survey are given in the following table with their p-values:

Table 1: Predictors and p-values

Predictors		Correlation	p-value	Significance
Vacation comfort	JS3	0.501	0	***
Supervisor workload is same	FT2	0.476	0	***
Accountability fairness	FT3	0.455	0	***
Job uncertainty	JS1	0.416	0	***
Supervisor Support	HS4	0.393	0	***
Absentees from work	MH4	0.39	0	***
Deserved Pays	FT4	0.389	0	***
Less Helpful colleagues	HS2	0.389	0	***
Trustworthy colleagues	HS1	0.387	0	***
Trivial Focus	JS2	0.381	0	***
Organization Criticism	MH1	0.378	0	***
Job Switch	MH3	0.352	0	***
Safe work conditions	JS4	0.333	0	***
Proper Oversight	FT1	0.303	0	***
Realistic Workload	HS3	0.292	0	***
Work stress	MH5	0.275	0	***
Unfair recognition	FT5	0.221	0	***
Bad Work environment	MH2	-0.023	0.4189	ns

Strongest Predictors of Workplace Mental Health ($r > 0.4$):

- JS3 ($r = 0.501$): The strongest correlation is that vacation comfort and job security are crucial.
- FT2 ($r = 0.476$): It is essential for supervisors to set a good example.
- FT3 ($r = 0.455$): Workplace health is significantly impacted by perceived accountability fairness.

Moderate to Strong Predictors of Workplace Mental Health ($r = 0.35-0.40$):

- Concerns about work-life balance, supervisor support, and job security are addressed in JS1, HS4, MH4, FT4, HS2, HS1, JS2, and MH1.

Weaker but Significant Predictors ($r = 0.22-0.33$):

- Although less closely connected, JS4, FT1, HS3, MH5, and FT5 are still statistically significant.

Non-Significant Finding ($r = -0.023, p = 0.419$)

- It appears that workplace mental health has little to do with concentration issues. It can be attributed to the fact that distraction may be attributed by respondents to personal rather than professional factors.

Analysis Of Workplace Mental Health Scores Across Different Industries

Respondents were asked to identify their industry of employment in order to have a better understanding of differences in workplace well-being. Based on these answers, mental health scores were examined in several industries to find trends unique to each one.

Safety PPE Industry (Score: 76.0/90)

- 84.4% of maximum possible score, which means exceptional workplace health environment.
- Potential contributing factors include robust safety procedures and culture, high standards for regulatory compliance and prioritising the protection and well-being of employees.

Sales Industry (Score: 65.0/90)

- 72.2% of maximum possible score, which means very good workplace health.
- Possible factors include a performance-based culture with clear incentives and strong team dynamics and support systems.

Energy Industry (Score: 58.5/90)

- 65.0% of maximum possible score, which shows good workplace health
- Possible factors include a high stakes setting that demands dependability and robust safety policies and procedures.

Government (Score: 58.4/90)

- 64.9% of maximum possible score, which shows good workplace health
- Possible factors include job security and stability.

Air Conditioning Plants (Score: 58.0/90)

- 64.4% of maximum possible score, which is a good workplace health
- Possible factors include technical, skilled workforce and possibly unionized environments.

The results show that occupational mental health scores vary significantly by industry. The Safety PPE industry received the highest rating, most likely as a result of its innate emphasis on worker welfare, safety, and compliance. Industries including government, energy, and manufacturing (air conditioning plants), on the other hand, received moderate scores, indicating generally favourable but less remarkable working conditions. It's interesting to note that the sales sector performed better than a number of historically stable industries, perhaps as a result of its focus on collaboration and reward programs that boost motivation. Overall, the findings imply that industry-specific traits including organizational culture, regulatory frameworks, and the harmony between job security, performance, and safety have a significant influence on workplace mental health.

Key Findings by Construct

- JS3-JS1 Correlation: $r = 0.397, p < 0.001$, these items exhibit the highest correlation, suggesting a direct psychological connection between vacation anxiety and fear of losing one's job.
- HS4-HS3 Correlation: $r = 0.375, p < 0.001$; there is a high correlation between supervisor support and realistic workload expectations, indicating that supportive leadership is associated with manageable work demands.
- FT3-FT4 Correlation: $r = 0.369, p < 0.001$; accountability fairness and pay equity perceptions are closely linked, indicating a broader justice perception factor.
- FT2-FT3 Correlation: $r = 0.364, p < 0.001$; two basic concepts of fairness are universal accountability and supervisor modelling.

The measuring structure's theoretical viability was confirmed by the analysis, which found multiple significant within-construct correlations. With the highest connection found between JS3 (vacation anxiety owing to job concerns) and JS1 (fear of work termination) ($r = 0.397, p < 0.001$), the Job Security construct was shown to be the strongest dimension. This research indicates that job insecurity is a significant factor in determining workplace stress since it shows a direct psychological link between workers' unwillingness to leave their jobs and their underlying fear of losing them. Such a link emphasizes how uncertainty affects more general patterns of work-life balance and psychological safety in addition to direct employment risk. Supportive leadership is associated with reasonable work demands, as evidenced by the correlation between HS4 (supervisor help during challenges) and HS3 (realistic workload expectations) ($r = 0.375, p < 0.001$) within the Help/help construct. Additionally, the Fair Treatment construct demonstrated consistency, with FT2 (supervisor role modeling) linked to FT3 (universal responsibility) ($r = 0.364, p < 0.001$) and FT3 (accountability across ranks) linked to FT4 (fair pay) ($r = 0.369, p <$

0.001). These results imply that job security, support, and justice are interconnected factors influencing how employees view the culture of their organizations.

DISCUSSION

Several recognized conceptual frameworks can be used to understand the study's outcomes. Starting with our first component i.e. fair treatment, both Equity Theory and the more all-encompassing framework of Organizational Justice Theory can be used to interpret the study's results on fair treatment and mental health.^[30]^[31] The strong correlations between accountability, pay equity, and supervisor role modelling, and positive association between fair treatment and mental health (H1, $r = 0.129$, $p < .001$), demonstrate the importance of improving well-being. Similarly, according to organizational justice theory, fair treatment and workload realism have a strong link (H6, $r = 0.235$, $p < .001$), which is an example of informational justice. This is because employees are better able to assess workload expectations when demands are communicated in a clear and transparent manner. Procedural and interactional justice are also reflected in supervisor role modelling and responsibility, which show how equitable procedures and considerate treatment influence mental health. The results also align with the Social Exchange Theory,^[32] which stresses connections at work that are reciprocal. Employees who perceive greater safety assurances (JS4–HS4, $r = 0.325$, $p < .001$) or support from managers (H3, $r = 0.060$, $p = .034$) are more inclined to respond with increased dedication and good well-being. The statistics highlight the significance of resource protection in maintaining mental health when seen via the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory.^[33] One of the best indicators of well-being was job security (H2, $r = 0.343$, $p < .001$), which reflected the protection of employment as a vital resource. Resource depletion is further demonstrated by the negative correlation between stress-related absenteeism and mental health (H8, $\rho = -0.623$, $p < .001$): absenteeism increases, and well-being decreases as job-related stress depletes personal and psychological resources. Lastly, the findings are consistent with the Job Demands–Control–Support which postulates that supportive circumstances reduce stress while high demands combined with little control and support predict strain.^[34] This concept is validated by the high correlation between improved mental health and less workplace stress (H4, $r = 0.865$, $p < .001$), which emphasizes the importance of manageable demands for employee well-being. Additionally, the association between workload expectations and supervisor support (HS4–HS3, $r = 0.375$, $p < .001$) shows how supportive leadership influences perceptions of workload realism, which in turn moderates job demands.

When combined, these results imply that a multi-theoretical approach provides the best explanation for workplace mental health. The moral underpinning is provided by equity and justice perceptions (Equity Theory), relational trust is maintained by reciprocal exchanges (SET), the buffering effects of security and support are explained by resource preservation (COR), and workload and stress management is made clear by demand-support dynamics (JDCS). Combining these viewpoints provides a thorough framework for comprehending how stress, job stability, justice, and assistance interact to influence workers' psychological well-being. Additionally, these findings correspond to actual human experiences i.e. First, anxious workers who worry about losing their jobs may also have mental health issues. Secondly, better support is probably experienced by the supported worker who obtains fair treatment. Lastly, a successful professional frequently experiences several pleasant circumstances that reinforce one another. This study has limitations despite the insightful information it produced. If compared to other contexts, Saudi Arabian cultural and contextual elements may have a distinct impact on workplace views and mental health outcomes. As a result, care should be taken when extrapolating results outside of the group under study.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of four workplace factors—stress at work, job security, equitable treatment, and organizational support—on employees' mental health in 37 Saudi Arabian enterprises. The results support the significance of each of these elements. The findings provide concrete proof for a number of conceptual paradigms. According to results, fairness has an impact on psychological consequences, reciprocal partnerships enhance well-being and how stress-reduction and mental health maintenance are achieved in supportive contexts. From a practical standpoint, the results indicate that organizations seeking to improve employee well-being should prioritize clear and consistent communication, employment stability policies, fair and open processes, and supportive leadership. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that work environment factors significantly affect employees' mental health.

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Nil.

Conflicts Of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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