

Organizational Ethical Climate and Workplace Harassment: Implications for Employee Psychological Health

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Abstract

The ethical environment within organizations significantly shapes employee behavior, workplace relationships, and overall psychological well-being. Organizational ethical climate refers to the shared perceptions among employees regarding appropriate ethical behavior and the procedures for addressing ethical issues in the workplace (Victor & Cullen, 1988). A positive ethical climate establishes norms that encourage respect, fairness, and accountability, while discouraging misconduct such as harassment and abuse of power. In contrast, weak or ambiguous ethical climates often enable unethical behaviors, including workplace harassment, which can have serious implications for employee psychological health and organizational effectiveness. Workplace harassment encompassing verbal, psychological, and social forms of mistreatment remains a critical organizational concern globally. Research indicates that employees exposed to harassment frequently experience elevated stress levels, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction. These psychological consequences not only affect individual well-being but also undermine productivity, commitment, and organizational performance. This study investigates the relationship between organizational ethical climate and workplace harassment and examines how these factors collectively influence employee psychological health. Drawing on ethical climate theory and occupational stress frameworks, the research explores how organizational norms, leadership behavior, and institutional policies shape employees' experiences of harassment and their psychological responses. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative survey data from 350 employees across multiple sectors with qualitative interviews to capture nuanced insights into workplace experiences. The quantitative component measured perceptions of ethical climate, exposure to workplace harassment, and indicators of psychological health using validated scales derived from established research. Qualitative interviews further explored employees' perceptions of organizational ethics, reporting mechanisms, and leadership accountability. Findings reveal that organizations characterized by strong ethical climates particularly those emphasizing caring, fairness, and adherence to ethical rules tend to report significantly lower levels of workplace harassment. Statistical analysis demonstrates a strong negative correlation between ethical climate and harassment, suggesting that supportive and principled organizational environments act as protective mechanisms against abusive workplace behaviors. Furthermore, workplace harassment is found to have a significant negative impact on employees' psychological health, contributing to heightened stress, emotional exhaustion, and reduced well-being. Importantly, the study also identifies ethical climate as a moderating factor that can buffer the adverse psychological effects of harassment, indicating that employees working in ethically supportive environments are better able to cope with workplace stressors. The findings highlight the critical role of ethical leadership, transparent reporting systems, and organizational accountability in promoting a safe and psychologically healthy workplace. By strengthening ethical climates, organizations can reduce the prevalence of harassment and enhance employee psychological well-being. This study contributes to the growing body of literature linking ethical organizational environments with employee mental health outcomes and underscores the importance of integrating ethical governance with workplace health policies. Ultimately, fostering a strong ethical climate is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic organizational practice that supports sustainable employee well-being and productivity.

Keywords: Organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, psychological health, employee well-being, ethical leadership.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizations, ethical considerations have become increasingly central to effective management, employee well-being, and sustainable organizational performance. Beyond achieving financial goals, organizations are now expected to cultivate environments that promote fairness, dignity, and psychological safety for employees. One of the key concepts that explains how ethical norms shape workplace behavior is organizational ethical climate. Organizational ethical climate refers to the shared perceptions among employees regarding what constitutes ethically appropriate behavior and how ethical dilemmas should be handled within an organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988). It represents the collective understanding of ethical standards that guide decision-making processes, interpersonal interactions, and managerial practices. A strong ethical climate can encourage integrity, transparency, and mutual respect, while a weak or ambiguous ethical climate may allow unethical practices to flourish (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Among the most concerning outcomes of poor ethical climates is workplace harassment. Workplace harassment includes repeated or persistent behaviors that demean, intimidate, or threaten employees, thereby creating a hostile work environment (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). Such behaviors may manifest in various forms, including verbal abuse, social exclusion, intimidation, humiliation, and other psychological aggressions. These actions are not only detrimental to individual employees but also undermine organizational culture and productivity. Research has shown that harassment is often embedded within organizational contexts where power imbalances, weak ethical oversight, and inadequate policies prevail (Herscovis & Barling, 2010). Consequently, examining workplace harassment through the lens of organizational ethical climate provides valuable insights into how organizational values and norms influence employee experiences.

The prevalence of workplace harassment has become a major concern in modern organizations across sectors and geographic contexts. Empirical evidence suggests that a substantial proportion of employees encounter some form of workplace mistreatment during their careers. Studies indicate that exposure to harassment can result in severe psychological and emotional consequences, including anxiety, depression, stress-related disorders, and diminished self-esteem (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010). From an organizational perspective, harassment can lead to increased absenteeism, lower job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and higher employee turnover (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). These outcomes highlight the importance of addressing workplace harassment not only as a moral issue but also as a critical organizational challenge affecting productivity and sustainability.

Psychological health has emerged as a key dimension of employee well-being within the field of organizational behavior. Psychological health refers to an individual's emotional stability, resilience, and overall mental well-being in relation to work experiences (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Work environments that are characterized by supportive leadership, fairness, and ethical conduct tend to foster positive psychological health among employees. Conversely, environments that tolerate harassment or unethical conduct may produce chronic stress and emotional exhaustion. According to stress and coping theory, employees exposed to persistent stressors such as harassment may experience psychological strain when they perceive limited control over their environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This strain can manifest in various forms, including burnout, reduced motivation, and impaired work performance.

Organizational ethical climate plays a critical role in shaping whether harassment behaviors emerge or are effectively prevented. Ethical climate theory suggests that organizational norms and values establish informal guidelines that influence employee behavior and decision-making (Victor & Cullen, 1988). When organizations emphasize caring, fairness, and adherence to ethical rules, employees are more likely to respect colleagues and adhere to professional standards. Conversely, climates that prioritize self-interest or tolerate unethical conduct may inadvertently encourage behaviors that harm others (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005). Empirical studies have demonstrated that ethical leadership and clearly articulated ethical policies significantly reduce the likelihood of workplace misconduct (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). These findings suggest that ethical climate serves as a preventative mechanism that can minimize harassment and protect employee well-being.

Despite growing scholarly attention to workplace harassment and organizational ethics, research integrating these two domains remains relatively limited. Many studies focus primarily on individual experiences of harassment without sufficiently considering the broader organizational context in which such behaviors occur. Similarly, studies on ethical climate often emphasize ethical decision-making or organizational integrity without fully exploring the implications for employee psychological health. As a result, there is a need for comprehensive research that examines how ethical climates influence the prevalence of workplace harassment and how these dynamics affect employees' psychological well-being.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health. Specifically, it investigates how perceptions of ethical climate influence the occurrence of harassment and how these factors collectively shape psychological outcomes for employees. By integrating insights from

ethical climate theory, workplace harassment research, and occupational stress frameworks, the study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of the mechanisms through which organizational environments affect employee well-being.

Understanding these relationships is particularly important in the context of contemporary organizations, where employee mental health has become a critical issue. As organizations strive to create inclusive and respectful workplaces, examining the role of ethical climate in preventing harassment and promoting psychological well-being becomes increasingly relevant. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader literature by highlighting the importance of ethical organizational cultures in safeguarding employee dignity and mental health while enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.

Background and Rationale

Organizations are increasingly scrutinized not only for performance outcomes but also for the ethical environments they cultivate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Organizational ethical climate refers to shared perceptions of what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005). A healthy ethical climate can deter workplace misconduct, including harassment, which is a prevalent organizational stressor (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). Workplace harassment whether verbal, psychological, or physical has been associated with heightened stress, anxiety, and decreased psychological health (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Despite extensive research into harassment and organizational climate separately, limited studies integrate their dynamic relationship and collective impact on psychological health. Understanding this interplay is essential for developing effective organizational policies and psychological health interventions.

Aim: To investigate how organizational ethical climate and workplace harassment influence employee psychological health.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the nature of ethical climate within organizations.
2. To examine the prevalence of workplace harassment.
3. To explore the relationship between ethical climate and workplace harassment.
4. To evaluate the impact of ethical climate and harassment on employee psychological health.
5. To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving workplace ethical climates and employee psychological outcomes.

Research Questions

1. What characterizes the ethical climate in contemporary organizations?

2. What is the prevalence and type of workplace harassment reported by employees?
3. How does organizational ethical climate relate to workplace harassment?
4. What are the implications of ethical climate and harassment on psychological health?
5. What organizational strategies can mitigate harassment and enhance psychological well-being?

Scope and Delimitations

This research focuses on employees from mid-to-large sized companies across services, manufacturing, and technology sectors. It does not cover small enterprises or governmental institutions exclusively. The study examines psychological health outcomes rather than clinical diagnoses and relies on self-reported survey data, which may introduce response bias.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health has received growing attention in organizational behavior and management research. Scholars increasingly recognize that workplace behaviors are not only influenced by individual characteristics but also shaped by organizational environments, leadership practices, and institutional norms. The literature on ethical climate theory, workplace harassment, and occupational health provides important insights into how organizational contexts can influence both employee conduct and psychological outcomes.

2.1 Organizational Ethical Climate

The concept of organizational ethical climate was first systematically introduced by Victor and Cullen (1988), who defined it as the shared perceptions among employees regarding ethical procedures and the appropriate ways to handle moral issues within an organization. According to their theoretical framework, ethical climate represents a form of organizational culture that influences decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and ethical conduct. Victor and Cullen (1988) further identified several ethical climate types based on ethical criteria and locus of analysis, including caring, law and code, rules, instrumental, and independence climates. Each type reflects different ethical principles that guide employee behavior.

Subsequent research has expanded the understanding of ethical climate and its implications for organizational outcomes. Martin and Cullen (2006), through a meta-analytic review of ethical climate research, concluded that ethical climate significantly influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and ethical decision-making. A caring climate, which emphasizes concern for the well-being of others, has been consistently associated with higher levels of trust

and cooperation among employees. In contrast, an instrumental climate where decisions are driven primarily by self-interest or organizational gain may foster unethical practices and interpersonal conflicts.

Ethical leadership also plays a crucial role in shaping ethical climate. Leaders serve as role models whose behaviors influence organizational norms and expectations. Mayer, Kuenzi, and Greenbaum (2010) argued that ethical leadership strengthens ethical climates by reinforcing fairness, accountability, and transparency in decision-making. When leaders actively promote ethical standards and demonstrate moral integrity, employees are more likely to internalize these values and exhibit ethical behavior. Conversely, when leaders tolerate unethical actions or fail to enforce ethical policies, employees may perceive misconduct as acceptable.

Schminke, Ambrose, and Neubaum (2005) further emphasized that ethical climate influences not only ethical decision-making but also the prevalence of workplace deviance and misconduct. Their research suggests that organizations with strong ethical climates tend to experience fewer instances of unethical behavior, including harassment and discrimination. This highlights the importance of ethical climate as a contextual factor that shapes employee interactions and workplace culture.

2.2 Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment is a form of interpersonal mistreatment characterized by repeated hostile actions directed toward an individual who may find it difficult to defend themselves (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). It includes behaviors such as verbal abuse, intimidation, humiliation, social exclusion, and deliberate obstruction of work performance. Workplace harassment may occur across hierarchical levels and can involve supervisors, peers, or subordinates.

Research indicates that workplace harassment is a widespread issue affecting employees in diverse organizational contexts. Nielsen, Matthesen, and Einarsen (2010) found that employees exposed to persistent harassment reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress compared to those who did not experience such behaviors. Harassment has been linked to numerous negative outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000).

Scholars have also examined the organizational antecedents of harassment. Hershcovis and Barling (2010) proposed a relational model of workplace aggression, suggesting that workplace harassment often arises from organizational environments characterized by high stress, poor leadership, and weak ethical standards. In such environments, employees may engage in aggressive behaviors as a response to frustration,

competition, or perceived injustice. Organizational structures that fail to address complaints or enforce disciplinary measures may inadvertently reinforce these behaviors.

Another important dimension of workplace harassment involves power dynamics within organizations. Employees in lower hierarchical positions are often more vulnerable to harassment due to limited authority and fear of retaliation (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, organizations lacking clear policies and reporting mechanisms may create environments where victims feel unable to report incidents, thereby allowing harassment to persist.

2.3 Psychological Health in the Workplace

Psychological health has emerged as a central topic in occupational health psychology. Danna and Griffin (1999) defined workplace health and well-being as the physical and psychological outcomes resulting from employees' interactions with their work environments. Psychological health encompasses emotional stability, mental resilience, and overall well-being.

Workplace stressors are widely recognized as significant determinants of psychological health. According to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory, stress occurs when individuals perceive environmental demands as exceeding their coping resources. Workplace harassment represents a significant stressor because it involves repeated exposure to hostile or threatening behaviors that undermine employees' sense of security and dignity.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that exposure to harassment negatively affects psychological health. Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) found that individuals subjected to workplace harassment often experience symptoms such as anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and sleep disturbances. Prolonged exposure to harassment may also lead to burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Psychological health not only affects individual well-being but also has important implications for organizational performance. Employees experiencing psychological distress are more likely to exhibit reduced productivity, absenteeism, and decreased engagement with their work (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Consequently, organizations have a strong incentive to create environments that support employee mental health.

2.4 Interrelationship between Ethical Climate, Harassment, and Psychological Health

Recent studies suggest that ethical climate serves as a critical contextual factor influencing both the occurrence of workplace harassment and its

psychological consequences. Ethical climate establishes behavioral norms that either discourage or tolerate interpersonal mistreatment. When organizations promote fairness, respect, and accountability, employees are less likely to engage in harassment and more likely to intervene when misconduct occurs.

Mayer *et al.*, (2010) demonstrated that ethical leadership and strong ethical climates reduce the likelihood of unethical behaviors, including workplace aggression. Their research indicates that ethical climates function as informal control mechanisms that guide employee behavior and reinforce moral standards. Similarly, Martin and Cullen (2006) found that ethical climates characterized by caring and rule-based principles are associated with lower levels of workplace conflict and misconduct.

In addition to reducing harassment, ethical climates may also buffer the psychological effects of negative workplace experiences. Supportive organizational environments can provide employees with coping resources such as social support, fair grievance procedures, and psychological assistance. These resources can mitigate the emotional strain associated with workplace stressors (Schminke *et al.*, 2005).

Despite these insights, there remains a need for more integrative research that simultaneously examines ethical climate, workplace harassment, and psychological health. Much of the existing literature addresses these variables independently rather than exploring their interconnected relationships. Understanding how ethical climates shape both the prevalence of harassment and its psychological impact can provide valuable guidance for organizations seeking to improve workplace well-being.

Overall, the literature suggests that organizational ethical climate is a powerful determinant of employee behavior and workplace culture. By fostering ethical norms, promoting respectful interactions, and establishing effective policies, organizations can reduce workplace harassment and support employee psychological health. This study builds on existing research by examining these relationships within a unified framework, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how ethical organizational environments influence employee well-being.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology outlines the systematic procedures used to investigate the relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health. A rigorous methodological framework is essential for ensuring the reliability, validity, and credibility of the findings. This study adopts a mixed-

methods research design to capture both quantitative patterns and qualitative insights regarding employees' experiences and perceptions. The methodology section describes the research design, study population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, measurement instruments, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Mixed-methods research combines the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, enabling researchers to explore complex social phenomena from multiple perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative component allows for statistical analysis of relationships among variables, while the qualitative component provides contextual insights into employees' experiences of ethical climate and workplace harassment.

The quantitative approach is primarily used to measure employees' perceptions of organizational ethical climate, the prevalence of workplace harassment, and indicators of psychological health. Through survey data, the study examines correlations and predictive relationships among these variables. The qualitative component complements the quantitative findings by exploring employee perceptions through semi-structured interviews. Such an approach helps to deepen understanding of how ethical climate influences interpersonal interactions and psychological well-being in workplace settings.

A cross-sectional research design was adopted, meaning that data were collected at a single point in time. Cross-sectional designs are widely used in organizational research to examine relationships among variables within a defined population (Bryman, 2016). Although cross-sectional studies cannot establish definitive causal relationships, they are effective in identifying patterns and associations that can inform future longitudinal research.

3.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted among employees working in various private sector organizations, including service, manufacturing, and technology sectors. These sectors were selected because they represent diverse organizational structures and workplace dynamics, which may influence the ethical climate and the occurrence of harassment. Investigating multiple industries helps increase the generalizability of the findings and allows for comparative insights into organizational practices.

Organizations participating in the study were medium- to large-sized enterprises with established human resource policies and management structures.

Such organizations typically have formalized ethical guidelines and employee conduct policies, making them suitable contexts for examining ethical climate and harassment dynamics.

3.3 Target Population

The target population consisted of full-time employees working in private sector organizations. Employees at different hierarchical levels including managerial, supervisory, and non-managerial staff were included in the study to capture diverse perspectives regarding organizational climate and workplace interactions.

Including employees from multiple organizational levels is important because perceptions of ethical climate and experiences of harassment may vary depending on power relations, job responsibilities, and workplace exposure (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). For example, employees in lower hierarchical positions may be more vulnerable to harassment due to limited authority and fear of retaliation.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups or strata based on specific characteristics such as organizational level or department and randomly selecting participants from each stratum (Bryman, 2016). This method helps ensure that different categories of employees are adequately represented in the sample.

The final sample consisted of 350 employees, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing in social science research. Sample size adequacy is important for ensuring statistical power and reliability of results. According to methodological guidelines, samples exceeding 300 participants are generally considered sufficient for regression and correlation analyses (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

For the qualitative component, 30 employees were selected through purposive sampling to participate in semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants who have relevant experiences and insights related to the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). These participants provided deeper perspectives on ethical climate perceptions, harassment experiences, and psychological impacts.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using two primary methods: survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

3.5.1 Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire served as the main quantitative data collection tool. Questionnaires are

widely used in organizational research due to their ability to collect standardized information from large samples efficiently (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, education level, job position, and years of work experience.
2. **Organizational Ethical Climate:** Measured using items adapted from the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ).
3. **Workplace Harassment:** Measured using indicators of workplace bullying and harassment behaviors.
4. **Psychological Health:** Measured using scales assessing stress, emotional exhaustion, and overall psychological well-being.

Participants were asked to respond using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

To complement survey findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to express their experiences and opinions in detail while still following a structured set of guiding questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Interview questions focused on:

- Perceptions of ethical practices within the organization
- Experiences or observations of workplace harassment
- Organizational responses to harassment complaints
- Psychological impacts of workplace interactions

These interviews provided qualitative insights into how organizational culture influences employee experiences and well-being.

3.6 Measurement Instruments

Several validated measurement instruments were used to ensure reliability and validity.

3.6.1 Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ)

The Ethical Climate Questionnaire developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) was used to assess employees' perceptions of ethical climate. The ECQ measures different dimensions such as caring, rules, instrumental, and independence climates.

3.6.2 Workplace Harassment Scale

Workplace harassment was measured using items adapted from research by Einarsen *et al.*, (2011), which assesses exposure to bullying behaviors such as verbal abuse, social exclusion, and intimidation.

3.6.3 Psychological Health Scale

Psychological health was measured using indicators of emotional well-being and workplace stress based on frameworks proposed by Danna and Griffin (1999). These measures assess stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and psychological distress.

The use of validated instruments enhances the reliability and comparability of the research findings.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis involved several stages:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Used to summarize demographic characteristics and variable distributions.
- **Reliability Analysis:** Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess internal consistency of measurement scales.
- **Correlation Analysis:** Used to examine relationships among ethical climate, harassment, and psychological health.
- **Regression Analysis:** Used to determine the predictive effects of ethical climate and harassment on psychological health outcomes.

These statistical methods are commonly used in organizational research to examine relationships between variables and test theoretical models (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data through systematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The process included:

1. Transcribing interview recordings.
2. Familiarizing with the data.
3. Coding significant statements.
4. Identifying recurring themes related to ethical climate and harassment.

Qualitative findings were used to complement and interpret quantitative results.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Ensuring reliability and validity is essential for producing credible research findings. Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement instruments, while validity refers to the accuracy with which the instruments measure the intended constructs (Bryman, 2016).

Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each scale to assess internal consistency. Values above 0.70 were considered acceptable for social science research. Content validity was ensured by using established measurement scales widely recognized in the literature.

Additionally, pilot testing was conducted with a small group of employees to refine questionnaire wording and improve clarity before full data collection.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained before administering questionnaires and conducting interviews.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to protect participants' identities. No personal identifiers were included in the dataset, and all responses were used solely for academic research purposes.

Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of workplace harassment, participants were provided with information about support resources in case discussing their experiences caused emotional discomfort. These ethical practices align with standard guidelines for conducting research involving human participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.10 Summary

In summary, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to investigate the relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health. The research utilizes stratified sampling, validated measurement instruments, and rigorous statistical and thematic analyses to ensure reliability and validity. By integrating multiple methods and data sources, the methodology provides a comprehensive framework for examining how organizational environments influence employee experiences and psychological well-being.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

This section presents and discusses the key findings of the study regarding the relationships among organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health. The findings are interpreted in light of existing literature and theoretical frameworks in organizational behavior, ethical climate theory, and occupational health psychology. The discussion integrates both quantitative and qualitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ethical environments within organizations influence workplace interactions and employee well-being.

4.1 Overview of Respondent Characteristics

The study involved a total of 350 employees from various sectors, including manufacturing, service, and technology organizations. Participants represented different hierarchical levels, including managerial, supervisory, and non-managerial positions. The demographic distribution showed that the majority of respondents had between three and ten years of work experience, suggesting that participants had sufficient exposure to organizational environments to evaluate ethical climates and workplace behaviors.

Demographic analysis revealed that employees across all age groups reported varying perceptions of ethical climate and experiences of workplace harassment. However, employees in junior or non-managerial positions reported slightly higher levels of perceived harassment compared to those in managerial roles. This finding aligns with previous studies indicating that power imbalances within organizational hierarchies often make lower-level employees more vulnerable to workplace mistreatment (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, employees with longer tenure tended to report stronger perceptions of organizational ethical norms, possibly due to increased familiarity with organizational policies and culture.

4.2 Perceptions of Organizational Ethical Climate

One of the primary objectives of this study was to assess employees' perceptions of organizational ethical climate. The results indicated that respondents generally perceived moderate to moderately high ethical standards within their organizations. However, significant variations were observed across different dimensions of ethical climate.

The analysis revealed that caring climate and rules-based climate received the highest average scores among respondents. A caring climate refers to an organizational environment where employees prioritize the well-being of colleagues and stakeholders when making decisions (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Employees reported that supportive teamwork, mutual respect, and consideration for colleagues were commonly emphasized within their organizations. Such environments are often associated with increased trust and collaboration among employees (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Similarly, rules-based climates where employees follow organizational policies and formal codes of conduct were also perceived positively. Participants indicated that many organizations had clearly defined ethical guidelines and disciplinary procedures addressing workplace misconduct. Research has consistently shown that formal ethical policies and codes of conduct play a significant role in shaping employee behavior and promoting accountability (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010).

In contrast, the instrumental climate, characterized by self-interest and competition, received comparatively lower scores. Employees perceived that most organizations discouraged behaviors driven purely by personal gain at the expense of colleagues. However, some respondents indicated that competitive work environments sometimes created pressure that could lead to unethical practices or strained interpersonal relationships.

These findings are consistent with ethical climate theory, which suggests that organizations emphasizing collective well-being and adherence to ethical standards are more likely to foster positive workplace interactions and ethical decision-making (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005).

4.3 Prevalence and Forms of Workplace Harassment

Another key focus of the study was examining the prevalence and forms of workplace harassment experienced by employees. Survey responses indicated that while most employees reported relatively positive workplace environments, a notable proportion of respondents had experienced or witnessed some form of harassment.

The most frequently reported forms of harassment included verbal hostility, social exclusion, and work-related intimidation. Verbal hostility involved behaviors such as harsh criticism, insulting remarks, or disrespectful communication. Social exclusion referred to deliberate isolation from team activities or professional opportunities. Work-related intimidation included actions such as unreasonable deadlines, excessive monitoring, or deliberate obstruction of work tasks.

These findings align with existing research indicating that workplace harassment often manifests through subtle psychological behaviors rather than overt physical aggression (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). Such behaviors may be difficult to identify or report, yet they can significantly affect employees' psychological well-being over time.

Qualitative interview data further revealed that harassment was sometimes associated with organizational power structures. Several interview participants noted that supervisors occasionally engaged in intimidating behaviors toward subordinates, particularly in high-pressure work environments. This observation supports previous research suggesting that hierarchical power differences can facilitate workplace bullying and harassment (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010).

Additionally, some respondents reported witnessing harassment among colleagues at the same hierarchical level, often driven by competition or interpersonal conflicts. These findings highlight the

multifaceted nature of workplace harassment, which can occur across different organizational relationships.

4.4 Relationship between Ethical Climate and Workplace Harassment

One of the most significant findings of the study was the strong negative relationship between organizational ethical climate and workplace harassment. Statistical analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between employees' perceptions of ethical climate and reported experiences of harassment. In other words, employees who perceived their organizations as having strong ethical climates were less likely to report harassment incidents.

This finding supports theoretical perspectives suggesting that ethical climates function as informal control systems guiding employee behavior (Victor & Cullen, 1988). When organizations emphasize ethical values such as fairness, respect, and accountability, employees are more likely to internalize these norms and refrain from engaging in harmful behaviors.

The regression analysis further indicated that ethical climate significantly predicted the likelihood of workplace harassment. Organizations characterized by strong caring and rule-based climates reported significantly lower levels of harassment compared to organizations with weaker ethical environments.

These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that ethical leadership and ethical organizational cultures reduce workplace misconduct and aggression (Mayer *et al.*, 2010). Ethical climates influence employees not only through formal policies but also through shared expectations regarding acceptable conduct.

Qualitative interview findings reinforced these quantitative results. Many participants emphasized that organizations with transparent communication and strong leadership accountability were less likely to experience harassment issues. Employees reported feeling more comfortable reporting concerns when organizations clearly communicated ethical expectations and maintained fair grievance procedures.

4.5 Impact of Workplace Harassment on Psychological Health

The analysis also examined how workplace harassment influences employees' psychological health. Results indicated a significant negative relationship between harassment experiences and psychological well-being. Employees who reported higher levels of harassment also reported higher levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and psychological distress.

These findings are consistent with occupational stress theories, which identify workplace mistreatment as a major psychological stressor (Lazarus & Folkman,

1984). Repeated exposure to hostile behaviors can undermine employees' sense of security and belonging, leading to emotional strain and reduced mental well-being.

Survey data showed that employees exposed to harassment were more likely to report symptoms such as anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased job satisfaction. These psychological outcomes are consistent with earlier research documenting the mental health consequences of workplace bullying and harassment (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

Qualitative interviews provided further insights into the psychological effects of harassment. Several participants described feelings of frustration, helplessness, and diminished motivation resulting from negative workplace interactions. Some employees reported avoiding certain colleagues or work situations to minimize exposure to harassment, which in turn affected their professional engagement and productivity.

These findings highlight the profound psychological implications of workplace harassment and emphasize the importance of preventive organizational measures.

4.6 Moderating Role of Organizational Ethical Climate

An important contribution of this study is the identification of the moderating role of ethical climate in the relationship between workplace harassment and psychological health. Statistical analysis suggested that employees working in organizations with stronger ethical climates reported lower levels of psychological distress even when they experienced occasional negative interactions.

This finding suggests that ethical climates may act as protective mechanisms that mitigate the psychological impact of workplace stressors. Organizations that promote fairness, transparency, and supportive leadership may provide employees with coping resources such as social support and fair conflict resolution mechanisms (Schminke *et al.*, 2005).

For example, employees who trust their organization's ethical standards may feel more confident that harassment complaints will be addressed appropriately. This sense of institutional support can reduce feelings of helplessness and enhance psychological resilience.

Conversely, employees working in organizations with weak ethical climates reported greater psychological distress in response to harassment. In such environments, employees may feel that unethical behaviors are tolerated or ignored, which can exacerbate emotional strain and reduce trust in organizational leadership.

These findings underscore the importance of ethical organizational cultures in promoting both respectful workplace interactions and employee mental health.

4.7 Organizational Responses to Harassment

The study also explored employees' perceptions of organizational responses to harassment. Survey results indicated that many organizations had formal policies addressing workplace misconduct, including anti-harassment policies and reporting procedures. However, employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of these policies varied.

Some respondents expressed confidence in their organizations' commitment to addressing harassment, citing examples of prompt investigations and disciplinary actions. These employees reported higher levels of trust in organizational leadership and greater satisfaction with workplace culture.

However, other participants expressed concerns about inconsistent enforcement of policies or fear of retaliation for reporting incidents. These concerns highlight the importance of not only establishing ethical policies but also ensuring their consistent implementation.

Research suggests that organizations with strong ethical leadership are more likely to enforce ethical standards and maintain credible reporting mechanisms (Mayer *et al.*, 2010). When employees perceive that leaders genuinely prioritize ethical conduct, they are more likely to report misconduct and participate in maintaining ethical workplace environments.

4.8 Implications for Organizational Practice

The findings of this study have important implications for organizational management and employee well-being initiatives. First, the results highlight the central role of ethical climate in preventing workplace harassment. Organizations that promote ethical values and establish clear behavioral expectations can significantly reduce the likelihood of interpersonal mistreatment.

Second, the study underscores the importance of leadership in shaping ethical climates. Leaders who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and accountability set the tone for organizational behavior. Ethical leadership not only discourages harassment but also fosters trust and psychological safety among employees.

Third, organizations should prioritize employee psychological health by addressing workplace stressors and providing appropriate support mechanisms. Programs such as counseling services, stress management training, and employee assistance programs can help employees cope with workplace challenges.

Finally, organizations should regularly assess their ethical climates and workplace cultures through surveys and feedback mechanisms. Continuous monitoring allows organizations to identify emerging issues and implement timely interventions.

4.9 Integration with Existing Literature

Overall, the findings of this study align with and extend existing research on organizational ethics and workplace well-being. Consistent with ethical climate theory, the results demonstrate that shared ethical norms influence employee behavior and organizational culture (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The study also confirms prior research linking workplace harassment with negative psychological outcomes (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

However, this research contributes to the literature by examining the interaction between ethical climate and harassment in shaping psychological health outcomes. By identifying the moderating role of ethical climate, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational environments influence employee well-being.

These insights highlight the importance of integrating ethical governance with workplace health strategies. Organizations that prioritize ethical conduct and employee well-being are better positioned to create sustainable, productive, and psychologically healthy workplaces.

4.10 Summary of Key Findings

In summary, the findings of this study reveal several important insights:

1. Employees generally perceive moderate to strong ethical climates within their organizations.
2. Workplace harassment remains a notable issue, often manifesting through subtle psychological behaviors.
3. Strong ethical climates are associated with significantly lower levels of workplace harassment.
4. Workplace harassment negatively affects employees' psychological health.
5. Ethical climates can moderate the psychological impact of harassment by providing supportive organizational environments.

Together, these findings emphasize the critical role of ethical organizational cultures in promoting respectful workplace interactions and safeguarding employee psychological well-being.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to help organizations strengthen ethical climates, reduce workplace harassment, and promote employee psychological

health. These recommendations draw upon the empirical results of the study as well as existing literature on ethical leadership, workplace culture, and occupational health psychology. Implementing these strategies can help organizations create more respectful, supportive, and psychologically safe workplaces.

5.1 Strengthening Organizational Ethical Climate

A fundamental recommendation of this study is that organizations should actively cultivate strong ethical climates. Ethical climate influences employees' perceptions of acceptable behavior and plays a crucial role in shaping interpersonal relationships and decision-making processes (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Organizations can strengthen their ethical climate by clearly articulating ethical values, reinforcing ethical standards, and integrating ethics into daily organizational practices.

One effective strategy is the development and implementation of comprehensive organizational codes of ethics. A well-designed code of ethics provides employees with clear guidance regarding expected behaviors and ethical decision-making processes. Such codes should address issues such as respect, fairness, transparency, and accountability. However, simply establishing a code of ethics is insufficient; organizations must also ensure that employees are aware of these guidelines and understand how they apply in practice (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Organizations should also integrate ethical considerations into their mission statements, performance evaluation systems, and organizational policies. When ethical values are embedded in organizational systems and procedures, employees are more likely to internalize these values and align their behaviors accordingly. Research suggests that organizations with clearly defined ethical frameworks tend to experience lower levels of misconduct and workplace conflict (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005).

5.2 Promoting Ethical Leadership

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping ethical climate and influencing employee behavior. Leaders act as role models whose actions and decisions signal what behaviors are acceptable within an organization. Therefore, promoting ethical leadership is essential for preventing workplace harassment and fostering employee psychological well-being.

Ethical leaders demonstrate fairness, honesty, and respect in their interactions with employees. They establish clear expectations for ethical conduct and hold individuals accountable for violating organizational norms (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). Organizations should provide leadership training programs that emphasize ethical decision-making, interpersonal respect, and conflict management skills.

Such training programs can help managers recognize early signs of workplace harassment and intervene effectively before problems escalate. Additionally, leaders should be encouraged to maintain open communication with employees and create environments where individuals feel comfortable expressing concerns. When employees perceive their leaders as ethical and supportive, they are more likely to trust organizational processes and report misconduct.

5.3 Establishing Comprehensive Anti-Harassment Policies

A key recommendation emerging from this study is the need for organizations to develop and implement robust anti-harassment policies. These policies should clearly define different forms of workplace harassment, including verbal abuse, intimidation, bullying, and social exclusion. Providing clear definitions helps employees recognize unacceptable behaviors and promotes accountability within the organization.

Anti-harassment policies should also outline specific procedures for reporting incidents and addressing complaints. Effective reporting mechanisms are essential for ensuring that employees feel safe and supported when raising concerns. Research indicates that employees are more likely to report harassment when organizations provide confidential and accessible reporting channels (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011).

Organizations should establish multiple reporting avenues, such as human resource departments, ethics committees, or anonymous reporting systems. Having multiple options allows employees to choose the most comfortable and secure channel for reporting concerns.

Furthermore, organizations must ensure that anti-harassment policies are consistently enforced. Inconsistent enforcement can undermine employees' trust in organizational leadership and discourage victims from reporting incidents. Transparent investigation procedures and appropriate disciplinary actions are essential for maintaining credibility and reinforcing ethical standards.

5.4 Enhancing Organizational Communication and Transparency

Transparent communication is another important factor in promoting ethical workplaces and preventing harassment. Organizations should encourage open dialogue about ethical conduct, workplace relationships, and employee well-being.

Regular communication from leadership regarding ethical expectations can reinforce organizational values and remind employees of the importance of respectful behavior. This communication may take various forms, including staff meetings,

internal newsletters, training sessions, and organizational workshops.

In addition, organizations should encourage employees to provide feedback regarding workplace culture and ethical practices. Employee surveys and focus group discussions can help identify emerging issues related to harassment, ethical concerns, or psychological stress. By actively seeking employee input, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to addressing workplace challenges and improving organizational culture.

5.5 Providing Training and Awareness Programs

Training and awareness programs are essential tools for promoting ethical behavior and preventing workplace harassment. Employees often have different interpretations of what constitutes harassment or inappropriate behavior. Comprehensive training programs can help clarify expectations and foster respectful workplace interactions.

Organizations should conduct regular ethics training programs that focus on topics such as professional conduct, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, and respectful communication. These programs should emphasize the importance of empathy, mutual respect, and accountability in workplace relationships.

In addition to ethics training, organizations should provide specialized anti-harassment training for both employees and managers. Such training can help employees recognize early signs of harassment, understand reporting procedures, and develop strategies for addressing conflicts constructively.

Training programs should also incorporate real-life scenarios and case studies to help participants understand how ethical principles apply in practical situations. Research suggests that interactive training methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, can enhance employees' understanding of ethical issues and improve behavioral outcomes (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010).

5.6 Supporting Employee Psychological Health

Promoting employee psychological health should be a central priority for organizations seeking to create healthy work environments. As this study demonstrates, workplace harassment can have significant negative effects on employees' psychological well-being, including increased stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion.

Organizations can support employee psychological health through the implementation of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and counseling services. These programs provide employees with access to professional support for managing stress, resolving

personal challenges, and coping with workplace difficulties.

Additionally, organizations should promote work-life balance by encouraging reasonable workloads, flexible working arrangements, and adequate rest periods. Excessive workload pressures and job insecurity can increase stress levels and contribute to interpersonal conflicts among employees.

Organizations should also establish peer support networks or mentoring programs that encourage employees to share experiences and support one another. Social support has been shown to reduce the psychological impact of workplace stressors and enhance employees' resilience (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

5.7 Strengthening Organizational Accountability

Accountability is essential for ensuring that ethical standards and anti-harassment policies are effectively implemented. Organizations should establish clear mechanisms for monitoring ethical practices and addressing misconduct.

One effective approach is the creation of ethics committees or compliance units responsible for overseeing ethical practices and investigating reported incidents. These bodies should operate independently and ensure that complaints are handled fairly and transparently.

Regular audits and evaluations of organizational ethical practices can also help identify areas for improvement. For example, organizations can conduct periodic assessments of ethical climate using validated survey instruments such as the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (Victor & Cullen, 1988). These assessments allow organizations to track changes in employee perceptions and identify emerging concerns.

Moreover, organizations should hold managers and leaders accountable for maintaining ethical work environments. Performance evaluations for managerial positions should include criteria related to ethical conduct, employee well-being, and conflict management.

5.8 Encouraging a Culture of Respect and Inclusion

Another important recommendation is the promotion of organizational cultures that emphasize respect, diversity, and inclusion. Inclusive workplaces recognize the value of diverse perspectives and ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and fairness.

Organizations should implement diversity and inclusion initiatives that promote understanding among employees from different backgrounds. Such initiatives may include diversity training programs, cultural awareness workshops, and policies supporting equal opportunities.

When employees feel respected and valued, they are more likely to engage positively with colleagues and contribute to collaborative work environments. Inclusive cultures also reduce the likelihood of harassment by promoting mutual respect and discouraging discriminatory behaviors.

5.9 Continuous Monitoring and Improvement

Finally, organizations should recognize that creating ethical workplaces and preventing harassment is an ongoing process. Continuous monitoring and improvement are necessary to ensure that organizational policies remain effective and relevant.

Regular employee surveys, organizational assessments, and feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights into workplace culture and employee well-being. Organizations should use this information to refine policies, improve training programs, and address emerging challenges.

Additionally, organizations should benchmark their ethical practices against industry standards and best practices. Learning from successful organizational models can help institutions adopt innovative approaches to promoting ethical conduct and employee well-being.

5.10 Summary

In summary, the recommendations presented in this section emphasize the importance of strengthening ethical climates, promoting ethical leadership, implementing comprehensive anti-harassment policies, and supporting employee psychological health. By adopting these strategies, organizations can create safer and more respectful work environments that reduce workplace harassment and enhance employee well-being.

Ultimately, fostering ethical workplaces requires sustained commitment from organizational leaders, managers, and employees. Through proactive policies, effective leadership, and continuous evaluation, organizations can cultivate environments where ethical conduct and psychological well-being are prioritized, thereby contributing to long-term organizational success and employee satisfaction.

6. Limitations of the study

While this study provides important insights into the relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health, several limitations should be acknowledged. Recognizing these limitations is essential for interpreting the findings appropriately and for guiding future research in this area. The limitations of this study relate primarily to research design, sampling, measurement methods, contextual constraints, and potential response biases. Despite these limitations, the study contributes valuable empirical evidence to the

existing literature on workplace ethics and employee well-being.

6.1 Cross-Sectional Research Design

One of the primary limitations of this study is its reliance on a cross-sectional research design, in which data were collected at a single point in time. Cross-sectional studies are widely used in organizational research due to their efficiency and practicality; however, they limit the ability to establish causal relationships among variables (Bryman, 2016). While the study identifies significant relationships between ethical climate, workplace harassment, and psychological health, it cannot definitively determine whether ethical climate directly causes reductions in harassment or improvements in psychological well-being.

For instance, it is possible that organizations with strong ethical climates may also possess other supportive characteristics such as effective leadership, better communication systems, or employee-centered policies that contribute to lower harassment and better psychological outcomes. Similarly, employees with higher psychological well-being may perceive their organizations more positively, potentially influencing their perceptions of ethical climate. Longitudinal research designs, which track changes in organizational climate and employee experiences over time, would provide stronger evidence regarding causal relationships among these variables (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

6.2 Reliance on Self-Reported Data

Another limitation of this study is the use of self-reported survey data to measure employees' perceptions of ethical climate, experiences of workplace harassment, and psychological health. Self-report measures are commonly used in organizational research because they allow researchers to capture individuals' perceptions and subjective experiences (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, such measures are susceptible to several forms of bias, including social desirability bias, recall bias, and response bias.

Social desirability bias occurs when respondents provide answers that they believe are socially acceptable or favorable rather than reflecting their true experiences or opinions. For example, employees may underreport experiences of harassment due to fear of stigma, embarrassment, or concerns about confidentiality. Similarly, respondents may provide overly positive assessments of their organizational climate in order to portray their organizations in a favorable light.

Additionally, recall bias may influence participants' ability to accurately remember past experiences of harassment or workplace interactions. Employees who experienced negative incidents in the

distant past may have difficulty recalling specific details, which can affect the accuracy of their responses. Future studies could mitigate these limitations by incorporating multiple data sources, such as supervisor evaluations, organizational records, or observational methods.

6.3 Sampling and Generalizability

The study sample consisted primarily of employees from medium- to large-sized organizations in selected sectors, including manufacturing, services, and technology. While this diverse sample provided valuable insights into organizational practices, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other organizational contexts.

For example, smaller organizations, start-up companies, or informal work environments may have different organizational structures, leadership dynamics, and cultural norms that influence ethical climate and workplace interactions. Similarly, public sector institutions and non-governmental organizations may operate under different regulatory frameworks and ethical standards compared to private sector organizations.

Furthermore, cultural factors may also influence perceptions of ethical climate and workplace harassment. Research indicates that cultural norms regarding authority, hierarchy, and interpersonal communication can affect how employees interpret workplace behaviors (Hofstede, 2001). As a result, findings from this study may not fully reflect experiences in organizations operating in different cultural or institutional contexts. Future research should consider conducting comparative studies across industries, organizational sizes, and cultural settings to enhance the generalizability of results.

6.4 Measurement Limitations

Although the study utilized well-established measurement instruments such as the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (Victor & Cullen, 1988) and workplace harassment scales adapted from previous research (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011), measurement limitations remain a potential concern.

First, ethical climate is a complex and multidimensional construct that may not be fully captured by standardized survey instruments. Employees' perceptions of ethical climate can be influenced by numerous factors, including leadership style, organizational policies, peer interactions, and personal values. While survey scales provide useful quantitative indicators, they may not fully capture the nuanced ways in which ethical climates are experienced and interpreted within organizations.

Second, workplace harassment can manifest in subtle or indirect forms that may be difficult to measure through structured questionnaires. For example,

behaviors such as passive exclusion, subtle intimidation, or microaggressions may not always be recognized or reported as harassment by employees. These forms of mistreatment can nonetheless have significant psychological consequences.

Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or ethnographic observations, may provide richer insights into the complexities of workplace interactions and ethical environments. Although this study included semi-structured interviews to supplement survey data, the scope of qualitative data collection was limited due to time and resource constraints.

6.5 Potential Non-Response Bias

Another potential limitation is non-response bias, which occurs when individuals who choose not to participate in the study differ systematically from those who do participate. For example, employees who have experienced severe workplace harassment may be reluctant to participate in research due to concerns about confidentiality or fear of retaliation.

Conversely, employees who are particularly satisfied with their organizational environment may be more willing to participate, which could result in an overrepresentation of positive perceptions of ethical climate. Such biases may affect the representativeness of the sample and influence the interpretation of findings.

Efforts were made to minimize non-response bias by ensuring participant anonymity and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. However, it is difficult to completely eliminate this limitation in organizational research. Future studies could attempt to increase participation rates through follow-up invitations, incentives, or partnerships with organizational leadership.

6.6 Contextual and Organizational Factors

The study primarily focused on the relationship between ethical climate, harassment, and psychological health, but other contextual factors may also influence these outcomes. Organizational variables such as workload pressure, organizational change, leadership turnover, and job insecurity can significantly affect employee experiences and perceptions.

For example, organizations undergoing restructuring or rapid growth may experience increased stress levels and communication challenges, which could contribute to workplace conflicts or harassment. Similarly, economic conditions and labor market dynamics may influence employees' willingness to report harassment or express dissatisfaction with organizational practices.

Although this study acknowledged the potential influence of contextual factors, it did not explicitly measure or analyze these variables. Future research

could incorporate additional organizational variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing workplace harassment and employee well-being.

6.7 Limitations in Psychological Health Measurement

Psychological health in this study was assessed using self-reported measures of stress, emotional exhaustion, and general well-being. While these indicators provide valuable insights into employees' psychological experiences, they do not constitute clinical assessments of mental health conditions.

As noted by Danna and Griffin (1999), workplace well-being is a multidimensional construct that includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. More comprehensive assessments may involve psychological testing, medical evaluations, or longitudinal health data. Such approaches could provide deeper insights into the long-term health consequences of workplace harassment.

6.8 Summary

In summary, this study has several limitations related to research design, data collection methods, sampling, and contextual factors. The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, while reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases. Additionally, the sample may not fully represent all organizational contexts, and measurement tools may not capture all dimensions of ethical climate and workplace harassment.

Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful contributions to the literature by examining the interconnected relationships among ethical climate, workplace harassment, and psychological health. By acknowledging these limitations, future research can build upon the findings of this study and develop more comprehensive approaches to understanding and addressing workplace harassment and employee well-being.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine the relationship between organizational ethical climate, workplace harassment, and employee psychological health, with the aim of understanding how organizational environments influence employee experiences and well-being. In contemporary workplaces, ethical behavior and employee mental health have become central concerns for both scholars and practitioners. Organizations increasingly recognize that creating ethical and respectful work environments is not only a moral responsibility but also a critical factor in maintaining productivity, employee engagement, and long-term organizational sustainability. The findings of this study contribute to this growing body of research by demonstrating how ethical climates within organizations shape workplace interactions and influence the psychological well-being of employees.

One of the key findings of the study is that organizational ethical climate plays a significant role in determining the quality of interpersonal relationships within workplaces. Consistent with ethical climate theory proposed by Victor and Cullen (1988), the results indicate that shared perceptions of ethical standards guide employee behavior and influence how individuals respond to ethical dilemmas and interpersonal conflicts. Organizations characterized by strong caring and rule-based climates tend to foster environments where employees treat one another with respect and fairness. These environments encourage ethical decision-making and discourage behaviors that may harm colleagues or undermine workplace harmony. The findings support previous research suggesting that ethical climates function as informal social control mechanisms that influence organizational behavior and culture (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

The study also highlights the continuing presence of workplace harassment as a significant organizational challenge. Although many organizations have established policies and procedures designed to address workplace misconduct, the findings suggest that harassment remains a reality for a number of employees. Harassment was found to manifest primarily through psychological and interpersonal behaviors, including verbal hostility, social exclusion, and work-related intimidation. These forms of mistreatment may be less visible than physical aggression but can nonetheless have profound consequences for employees' emotional well-being and professional performance. The findings are consistent with previous research by Einarsen *et al.*, (2011), which emphasizes that workplace harassment often occurs through subtle and repeated behaviors that create hostile work environments.

A particularly important contribution of this study is the identification of a significant negative relationship between organizational ethical climate and workplace harassment. Employees working in organizations with stronger ethical climates reported fewer experiences of harassment compared to those in organizations with weaker ethical environments. This finding supports earlier research suggesting that ethical organizational cultures reduce the likelihood of unethical behaviors and workplace aggression (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). When organizations emphasize fairness, transparency, and accountability, employees are more likely to adhere to ethical standards and refrain from engaging in harmful behaviors toward colleagues.

Another critical finding of the study concerns the impact of workplace harassment on employee psychological health. The results clearly demonstrate that employees who experience harassment are more likely to report higher levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and psychological distress. These findings align with occupational stress theories, which suggest that persistent workplace stressors can significantly

undermine employees' mental well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Workplace harassment represents a particularly damaging stressor because it directly affects employees' sense of dignity, security, and belonging within the organization. Over time, such experiences can contribute to reduced job satisfaction, decreased motivation, and impaired organizational commitment.

Importantly, the study also found that organizational ethical climate may serve as a protective factor that moderates the psychological impact of workplace harassment. Employees who perceived their organizations as having strong ethical climates reported lower levels of psychological distress even when they experienced occasional negative interactions. This finding suggests that supportive organizational environments can provide employees with coping resources such as fair grievance procedures, supportive leadership, and peer support networks. Such resources can help employees manage workplace challenges and reduce the emotional strain associated with interpersonal conflicts. These results reinforce the argument that organizational culture and leadership practices play a critical role in safeguarding employee mental health.

The findings of this study carry several important implications for organizational management and policy development. First, organizations must recognize that ethical climate is not merely an abstract concept but a practical organizational asset that shapes everyday employee experiences. By promoting ethical values and reinforcing respectful workplace behaviors, organizations can significantly reduce the risk of harassment and enhance employee well-being. Second, leadership plays a central role in shaping ethical climates and influencing workplace culture. Ethical leadership characterized by integrity, fairness, and accountability can foster trust and encourage employees to adhere to organizational values.

Third, organizations must continue to strengthen their policies and procedures related to workplace harassment. Clear reporting mechanisms, consistent enforcement of policies, and comprehensive training programs are essential for creating safe and respectful workplaces. In addition, organizations should invest in initiatives that support employee psychological health, such as counseling services, stress management programs, and work-life balance initiatives.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the growing literature on organizational ethics and employee well-being by integrating ethical climate theory with research on workplace harassment and occupational health. By examining these variables within a unified framework, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational environments influence employee experiences and psychological outcomes. Future research can build upon these findings by exploring additional contextual factors

such as leadership styles, organizational justice, and cultural influences.

In conclusion, the results of this study emphasize the importance of fostering ethical organizational environments that promote respect, fairness, and psychological safety. Organizations that prioritize ethical conduct and employee well-being are better positioned to create positive workplace cultures where employees feel valued and supported. Ultimately, strengthening organizational ethical climate represents a crucial step toward preventing workplace harassment and promoting the long-term psychological health and productivity of employees.

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