

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Peer-reviewed | Open Access

The Effect of Toxic Workplace Environments on Employee Engagement: Mediating Roles of Employee's Wellbeing and Organization Support

Pramila Thapa^{1*}, Beena Giridharan², Rupa Devi Thapa³ and Narayan Pandey⁴

¹CEO, Life Skill Education Institute/Yeti Health Science Academy, Nepal

²Dean, Curtin University Malaysia's Office of Learning and Teaching, Malaysia

³Head of Department, Yeti Health Science Academy in Nepal

⁴Head of Department, Program Manager at SIDS Nepal, Sindhuli, Nepal

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

RECEIVED: 25-Sep-22

REVISED: 30-Oct-22

ACCEPTED: 9-Nov-22

PUBLISHED: 15-Nov-22

*Corresponding Author

Pramila Thapa

E-mail: pbrt426@gmail.com

Co-Author(s):

Author 2: Beena Giridharan

E-mail: beena@curtin.edu.my

Author 3: Rupa Devi Thapa

E-mail: rupadthapa82@gmail.com

Author 4: Narayan Pandey

E-mail: pandeynarayan1996@gmail.com

Citation: Pramila Thapa, Beena Giridharan, Rupa Devi Thapa and Narayan Pandey (2022). The Effect of Toxic Workplace Environments on Employee Engagement: Mediating Roles of Employee's Wellbeing and Organization Support. Horizon J. Hum. Soc. Sci. Res. 4 (2), 66–74. <https://doi.org/10.37534/bp.jhssr.2022.v4.n2.id1168.p66>



ABSTRACT

Introduction: Employee Engagement (EE) is a key priority in organizations. The main goals of this study are to analyze the effect of a toxic work environment (TWE) on employee engagement, to understand the mediating role of organizational support (OS) and employee wellbeing (EWB), and to find associated demographic data on EE.

Methods: The current study used a quantitative approach. The convenience sampling technique was chosen, and 151 employees participated. The instrument that the researcher used was robust, had been thoroughly tested for reliability, and had received written approval from researchers to be used as standard tool. Descriptive analysis, regression model, t- test and ANOVA test were used to assess the data.

Results: According to the findings of the present study, TWE has a negative impact on EE at work. OS and EWB are all terms used to describe a toxic workplace environment. Furthermore, EE is associated with demographic characteristics such as age, and experience.

Conclusion: The higher authorities should enhance and implement employee well-being systems and OS in order to boost EE and well-being.

Keywords: toxic workplace environments, employee engagement, employees' well-being, organization support

INTRODUCTION

The term “engagement” was coined in the 1990s by William Kahn and is becoming increasingly relevant and popular in today's research on the workplace and has resulted in more managerial intentions. The term “engagement” has been used by numerous researchers

(Brunetto et al., 2013; Kou, 2012; Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021; Saleem, Shenbei, & Hanif, 2020). A manager is someone who has an overview of overall responsibility at work for his or her unit/department, which includes work processes and employee welfare and progress. Therefore, they should be able to define the significance of workplace engagement for their

units. Numerous studies have revealed that there is a significant relationship between employees' engagement and performance within organizations (Shrestha, 2019; Fulmer & Ployhart, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016; Rashidi Md. Dom & Murad Ahmad, 2019). EE is an important ingredient for managers (Seats & Cram, 2006), and employees are the greatest asset of any organization (Fulmer & Ploy Hart, 2014). EW and OS are shown to be significant in EE (Retool, Wang, Tang, Saied, & Irbil, 2021). It is undeniable that employees' physical, mental, and social well-being are jeopardized in toxic work environments. Toxic people tend to infect coworkers with their poor work culture and unpleasant feelings. Harassment, bullying, and ostracism, which are all symptoms of a toxic work environment, may lead to unnecessary burdens, burnout, depression, and anxiety among employees. All of these factors contribute to lower worker productivity. In this regard, there are potential solutions and mediating strategies, such as EW and OS, to enhance positive EE. A healthy workplace environment is important and beneficial to each employee as it enhances and improves employee performance and productivity, increases employee-manager trust, and reduces turnover and absenteeism. Evidence has suggested that a healthy workplace nurtures job satisfaction and contributes to the quality of service (Bai, 2016), and motivates workers, which ultimately, leads to employees' productivity and reduce health hazards, illness, and other unacceptable behavior. On the other hand, TWE, such as harassment, bullying, and ostracism, can be harmful to workers, causing unnecessary stress, burnout, despair, and anxiety (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021). Sexually harassed employees have lower job satisfaction and suffer from a range of psychological and physical health problems (Hersch, 2015). It can be assumed that if there is a high prevalence of bullying at work, employee performance could be directly impacted. The current study focuses on determining the relationship between TWE on employee engagement mediated by roles of employee's well-being and OS.

One out of every three women in the world will face violence from a partner or another individual (WHO, 2013; UN Women, 2019). Despite the fact that 53.84 percent of Nepali female employees reported being harassed, the issue is not openly addressed because it is a taboo subject, and Nepali women continue to hide their struggles from their friends and relatives for a variety of reasons (Bellig, 1993). There are a few examples of toxic workplace issues, such as bullying and sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a serious workplace issue. For example, in a survey conducted, more than half of the women polled stated (Bularzik, 2013) they have

been harassed in some way. TWE has become an urgent and concerning issue in today's workplace as it can lead to depletion, decreased performance, and decreased engagement at work.

Fair organization, support, rewards, and job conditions are basic antecedents of perceived OS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees' stress, anxiety, burnout, and turnover are reduced when organizations provide instrumental social and emotional support. There is evidence that OS has a mediating effect on employee work performance (Chen et al., 2020), and that the organization benefits from employees' good treatment, which results in improving their attitudes towards their jobs, such as job satisfaction and lowering their desire to leave (Astuty & Udin, 2020; Duke, Goodman, Treadway, & Breland, 2009; Park, Newman, Zhang, Wu, & Hooke, 2016; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shaheen & Krishnankutty, 2018) The Nepalese Company Act makes provision for effective corporate governance in Nepalese organizations. Nevertheless, institutional management in the spirit of existing requirements for effective governance is still in its early stages (Shrestha et al., 2019), and research carried out in Nepal about the topic is scarce.

When employees are happy, it is believed that they are more likely to develop a positive work culture, maintain it, and be productive (Salas-Vallina, Pozo-Hidalgo, & Gil-Monte, 2020). According to survey data from 5328 participants from workplaces in four countries, harassment and domestic violence are significant stressors that affect withdrawal from work, work attitude, and work quality, and the study highlighted a message to global brands and factory managers to foster worker well-being, which may improve factory performance (Wziak-Biaowolska, Biaowolski, & McNeely, 2020). EWB is positively associated with employee productivity and workplace productivity. The researchers in the present study, have made very strong recommendations on the significant relationship between employee well-being, productivity, and firm performance. The primary purpose of policymakers is to improve society's well-being (Krekel, Ward, & De Neve, 2019). EWB aspects, such as physical, psychological, and social well-being qualities, are becoming more important. In the workplace, safety and health are at the heart of the future of work (Dollard & Neser, 2019). According to the study, mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and insomnia were common among healthcare workers in Nepal during the early phases of COVID-19, and they were more likely to have mental health problems. Researchers have proposed that well-being packages could be a coping

strategy for dealing with challenges (Khanal, Devkota, Dahal, Paudel, & Joshi, 2020). Further, it is recognized that the effectiveness of EWB within the organization helps to maintain strength and empower employees both mentally and physically, according to studies. It motivates and encourages people to work more efficiently and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, studies conducted by researchers have discovered a significant and strong positive. There is an association between employee satisfaction, employee productivity, and customer loyalty as well as a significant and strong negative correlation with staff turnover (Krekel, Ward, & De Neve, 2019). However, there has been less research on this topic in Nepal. EE receives less attention (Shrestha, 2019), but it is a crucial component that must be present at work. Leadership must develop enthusiasm, maintain employee trust, and excel in a favorable work environment in this regard. Whether an organization is small or huge, in general, they should aim to demonstrate that their employees are happy and engaged at work. If an organization keeps its EE, it may be possible to boost productivity and wellbeing at work, resulting in fewer employee absences, turnover, and preventive employee grousers. Accordingly, employee motivation and EE are essential aspects (Vance, 2006) to maintain the sustainability and profitability (Kazimoto, 2016) of organizations, and the authorities need to address essential EE by deploying appropriate people in the right designations. Research reveals that EE has an impact on organizational performance (Ahmed, Khan, Thirties, Siraphatthada, & Phumdara, 2020; Mulle, Smith, & Lillah, 2018; Paper, 2013; Smith & Markwick, n.d.; Shrestha, 2019). However, negative organizational characteristics such as aggressive behaviors, demotivation, and negative emotions can result in an unpleasant or TWE (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021), and the organization's outcome would be unsatisfactory. Furthermore, EW and OS are critical factors that play a positive role in achieving EE. The working environment of an OS is crucial in encouraging high EE (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; J., 2014; Motyka, 2018). Studies have demonstrated a considerable positive influence of OS on EE (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; J., 2014; Motyka, 2018).

METHODS

The study was conducted utilizing a descriptive cross-sectional research design based on quantitative methodology. The survey method was used to collect participant data. Participants' formal consent was obtained before administering the survey instruments.

According to a previous study; Cronbach's Alpha scale has a good internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha: domain TWE (0.935), domain OF (0.784), domain EWB (0.843), domain EE (0.759) value (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021) are acceptable values and demonstrate good construct validity. In the first section, the socio-demographic characteristics included *Age, Work experience, Marital status, Gender, and Education level*. The second section consisted of [TWE = 7 questions, OS included = 4 questions, EWB included = 5 questions, and EE included = 4 questions] on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagreeing and 7 denoting strongly agreeing. The population sample in the study are mostly from selected health institutions in the Kathmandu valley, where they worked as staff. A total of 151 employees in all, participated in the study. Data were gathered using purposive sampling. It is a non-random sampling strategy that applies a particular goal to chosen samples. Additionally, the researchers received consent from all participants, and data was collected using online social media such as WhatsApp, email, and Viber. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis, regression analysis, T-test, and the ANOVA test.

Factor analysis makes it possible to understand the number of factors required to explain a common theme from a set of variables. In this current study researchers applied KMO and Bartlett's Test to analyze all available data for reliability and validity. With a KMO of .858, a Bartlett's Test of less than 0.05, and a KMO of higher than 0.5, the study was significant. The feasibility of utilizing factor analysis is demonstrated by the analysis between variables which validates Bartlett's test, and Kiaser-Mayer-Olkin indicator (KMO). The P-value is 0.000, and the result is greater than 0.05, it is significant (Bhakar, 2021; Vorina, Simonič, & Vlasova, 2017). The Communalities Extraction value is greater than 0.5, indicating a superior fit for the model in this study.

RESULTS

To examine the relationship of TWE on EE with mediating roles of EWB and OS, researchers administered the descriptive analysis, regression analysis, and ANOVA, and researchers tested for reliability and to meet the study aims.

Descriptive Analysis: Table 1. Shows that that; 39.1% were between the ages of 20 and 30. 32.0 % had 6 and 10 years of work experiences, 54.3 % were married, 68.9% were female, and 37.1 % had a master's degree.

Hypothesis Testing; Regression statistical tool was used to examine Hypothesis1 (H1): effect of a TWE on EE; Regression Model Summary demonstrates that; TWE has a negative relationship with EE, according to regression analysis (Pearson Correlation, MEAN _TWE = -.009a, R Square =.000, Adjusted R Square =-.007, P > 0.05). As a result, hypotheis1 (H1): This conclusion suggests that there is a negative relationship between TWE and EE and that one of the key elements affecting employee performance and engagement at work is a toxic work environment.

Hypothesis2 (H2): Impact of OS on EE; Regression Analysis of OS (Pearson Correlation, MEAN_ OS =.447, R =. 447a, R Square =.200, Adjusted R Square =.195, p>0.05). It has been proven that there is a relationship between OS and EE. As a result, it is established and demonstrated that OS has a significant impact on EE.

Hypothesis 3(H3): Impact of EWB on EE; Regression Model Summary; demonstrate that ;(Pearson Correlation, MEAN_ EWB =.4107, R.410a, RSquare.168, Adjusted R Square =.162, P > 0.05). It has been established that a EWB and EE have a significant relationship in this regard. As a result, EWB has a significant impact on EE.

Researchers applied to compare F distributions, using the ANOVA test program. It's a statistical method for comparing different sources of variance within a set of data. These are;

H4: Between the various age levels, there is considerable variance in EE. According to the findings, there is a significant difference between groups as established by one-way as shown in Table 2 ANOVA analysis shows that, Sig=.032, (F2, 146), F=2.715. As a result, hypothesis H4 is accepted.

H5: The EE varies significantly based on the level of work experience. Table 3. ANOVA analysis has shown that; there is a significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA (F2, 145) =4.111, Sig=.003. As a result, hypothesis H5 is accepted.

H6: There is a significant difference between males and females in terms of EE. Table: 4 Males and females differ in terms of EE, according to the analysis of the Independent Samples T- test. The independent sample t-assumption test of equal variance was examined in the independent t-test using Levene's test, and the results showed that F = 2.212, P value sig (2-tailed) =.665, and equal variance was assumed at df = 149. This outcome showed that the value is more than 0.05. As a result, the hypothesis cannot be accepted.

Table 1. Illustrates the data obtained of demographic variables

Mean	Frequency	Percent
Age(Years)		
20-30	59	39.1
30-40	44	29.1
40-50	29	19.2
50-60	13	8.6
>60	6	4
Work Experiences(Years)		
0-5	38	25.3
6-10	48	32.0
11-20	36	24
21-30	22	14.7
30-40	6	4
Marital Status		
Married	82	54.3
Unmarried	69	45.7
Gender		
Male	47	31.1
Female	104	68.9
Education Level		
Certificate degree	32	21.2
Bachelor degree	37	24.5
Master Degree	56	37.1
PhD	26	17.2

Table 2. Analysis of variance (age-specific ANOVA)

MEAN_EE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.216	4	2.554	2.715	.032
Within Groups	137.342	146	.941		
Total	147.558	150			

DISCUSSION

This study's goal is to investigate the effect of TWE on EE, which is a pertinent and significant research topic in the current workplace. In the current study with the utilization of regression, the model summary revealed that; TWE has a detrimental effect on EE. Healthcare professionals are more prone to experience violence at work. Previous research evidence suggested that;

Table 3. Analysis of variance (work experiences- specific ANOVA)

MEAN_EE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.017	4	3.754	4.111	.003
Within Groups	132.416	145	.913		
Total	147.433	149			

Table 4. Male and Female Independent Samples T- Tests

MEAN_EE		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
MEAN_EE	Equal variances assumed	2.212	.139	-.433	149	.665
	Equal variances not assumed			-.362	61.689	.718

violence and discrimination are frequent occurrences at work, particularly in the healthcare industry (Stahl-Gugger & Hämmig, 2022). Another research study also revealed that; TWE appears to negatively affect EE at work (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021). While in another empirical study, reported that; workplace violence has a significant direct adverse influence on EE (B=-.556) (Saleem, Shenbei, & Hanif, 2020). Additionally, it is a novel study topic that demands careful examination. If it is seriously occulting, it could have a major effect on staff productivity (Zhou, Rasool, & Ma, 2020) and the workplace. "Happy Workers" More Productive states (Natasha Fogaça & Francisco Antônio Coelho Junior, 2016.) Without happy employees, organizations are unable to function and fail to meet their intended objectives. (Natasha et.al, 2016), stated that; workplace well-being and job happiness influence individual job performance. While toxic work environments may be troublesome, the current research study argues that a variety of strategies may be used to increase engagement and performance. In order to investigate how toxic workplace environments might be reduced and boost employee engagement at work, researchers created hypotheses. In relation to this, the outcome showed that;

1. Organizational support may be a crucial and successful strategy to increase employee engagement because OS and EE have a clear relationship.
2. Organizations must not underestimate prospects in this regard.

The current study revealed that there is a positive relationship between OS and EE. However, everyone's overall well-being is a crucial tenet. People can exert more willpower and energy at work by being assertive. Making employees more productive and improving their performance is another crucial and pertinent approach.

In this regard, the researchers applied the hypothesis to assess how EWB affects EE. The summary of the regression model revealed a favorable correlation between EWB and EE. This study also implies that improving EE is necessary and pertinent. However, there is the question that the well-being strategy is pertinent, and evidence from other studies reveal that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and well-being (Sarwar, Ishaq, Amin, & Ahmed, 2020; Wieneke et al., 2019).The results show a strong relationship between EE, EWB, and OS in the present study. Researchers have revealed that there is a relationship between OS and EE, as well as EE and EWB. The toxic atmosphere at work is reduced by these independent variables. As a result, maintaining EWB and OS leads to a stronger high-level team and greater trust, as well as the ability to manage home and work life.

In this study, relationships between a few socio-demographic variables, including age, job experiences, and gender, were investigated. Study results show that the socio-demographic variable for age has exhibited relevance, although age has a positive impact. There are demographic factors affecting experience as another sign of rising EE at work. Employees with experience may make a big difference in the workplace. Even though the results showed there is no significant relationship between gender and increased EE at work, gender is not demonstrated as a main predictor in this current study.

The researchers maintain that the study's results support their hypothesis. Furthermore, they have developed recommendations for organizations and authorities. The present study findings suggest that the toxic workplace is a serious problem that negatively impact employee engagement. Although an assumptive result had been predicted prior to the study, the depth of negative

correlation found in the study was surprising. It is established that the unacceptable work environment and culture are the main contributors to the issue. Organizational support and well-being are two essential tactics to mitigate TWE.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that TWE may have an adverse effect on EE, which is undesirable for the workplace and impact on Employee' Performance (EE). However, there are ways to increase the importance of EE. Thus, OS and EWB, as well as experienced workers and greater age—both sociodemographic characteristics have been discovered to be favorable markers of enhanced EE—as they are more relevant and significant influencing factors. This study encourages employees to perform at a higher level, resulting in greater production. There are a few strategic needs to concentrate on in order to improve the progressive workplace environment, including improved training, suggesting curriculum inclusion in academic programs, and generating theoretical guidelines. In this study, employees at healthcare institutions were primarily selected for the study, however suggestions have been made for other industries, including business, tourism, and education based on available data from participants. Although the current study was quantitative in nature, a qualitative component is suggested for future research studies for a more in-depth analysis of the topic investigated. The current study's emphasis is on Kathmandu, which could be replicated in other parts of Nepal in future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author(s) wish to thank the Yeti Health Sciences Academy (IRC) and participants for their time, encouragement, and willingness to share their own stories. The authors would also like to express their gratitude to the editors and editorial staff of JHSSR for their assistance during publication period.

Funding

No funding was provided for this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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Biographical Statement of Author(s)

Pramila Thapa serves as the advisor to the Yeti Health Sciences Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal. Ms. Pramila Thapa obtained her master's degree in public administration from TU in Nepal and her master's degree in nursing from the Tamil Nādu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai (INDIA), respectively.



administration. She has contributed a couple of papers in her academic and professional disciplines.

Currently, she holds the positions of CEO of the Life-skills Education Institute and consultant for the Yeti Health Sciences Academy, Nepal.

Ms. Pramila Thapa

Chief Executive Officer
Life Skill Education Institute
Yeti Health Science Academy
Nepal

E-mail: pbrt426@gmail.com

For over 20 years, she has been actively involved in community teaching, research, policymaking, and

Professor Beena Giridharan is a research supervisor and research consultant at the Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University, Malaysia, after completing her tenure as the Dean for Learning and Teaching. Prior to that she was the Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor at Curtin University, Malaysia from 2016 to 2021.



Beena Giridharan is a **Fellow of the Curtin Academy** and also a Fellow of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) since 2006. She won the **2006 Carrick Australian Award for University Teaching**, and the **2006 Curtin University, Australia, Excellence in Teaching and Innovation award**, and was a visiting professor at the Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA between 2007- 2008.

She is currently a Professor of Higher Education at Curtin University, Malaysia and a recognized global leader in higher education. She has been appointed as Country Director Malaysia at International HETL Association.

Professor Beena Giridharan

Dean
Curtin University
Malaysia's Office of Learning and Teaching
Malaysia

E-mail: beena@curtin.edu.my

She attained a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics and Education from Curtin University, Western Australia. Her research and academic interests include vocabulary acquisition in ESL, educational administration and leadership; higher education practices, transnational education (TNE), and ethno-linguistic studies in indigenous communities.

Associate Professor Rupa Devi Thapa is Head of Department of Bachelor Nursing Program and also a Member Secretary of Research Committee at Yeti Health Science Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal.



She has Masters in Nursing and M.Phil. in Education from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. She has worked as Registered Nurse in Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Nepal for fourteen years (1993-2007) where she received the award for

best performance too. After then she worked as class coordinators, program coordinator of the Bachelor Nursing Program where she was involved in teaching learning activities of various subjects along with guiding the final year students on their research activities.

Her major interest areas are research, leadership and management. She has published research articles in national and international journals.

Associate Professor Rupa Devi Thapa

Head of Department
Yeti Health Science Academy
Nepal

E-mail: rupadthapa82@gmail.com

Mr. Narayan Pandey is a Program Manager at Sindhuli Integrated Development Service (SIDS Nepal), Sindhuli Nepal. Mr. Pandey has completed his master's degree in Sociology from Marsyangdi Campus Besisahar Lamjung Nepal. He is also perusing Bachelor in Law from Nepal Law Campus Kathmandu.



Being a Program Portfolio manager; he has been managing several developmental and emergency response programs related to Education, Health & Nutrition, Resilient Livelihood, Protection, Gender

Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for the wellbeing of community people through the support of national and international funding agencies since 2015.

He has good knowledge of program designing, implementation, monitoring, and human resource management concerning issues.

Mr. Narayan Pandey

Head of Department
Program Manager
SIDS Nepal
Sindhuli
Nepal

E-mail: pandeynarayan1996@gmail.com