

Strategic development of mental health-based organizational culture to improve institutional workforce performance in higher education

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Abstract

Mental Health-Oriented Organizational Culture is a New Paradigm in Human Resource Management of Higher Education. This study aims to examine the concept of developing an organizational culture that supports the psychological well-being of educational personnel, identify the factors influencing its successful implementation, and analyze its impact on work effectiveness. Through a normative qualitative literature review, this study finds that an organizational culture emphasizing mental health fosters psychological safety, trust, and social support within the workplace. Factors determining the success of implementing the culture include empathetic leadership styles, open communication, social support, and a balance between personal life and work. Meanwhile, strengthening an organizational culture based on psychological well-being has been proven to enhance work engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty among educational personnel, which ultimately has a positive impact on work effectiveness and productivity. Higher education institutions need to embed good mental values into human resource management systems and institutional governance in order to create a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable work environment.

Keywords:

Educational personnel; mental health; organizational culture; psychological well-being; work effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, mental health issues within higher education environments have begun to receive serious attention. Increasing work pressure, administrative complexity, and high performance expectations have led to psychological fatigue among educational personnel (Tight, 2025). They often face excessive administrative burdens without adequate emotional support from the institution. This condition leads to a decline in motivation,

increased work-related stress, and symptoms of burnout, all of which negatively affect the effectiveness of academic services. Amid these pressures, the psychological well-being of educational personnel has not yet become a full priority in the managerial policies of higher education institutions (Ohadomere & Ogamba, 2021). This situation indicates an urgent need to reconsider the prevailing paradigm of organizational culture in higher education institutions. Organizational culture in many higher education institutions still tends to be oriented toward administrative achievements and short-term productivity (Lacatus, 2013). The work performance is measured by quantitative indicators, while the psychological aspects of educational personnel rarely receive systematic attention. As a result, a gap emerges between institutional demands and individual capacity to maintain mental balance.

This phenomenon becomes increasingly complex as competitive work environments often pressure educational personnel to continuously adapt to new policies, digital systems, and bureaucratic efficiency demands. The imbalance between workload and emotional well-being leads to a decline in collaborative spirit, increased interpersonal conflict, and weakened institutional loyalty (Win et al., 2025). Mental health is actually a crucial foundation for the sustainability of educational organizations. However, in practice, higher education institutions still view this issue as an individual responsibility rather than as part of the organizational work culture system. (Cenedesi et al., 2024). An organizational approach that ignore psychological aspects has the potential to create a dysfunctional cycle: stress increases work errors, errors reduce self-confidence, and ultimately lower productivity (Van Scheppingen et al., 2015). This phenomenon indicates that the mental well-being of educational personnel cannot be separated from the organizational climate that shaped by the values, norms, and patterns of interaction among institutional members. Without a culture that supports mental health, it is difficult for educational personnel to consistently demonstrate optimal performance (Suganya et al., 2024).

One of the fundamental issues faced is the weak internalization of organizational values that foster empathy, fairness, and psychological safety (Proper & Van Oostrom, 2019). A considerable number of higher education institutions have yet to establish explicit policies that actively promote an emotionally supportive and psychologically healthy work environment (Hodgins et al., 2024). Psychological support mechanisms, humanistic supervision, and stress management training are often not yet integrated into the human resource development systems (Shanock et al., 2019). As a result, the relationship between leadership and staff tends to be merely hierarchical and functional, rather than relational and supportive (Reit & Halevy, 2020). Such conditions exacerbates the psychological distance between institutional

management and educational personnel, thereby impeding the cultivation of an organizational culture grounded in mental well-being.

Another factor that exacerbates the situation is the limited conceptual and practical understanding of organizational culture grounded in mental health. Most institutions have yet to grasp how to cultivate organizational values that sustain individual emotional balance while simultaneously supporting collective productivity (Peterson & Wilson, 1998). The absence of an integrated framework linking human resource management, occupational psychology, and institutional policy has resulted in the sporadic implementation of organizational cultures that support mental health (Dextras-Gauthier et al., 2012). Several higher education institutions have indeed introduced well-being programs; however, their implementation remains unsystematic and is often ceremonial in nature, lacking clear evaluation mechanisms to assess their impact on work effectiveness (Delgado Vela, 2025).

Another emerging issue is the gap between institutional policies and the everyday realities of educational personnel. Although some universities have begun to incorporate well-being values into their institutional missions, implementation often remains inconsistent (Travia et al., 2022). For example, policies on flexible working hours, recognition of emotional burdens, and psychological support systems often fail to operate effectively due to weak coordination and a lack of commitment from unit leadership. The misalignment between declared institutional values and enacted organizational behaviors generates cultural dissonance, which in turn exacerbates psychological stress among educational personnel and erodes trust in leadership (Haq & Torlak, 2025). Beside structural issues, psychosocial factors further compound the complexity of this problem. Divergent perceptions between leadership and staff regarding the meaning of mental well-being frequently lead to misunderstandings. Some leaders perceive mental health concerns as indicative of a lack of professionalism, whereas staff members regard them as a legitimate and fundamental human need (Moreno Fortes et al., 2020). This discordance in perspectives creates a communication gap and obstructs the formation of a mutually supportive organizational culture. Such conditions underscore that the development of a mental health-oriented organizational culture cannot succeed without a shared vision across all levels of the institution regarding the importance of psychological balance in the workplace (House, 2023).

Based on an empirical perspective, the lack of attention to mental health has a direct impact on work effectiveness (Van Gordon et al., 2014). Chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and work-related anxiety are significantly associated with decreased productivity among educational personnel (Wang & Li, 2022). These symptoms often manifest in high absenteeism, interpersonal conflicts, and a decline in the quality of academic services. In the long term,

such conditions are detrimental to individual well-being and hinder the achievement of institutional goals. Therefore, cultivating an organizational culture that prioritizes mental health should be pursued as a strategic imperative to sustain stability, foster staff loyalty, and enhance the performance effectiveness of educational personnel (Mwangi & Waithaka, 2018; Ng'ang'a & Wesonga, 2012). Considering these various issues, developing an organizational culture that supports mental health in universities is both a strategic need and a complex challenge. The issues involved relate to institutional policies and encompass social, psychological, and professional ethical aspects within the educational environment. Therefore, it is important to further examine how the concept of a mental health-oriented organizational culture can be developed contextually in higher education settings, what factors influence its success, and how its reinforcement can contribute to the sustainable work effectiveness of educational personnel. The main problems of this research can be formulated in the following questions:

1. How is the concept of a mental health-oriented organizational culture developed in higher education institutions to support the psychological well-being of educational personnel?
2. What factors influence the successful implementation of a mental health-oriented organizational culture among educational personnel?
3. How does the effect of strengthening a mental health-oriented organizational culture to the work effectiveness of educational personnel in higher education institutions?

This study aims to analyze the concept and implementation of a mental health-based organizational culture within the scope of higher education as an effort to realize the psychological well-being of education personnel. In addition, this study intends to identify and explain the various factors that influence the effectiveness of implementing a mental health-oriented organizational culture, both from structural, social, and psychological aspects. This study also aims to evaluate the extent to which strengthening the values and practices of organizational culture based on mental health is able to increase the work effectiveness of education personnel and contribute to the sustainability of the performance of higher education institutions.

Theoretically, the results of this study can enrich the literature on the relationship between organizational culture, mental health, and work effectiveness within the scope of higher education institutions, especially in the fields of human resource management and organizational psychology. This study is also expected to be an academic reference in developing a conceptual model of organizational culture that is humanistic and based on mental well-being.

Practically, this study is expected to be the basis for university leaders to design institutional policies that are more inclusive and oriented towards the

psychological well-being of education personnel. The results of this study can also serve as a reference for designing organizational intervention strategies, such as work-life balance training programs, improving empathic communication between leaders and staff, and mental health-based reward systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational culture refers to the system of values, beliefs, and norms that are shared by organizational members and that direct collective behavior (Akpa et al., 2021). A strong organizational culture facilitates organizational effectiveness through strengthening commitment, collaboration, and work ethic (Kim & Lee, 2024). Organizational culture impacts not only on technical output, but also on the quality of interpersonal relations, internal communication, and the climate of trust that is the foundation for the development of a healthy work culture (Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). Meanwhile, in the health sector, Almutairi et al. (2022) concluded that organizational factors such as leadership, discipline, and internal cultural groups significantly influence the performance of health professionals.

Recent studies show that a mental health-oriented organizational culture is a key variable in creating a psychologically safe work climate (Mirza et al., 2023). An organizational climate with low psychological safety and high mental health stigma worsens work-related stress and burnout (Klinefelter et al., 2021). Organizational culture has a positive impact on employees' mental health, and transparent communication moderates this effect (Sun et al., 2023). Therefore, developing a mental health-oriented organizational culture requires the integration of values such as openness, social support, employee engagement, and timely, honest communication.

Work effectiveness among educational personnel includes administrative productivity, the quality of academic services, the effectiveness of interactions with students and stakeholders, and the institution's ability to achieve its educational vision and mission. Smart and St. John (1996) argue that a positive organizational culture strongly correlates with school effectiveness, a principle that is also applicable to higher education institutions. Systematic reviews in the health sector indicate that organizational culture influences the performance of service-oriented professionals, with psychological factors such as stress and discipline acting as mediators (Almutairi et al., 2022). In other words, the work effectiveness of educational personnel depends not only on technical competence but also on the cultural context and their mental well-being.

Cross-sectoral research indicates that organizational cultures supporting psychological well-being can contribute to improved work effectiveness (Dóra et al., 2019; Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). This suggests that organizational culture is not merely a background variable, but also serves as a mediator

between employees' psychological conditions and organizational performance. In higher education, although research remains limited, preliminary findings show that when institutions adopt well-being-oriented values, educational personnel feel more engaged, motivated, and committed ultimately enhancing institutional work effectiveness.

The literature identifies several key factors for the successful development of a mental health-oriented organizational culture. First, empathetic leadership and supportive role model are essential for setting examples and prioritizing mental health in organizational policies (Arghode et al., 2022). Second, staff involvement in the formulation of well-being policies and open organizational communication helps reduce stigma and fosters psychological safety (Gardi et al., 2021; Hunt et al., 2021). Third, organizational structures that allow flexibility, reasonable workloads, and peer social support have been shown to strengthen a healthy work culture (Smith et al., 2019). Fourth, continuous monitoring and evaluation of policy and cultural implementation are crucial to ensure the sustainability of change (Fischer, 2011).

Although the literature is gradually expanding, several research gaps remain relevant to the context of higher education. First, most studies focus on the health sector or primary and secondary education, while educational personnel in higher education are still underrepresented. Second, many studies employ quantitative designs, with limited adoption of qualitative approaches or thematic literature syntheses, despite the fact that cultural change requires a deep understanding of organizational social and psychological processes. Third, few studies explicitly link mental health-oriented organizational culture to work effectiveness in higher education settings, indicating a clear opportunity for further scholarly contribution.

The development of an organizational culture that positions psychological well-being as a strategic institutional element is increasingly relevant in responding to the demands of change, digitalization, and high academic pressure. Therefore, this study aims to address existing gaps by conducting a qualitative literature review and thematic analysis to explore the concept, supporting factors, and the impact of a mental health-oriented organizational culture on the work effectiveness of educational personnel in higher education institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses literature review method with a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because the research focus lies on conceptual and theoretical examinations regarding the development of a mental health-based organizational culture as a strategy to increase the work effectiveness of education personnel in higher education. This method allows researchers to

integrate various scientific views, previous research results, and relevant human resource management and organizational psychology theories (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). As such, this study is analytical-descriptive in nature, seeking to build a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and the psychological well-being of education personnel.

The research implementation stage began with the collection of primary and secondary literature sources, which included academic books, reputable scientific journals, research reports, and scientific articles relevant to the themes of organizational culture, mental health, and work effectiveness. Each piece of literature was selected based on the credibility of the source, novelty (mostly available in the last five to ten years), and relevance to the research focus. The analysis process was conducted using the content analysis technique, which examines thematic patterns, theoretical concepts, and existing empirical results to find similarities in ideas and differences in views between researchers (Choi & Lee, 2014; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Data obtained from various sources were then interpreted through a conceptual synthesis approach to construct a framework that shows the relationship between organizational culture, mental health, and work effectiveness. The analysis was conducted qualitatively, emphasizing the meaning of concepts, principles, and study results without involving statistical calculations. The results of the study are expected to produce a conceptual model that can serve as a reference for the development of human resource management policies in higher education, especially in building an organizational culture that is adaptive, psychologically healthy, and supports sustainable improvement in the performance of education personnel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Development of a mental health-based organizational culture concept in the higher education environment

According to Schein (2010), organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions created, discovered, or developed by a particular group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration. In the context of higher education, developing a mental health-oriented organizational culture involves cultivating institutional values, norms, and practices that foster psychological safety, mutual trust, and social support among educational personnel (Guillaume & Austin, 2016).

Moreover, within the current dynamics of higher education, the implementation of cultural patterns that allow space for mental health maintenance strategically bridges the gap between group adaptation needs and the demands of modern organizations. The basic assumptions initially formed by educational personnel gradually evolve into the foundation for collective

practices that provide psychological protection. Trust-based relationships are nurtured through daily interactions that affirm individual roles, thereby strengthening social cohesion in the workplace. Therefore, the formation of these values is not merely normative but also encourages practices that are responsive to real needs. In line with this, an approach that emphasizes active participation from all organizational elements creates space for dialogue and reflection on mental well-being issues. Through this mechanism, cultural transformation becomes a simultaneous top-down and bottom-up process. On the other hand, institutional support remains a fundamental requirement, as new values and practices need structural legitimacy to be sustainable. Thus, a bridge is formed between the establishment of psychological foundations and the systemic steps necessary to create a healthy and sustainable work environment. This model is relevant for various mental health improvement programs, allowing the integration of new values to occur organically. These principles will serve as the foundation for developing effective and impactful organizational interventions (Pavlova, 2023).

A mental health oriented organizational culture in higher education requires systemic and participatory support to ensure a healthy work environment for educational personnel. According to the World Health Organization (2022), organizational factors such as a supportive work climate, effective communication, and openness about psychological issues significantly influence staff well-being. One of the key elements is the development of values and norms that promote well-being, supported by training that raises awareness of mental health issues and socialization efforts that emphasize mutual care and respect in the workplace (Irfan & Darmawan, 2021). Organization-based interventions have proven effective in reducing work-related stress and enhancing motivation through experience-sharing activities and mentoring (Wurie et al., 2016).

Strengthening institutional policies is essential to ensure that educational personnel feel psychologically safe and valued within the organization. The implementation of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and access to professional counseling services are critical components in providing safe spaces for campus staff to discuss personal and work-related issues that affect their mental health (Mazzetti et al., 2020). The adoption of flexible working hours, inclusion of mental health leave, and access to recreational and relaxation facilities have been shown to reduce burnout levels (Kinman & Wray, 2018). These guaranteed rights and facilities foster a sense of appreciation and reinforce employee loyalty and performance. The influence of leadership style on mental health-oriented organizational culture is critical. Arnold and Connelly (2013) emphasize that supportive leadership enhances psychological safety, open communication, and the confidence of educational personnel to express personal and professional challenges. Participatory,

transparent, and inclusive leadership models strengthen employees' emotional engagement and increase opportunities for innovation in stress management (Abdullah et al., 2021). Proactive leaders consistently set standards and model healthy workplace behaviors, while promoting empathy as a core value. This collective approach has been shown to reinforce a mental health-friendly organizational culture (Ajadi et al., 2025).

Community-based approaches, such as the formation of peer support group or colleague initiatives, can serve as key pillars of mental health in higher education environments. According to McBeath et al. (2022), participation in internal support groups enables staff to provide mutual feedback and practical solutions for managing work-related stress. Peer support groups enhance a sense of connectedness and reduce the social isolation often experienced by educational support personnel, while also facilitating emotional openness in informal settings. Such programs have proven effective in lowering levels of depression and anxiety among staff, as they feel less alone in facing workplace challenges (Zulu et al., 2025).

Technology contributes a highly relevant role in supporting mental health ecosystems on campus. Online counselling services, stress detection apps, and self-paced learning modules on emotional management have been recognized for expanding access and enabling staff to seek psychological support at any time (Kurniawan & Darmawan, 2021). According to Cook et al. (2017), the use of e-mental health enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, particularly in hybrid or remote work settings. Technological solutions also support staff autonomy in seeking help privately, without fear of stigma or judgment from their surroundings, thereby safeguarding psychological well-being (Dutta, 2023).

To maintain the sustainability of a mental health-oriented organizational culture, regular evaluations and program adjustments must be part of human resources management strategies. Internal surveys, focus group interviews, and routine mental health audits serve as the basis for identifying needs and improving policies (Houghton et al., 2021). Evaluation results enable institutions to design more targeted interventions and increase staff participation in decision-making related to psychological well-being. This allows universities to build an adaptive and responsive culture that ensures optimal psychological welfare for their employees (Bhattacharjee, 2025).

In order to achieve this goal, it is important to recognize that regular evaluations are not merely administrative routines, but strategic steps essential for shaping a more inclusive organizational culture. By identifying needs and challenges through surveys and interviews, institutions can adapt policies that align with the aspirations of educational personnel. Moreover, these evaluations provide valuable insights for designing interventions that are not only responsive but also proactive in supporting mental health. Therefore, the

changes resulting from this process are crucial for creating a more human-centered work environment (Hariani et al., 2021). In line with this, embedding psychological well-being values becomes vital, as it enables the integration of these principles into human resource management practices (Mahajan & Kaur, 2025). Ultimately, organizational culture transformation not only enhances individual well-being but also strengthens collective performance, making institutions more adaptive and sustainable in the face of change.

The implementation of a mental health-oriented organizational culture requires a paradigm shift from an administrative approach to a more humanistic one. Higher education institutions need to embed psychological well-being values into their work systems, communication practices, and human resource management in order to create a healthy, productive, and sustainable work environment (Eddine et al., 2021). In doing so, organizational culture becomes not only a symbol of institutional identity but also a strategic instrument for maintaining emotional stability and enhancing the performance of educational personnel.

Determinants of successful implementation of a mental health-oriented organizational culture

According to James and James (1989), psychological climate reflects how individuals perceive organizational policies and practices that affect their well-being and behavior. Key factors include leadership, social support, communication, and work-life balance (Bronkhorst et al., 2015). These elements interact to shape overall organizational functioning (Toprak & Karakus, 2018). Effective leaders who are inclusive and supportive foster open communication, participation, and empathy, enhancing motivation and commitment to a mentally healthy culture (Sharma & Patel, 2025). By enhancing social support and providing opportunities for staff to participate in decision-making, organizations can build a strong sense of ownership over policies and practices that support psychological well-being. Furthermore, leaders who demonstrate empathy and show concern for employees' work-life balance not only boost motivation but also strengthen commitment to a mentally healthy organizational culture (Ramesh, 2022). Thus, the transition from theory to practice in implementing a mental health-oriented organizational culture largely depends on the quality of leadership in place.

The successful implementation of mental health-oriented organizational culture among educational personnel is strongly influenced by supportive and inclusive leadership. A study by Arnold and Connelly (2013) found that leaders who adopt transformational leadership can enhance staff psychological health and overall well-being. Leaders with empathy and effective communication skills encourage staff to openly share the challenges they face. Empowerment in decision-making motivates staff to actively maintain work-life balance and

foster a workplace climate that values mental health. Consistent delivery of positive values by leaders reinforces the internalization of policies that support psychological well-being within the organization (Venema-Steen et al., 2023).

Institutional support through formal policies is another fundamental factor in the success of a mental health-focused organizational culture. Policies related to flexible working hours, mental health leave, and access to counseling services encourage staff to maintain a healthy work-life balance. The allocation of dedicated human resources and budgets for mental health programs fosters a sense of safety and protection in the workplace. These facilities help reduce burnout and increase employee loyalty. The implementation of such policies must include regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure their effectiveness and allow for necessary adjustments (De Alencar et al., 2024).

Transparent communication among organizational members is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of a mental health-supportive culture. A study by Mazzetti et al. (2020) concluded that open, two-way communication reduces stigma around psychological issues and strengthens a sense of togetherness. Reflective group discussions, psychological needs assessments, and informal forums must be properly facilitated. With effective communication spaces in place, educational personnel feel heard, understood, and supported when facing challenges. A work environment that embraces the diversity of individuals' emotional conditions also makes it easier to socialize mental health programs (Zeenat Shafiq & Jan, 2024).

The role of social support from colleagues and campus communities cannot be overlooked. McBeath et al. (2022), through qualitative research, concluded that the presence of peer support groups enhances resilience and helps individuals cope with work-related stress. Peers can serve as effective informal consultation partners, allowing members to feel less alone in facing challenges. At the same time, participation in such groups facilitates the transfer of knowledge about healthy coping strategies. In addition, campus social activities and open support from the community strengthen solidarity and emotional well-being (Delgado Vela, 2025). Technology-based innovations support the implementation of a mental health-oriented organizational culture through stress monitoring applications, digital counseling services, and self-paced online training. Cook et al. (2017) found that the use of information technology expands educational staff's access to psychological services without time or location constraints. Digital systems facilitate regular monitoring, allowing timely interventions when signs of declining mental health are detected. Technology also supports staff education on stress management, mindfulness, and resilience in adapting to changes in the modern work environment (Zeenat Shafiq & Jan, 2024).

Regular monitoring and evaluation of mental health programs contribute to the success of a healthy organizational culture. The World Health

Organization (2022) recommends that institutions conduct internal audits, focus group discussions, and psychological surveys to identify problems and opportunities. Monitoring data guides policy improvements and helps tailor interventions to be more targeted and effective. Involving all organizational levels in the evaluation process ensures that each program remains relevant to the actual needs of staff and responsive to the dynamics of the educational environment (Dani & Rohman, 2025).

The successful implementation of a mental health-oriented organizational culture in higher education institutions relies heavily on the synergy between institutional policies and the subjective experiences of educational personnel. When staff feel valued, involved, and possess psychological autonomy, affective commitment emerges, reinforcing a positive work culture. Thus, a supportive organizational climate is not merely the result of formal policies, but also a reflection of interpersonal relationships and the internalization of well-being values within the campus's social structure.

The impact of strengthening mental health-based organizational culture on the work effectiveness of education personnel

According to Ryff and Keyes (1995), psychological well-being in the workplace encompasses six core dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. An organizational culture oriented toward mental health reinforces these dimensions through emotional support, empathetic communication, and a work environment that values individuals' psychological balance (Naveena & Murthy, 2025). As a development of the concept of psychological well-being, it is important to understand that strengthening the six dimensions identified by Ryff and Keyes is not merely theoretical, but carries significant practical implications. Therefore, implementing an organizational culture that supports mental health is essential for creating a productive work environment. In line with this, emotional support and empathetic communication within the organization encourage educational personnel to feel valued and engaged. Moreover, strengthening individual autonomy in the workplace enables staff to manage their responsibilities more effectively, which in turn contributes to greater mastery of their work environment. When these dimensions are reinforced, the result is increased motivation and commitment to assigned tasks. On the other hand, an organizational culture that is responsive to psychological needs not only reduces stress levels but also facilitates better collaboration among staff. This creates a conducive work atmosphere where individuals can share ideas and solutions more effectively, ultimately contributing to higher collective performance (Namdech et al., 2025).

Strengthening a mental health-oriented organizational culture has been shown to significantly impact the work effectiveness of educational personnel in higher education institutions. A work environment that supports psychological well-being facilitates professional development, reduces stress, and enhances individual motivation to work more productively. According to Mazzetti et al. (2020), staff engagement in supportive teams strengthens overall engagement, enabling tasks to be completed with greater commitment and quality. Moreover, an organizational environment that is responsive to psychological needs directly reduces internal conflicts that could undermine collective performance. These implications are evident in improved daily collaboration, optimized communication, and staff's enhanced ability to address complex problems with effective solutions (Li, 2025).

The availability of counseling services, flexible working hours, and various forms of organizational social support have been shown to improve the balance between work demands and personal life (Arifin et al., 2021). Kinman and Wray (2018) noted that organizations with policies accommodating mental health successfully reduce the risk of burnout and unplanned absenteeism among educational staff. Such policies strengthen loyalty and foster a sense of belonging to the institution. In addition to providing adequate space for psychological recovery, these facilities create a sense of safety and enhance job satisfaction. Supportive peers and supervisors further sustain performance and ensure stable educational service quality (Jusoh & Zhenni, 2025).

Effective leadership is one of the key drivers of organizational culture change toward mental health orientation. Transformational leadership, as described by Arnold and Connelly (2013), enhances the sense of meaning in work among staff and strengthens positive psychological traits such as self-esteem and confidence. Leaders who are open and provide fair recognition encourage staff to actively participate in improving the work environment. As a result, healthy interpersonal relationships accelerate innovation, minimize conflict, and improve both formal and informal communication flows. This leadership model enables the growth of a supportive work culture amid the dynamic nature of higher education systems (Douglas et al., 2025).

A workplace environment that normalizes mental health issues can reduce stigma and feelings of shame when educational personnel seek support. McBeath et al. (2022) found that staff who feel accepted and respected for their emotional backgrounds are more likely to seek help when experiencing stress. This normalization fosters an inclusive work environment and enhances staff retention. Effectively eliminating stigma accelerates the recovery process from work-related stressors, thereby maintaining productivity. Regular psychological training programs also shaping collective understanding of mental health maintenance (Coats et al., 2024). Cross-divisional collaboration in building a healthy organizational culture within higher education institutions

plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of mental health interventions. WHO (2022) emphasizes that involving all organizational elements from administrative staff and educators to campus leadership enhances each individual's sense of ownership. Such synergy strengthens program sustainability and maximizes outcomes. Empirical evidence shows that open, participatory communication and the empowerment of workplace communities reduce resistance to new mental health policies. Positive interactions between individuals and groups contribute to the creation of a productive and adaptive work environment (Ohadomere & Ogamba, 2021).

The role of information technology enhances the effectiveness of educational personnel. E-counseling and stress monitoring tools help detect mental health issues early and provide faster support (Cook et al., 2017). Online stress management training equips staff to handle workloads and maintain performance, while technology reduces time and location barriers in hybrid work settings (Abdul et al., 2024). Regular evaluations—through audits, surveys, and interviews—are essential to identify challenges and adjust policies. Data-driven, inclusive evaluations help sustain productivity and prevent performance decline from unmanaged stress (Medina-Benavides & Altamirano-Hidalgo, 2023). Strengthening a mental health-oriented organizational culture has a direct impact on work effectiveness of educational personnel, as it fosters psychological conditions conducive to work engagement, job satisfaction, and institutional loyalty. When staff feel emotionally secure and find meaning in their work, they tend to demonstrate more stable and productive performance. Thus, mental well-being is not merely a personal concern, but a strategic determinant in enhancing work effectiveness and the quality of administrative services in higher education institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

A mental health-oriented organizational culture serves as a critical foundation for fostering a healthy and competitive work environment in higher education institutions. This concept positions psychological well-being as an integral component of human resource management strategies. By upholding values such as psychological safety, social support, and mutual trust, universities can cultivate a humanistic and productive work ecosystem. Key factors such as empathy-driven leadership styles, policies that support work-life balance, and open communication play a vital role in the successful implementation of this culture. Strengthening a mental health-oriented organizational culture has a direct impact on work effectiveness, as reflected in increased motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction among educational personnel.

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and psychological well-being within the

context of human resource management in higher education. Practically, its implications encourage universities to integrate mental health into systematic institutional policies. Developing a work culture that prioritizes mental well-being can sustainably enhance the performance of educational personnel. Furthermore, institutional leaders should design training programs and psychological support systems that strengthen individual capacity to manage work-related stress, foster collaborative communication, and reinforce a sense of ownership toward the organization.

Higher education institutions are encouraged to integrate mental health principles into the design of organizational culture through recruitment policies, career development, and performance appraisal systems oriented toward well-being. Institutions should also strengthen empathy-based leadership training for managers to foster a work climate that supports psychological balance. Furthermore, future research may expand empirical inquiry using quantitative approaches to measure the relationship between mental health-oriented organizational culture and the work effectiveness of educational personnel across different types of universities. In doing so, research findings can offer tangible contributions to the sustainable governance of human resources in the higher education sector.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Jeje Abdul Rojak: Conceptualisation, Research Design, Data Collection, Methodology, **Didit Darmawan:** Supervision, Writing Entire Paper, Conceptualisation, **Antonino Pedro Marsal:** Data Collection, Analysis, Editing and Layouting. All Authors have read the final version of the paper.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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