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The Mental Health in the Workplace as an Element of Organizational Sustainability

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
1. Chapter 1: Introduction	4
1.1. Research Background	5
1.2. Research Problem	6
1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps.....	6
1.2.2. Practical Gaps.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3. Research Significance.....	7
1.3.1. At the theoretical level	7
1.3.2. At the practical level	7
1.4. Research Questions	7
1.5. Research Objectives	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.6. Research Hypotheses.....	8
1.7. Research Model.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.8. Scope of The Study	10
1.9. The Project Structure	11
2. Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
2.1. Introduction.....	13
2.2. The independent variable.....	13
2.3. The dependent variable.....	13
2.4. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables	14
2.5. Conclusion	14
3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	15
3.1. Introduction.....	16
3.2. Operational definitions for research variables	16
3.3. Research design (research onion)	16
3.4. Research population & Sampling methods and technique	16
3.5. Data collection method	17
3.6. Types of data	17
3.7. Statistical analysis procedures	18
3.8. Conclusion	19
4. Chapter 4: Statistical Analysis & Findings discussion	20

4.1.	Introduction.....	21
4.2.	Sample profile (descriptive statistics for research sample)	21
4.3.	Validity & reliability tests for the questionnaires	22
4.4.	Descriptive statistics for research variables (answer research questions)	22
4.5.	Testing Hypotheses & Findings Discussion	23
4.6.	Conclusion	24
5.	Chapter five: Research limitations, Recommendations & Conclusion	25
5.1.	Research Limitations & Future Research	26
5.2.	Research Recommendations	26
	References.....	27-28

Abstract

This study investigates the role of workplace mental health in promoting organizational sustainability. Increasing workplace pressures, including digital transformation and post-pandemic changes, have intensified concerns about employee well-being. However, many organizations still fail to integrate mental health into their sustainability strategies. This research examines the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability, identifying key factors influencing this integration.

A quantitative, explanatory design is adopted using a deductive approach based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical techniques such as correlation and regression.

The findings are expected to show that workplace mental health positively impacts employee engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience. The study emphasizes the importance of mental health initiatives and supportive practices in enhancing long-term organizational performance.

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability, and to identify the key factors that influence the integration of mental health initiatives into sustainability strategies.

Methodology: A quantitative, explanatory research design is employed using a deductive approach based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire from employees in medium and large organizations and analyzed using statistical techniques such as correlation and regression.

Findings: The study is expected to reveal that workplace mental health has a significant positive impact on organizational sustainability, enhancing employee engagement, productivity, and resilience. It also highlights the role of mental health initiatives and supportive workplace practices.

Originality & Implication: This research contributes by integrating organizational psychology and sustainability theory, emphasizing mental health as a strategic component of sustainability. It provides practical insights for organizations to improve employee well-being and long-term performance.

Keywords: Workplace mental health; Organizational sustainability; Employee well-being; Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model; Employee engagement; Sustainable workplace practices.

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The growing recognition of mental health as a decisive factor in workplace effectiveness reflects broader global changes in how organizations understand employee well-being. Historically, organizational performance models emphasized physical safety and productivity; however, the shift toward knowledge-based economies and complex work environments has elevated the role of psychological well-being as a key driver of sustainable organizational outcomes. Over the past decade—and especially following the COVID-19 pandemic—mental health challenges such as burnout, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and work-related stress have intensified across industries, prompting renewed academic and institutional interest in the dynamics between mental well-being and sustainable organizational practices (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Organizations today operate under pressures shaped by technological change, remote work arrangements, rising workloads, and an increasing demand for continuous innovation. These pressures have contributed to a noticeable rise in mental health concerns among employees. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022), poor mental health at work results in substantial economic losses globally due to reduced productivity, presenteeism, absenteeism, and turnover. Such consequences highlight the necessity for organizational strategies that address psychological well-being as part of long-term sustainability planning.

Recent academic studies reinforce the view that workplace mental health is directly linked to organizational resilience, adaptability, and innovative capacity. Sonnentag (2021) notes that recovery and psychological resources are vital for maintaining long-term employee engagement and preventing burnout—a major threat to organizational stability. Furthermore, De Neve and Ward (2020) demonstrate that happier and healthier employees tend to perform better, collaborate more effectively, and contribute to a positive organizational culture, all of which are essential components of sustainable development.

Given these trends, there is a growing need for empirical research that examines how organizations can integrate mental health initiatives into their sustainability frameworks. Understanding this relationship is crucial not only for improving employee well-being but also for strengthening organizational competitiveness, ethical responsibility, and long-term viability.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022) highlight that mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, and depression significantly reduce organizational efficiency while simultaneously increasing absenteeism, presenteeism, and healthcare-related costs. These negative outcomes underscore the importance of integrating mental health considerations into organizational policies, leadership practices, and human resource management systems.

Furthermore, sustainable organizations—those committed to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria—are increasingly expected to protect and promote employee psychological well-being as part of their social sustainability agenda.

Research within organizational psychology reinforces this perspective. Sonnentag (2021) emphasizes that recovery, resilience, and supportive work environments are essential for maintaining long-term employee performance and preventing burnout. Similarly, analyses of workplace wellbeing have demonstrated that mentally healthy work environments contribute to stronger organizational commitment, enhanced innovation, and improved stakeholder trust, positioning mental health as a foundation of sustainable organizational development (De Neve & Ward, 2020).

Given this context, it has become increasingly important to examine how mental health initiatives can be incorporated into organizational sustainability frameworks. Such integration not only enhances employee well-being but also strengthens organizational competitiveness, ethical responsibility, and resilience.

1.2. Research Problem

Although mental health is increasingly recognized as essential for employee wellbeing and organizational performance, many organizations still fail to incorporate psychological wellbeing into their sustainability strategies. This gap leads to challenges such as reduced productivity, higher absenteeism, and weakened organizational resilience (WHO & ILO, 2022). Research also shows that poor workplace mental health negatively affects long-term organizational sustainability, yet organizations often lack systematic approaches to address it (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Therefore, the core problem addressed by this study is the insufficient integration of workplace mental health within sustainability strategies, limiting the development of healthy and sustainable work environments.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

Fragmented theoretical treatment of mental health across disciplines. Mental health research spans psychology, public health, and management, but theoretical integration across these domains is limited. Sonnentag (2021) highlights the importance of recovery and psychological resources, yet organizational sustainability literature rarely incorporates these psychological constructs. This fragmentation prevents the development of a holistic theoretical model linking wellbeing and sustainability.

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

Implementation gap between policy and practice. Organizations frequently adopt mental health policies, but employees report limited actual support—creating a gap between documented intentions and lived experiences (Kniffin et al., 2021). Without consistent monitoring and evaluation, mental health initiatives fail to translate into meaningful workplace improvements.

1.3. Research Significance

This research is significant because it highlights the essential role of mental health in achieving sustainable ergonomics. As workplaces face increasing pressures from digitalisation, rising workloads, and post-pandemic restructuring, understanding the impact of psychological well-being on long-term organisational stability has become crucial. By examining how mental health initiatives can be effectively integrated into sustainability strategies, this study offers valuable insights for organisations seeking to enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism, and foster stronger employee engagement.

1.3.1. Theoretical Level

This study integrates organizational psychology with sustainability theory, drawing upon models such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model. It emphasizes how psychological well-being functions as a core component of sustainable organizational development.

1.3.2. Practical Level

The study provides actionable guidance for organizations seeking to integrate mental health initiatives into sustainability frameworks. It highlights supportive leadership, work–life balance policies, psychological safety, and employee-centered interventions.

1.4. Research Questions

- How do workplace mental health factors influence organizational sustainability?
- To what extent are mental health initiatives currently integrated into organizational sustainability practices?
- What organizational factors support or hinder the successful incorporation of mental health into sustainability frameworks?
- How do sustainable workplace practices contribute to improving employees' psychological well-being?
- What strategies can organizations adopt to strengthen the role of mental health within their long-term sustainability plans?

1.5. Research Objectives

To address the research questions, the following research objectives have been established:

1. Examine the relationship between mental health and organizational sustainability.
2. Assess the extent of integration of mental health initiatives within sustainability plans.
3. Identify organizational enablers and barriers affecting integration.
4. Explore how sustainable practices enhance psychological well-being.
5. Propose strategies to strengthen mental health integration within long-term sustainability plans.

1.6. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are proposed

- Main Hypothesis

H1: Workplace mental health has a significant positive impact on organizational sustainability.

- Sub-Hypotheses

H1a: Organizations that implement mental health initiatives demonstrate higher levels of employee engagement and productivity.

H1b: Poor workplace mental health is positively associated with increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover intention.

H1c: Sustainable workplace practices (e.g., supportive leadership, work–life balance policies, and healthy work environments) positively influence employees' psychological well-being.

The integration of mental health initiatives into sustainability strategies enhances organizational resilience and long-term performance.

H1d: Organizational barriers—such as lack of training, limited resources, and weak leadership commitment—negatively affect the incorporation of mental health into sustainability frameworks.

1.7. Research Model

The research model is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The research model diagram.

1.8. Empirical Study

This study adopts an empirical approach to examine the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability. Primary data were collected from employees working in medium and large organizations using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire measured key variables, including workplace mental health, mental health initiatives, organizational sustainability, and organizational barriers, using a five-point Likert scale.

A convenience sampling technique was employed to gather responses from participants across different departments and job levels, ensuring diverse perspectives. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software to test the proposed hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) ensured the consistency of the measurement scales. Additionally, correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships between variables and assess the impact of workplace mental health on organizational sustainability.

The empirical findings are expected to support the hypothesis that improved workplace mental health contributes significantly to higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience, thereby enhancing long-term sustainability.

1.9. Scope of The Study

The main goal of the study is to investigate how workplace mental health affects organizational sustainability. It especially focuses on how workplace policies, initiatives and mental health issues impact employee outcomes such as resilience, productivity and engagement.

The research is limited to employees working in medium and large organizations, where formal sustainability strategies and mental health practices are more likely to be implemented. It considers various organizational factors, including leadership support, work–life balance policies, and psychological safety, as well as barriers such as limited resources and lack of training.

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional approach, collecting data at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire. Therefore, the findings reflect current perceptions and practices rather than long-term changes.

Geographically, the study is confined to the selected sample accessible to the researcher, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the integration of mental health within organizational sustainability frameworks.

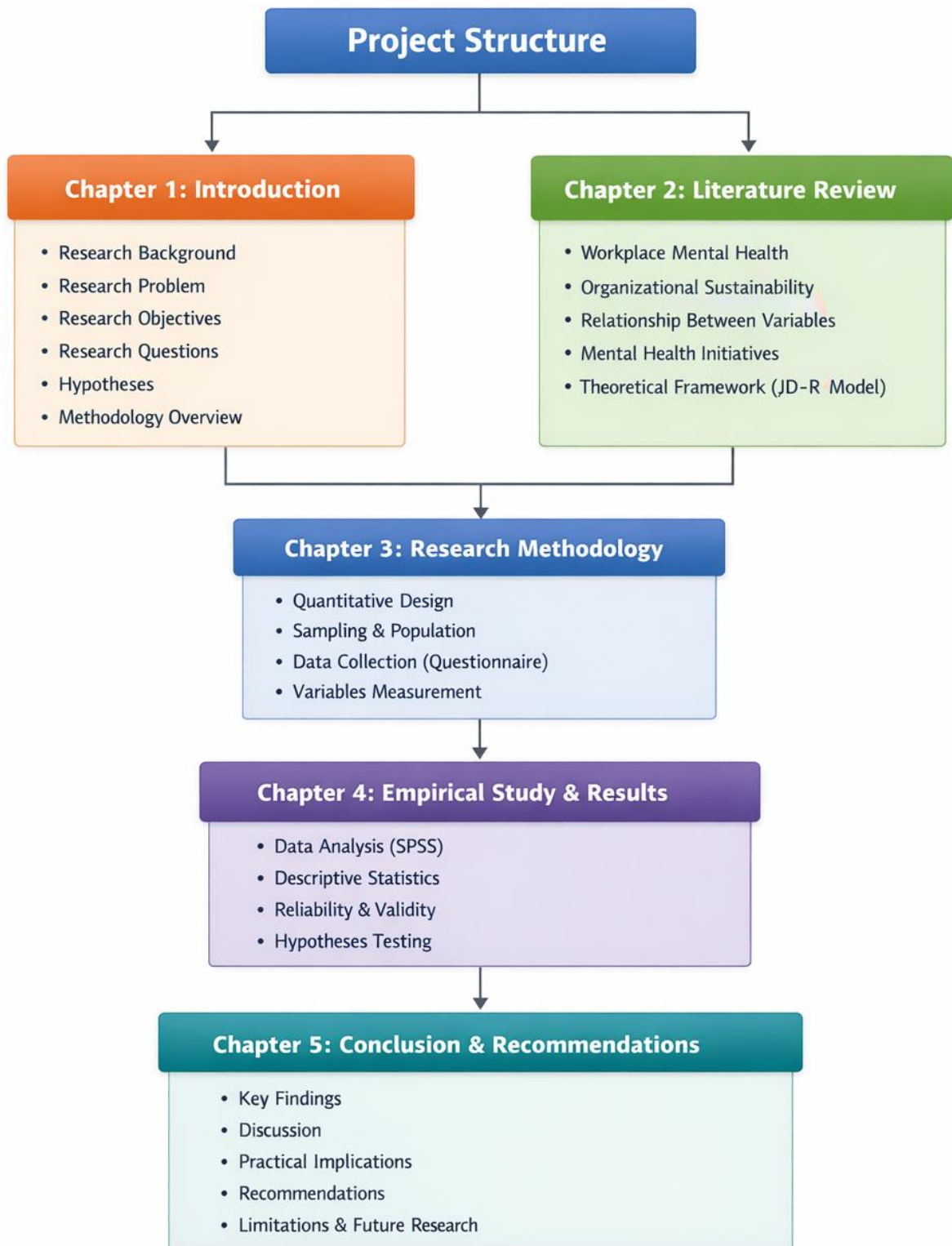


Figure 2: Project Structure. Source: Developed by the researcher (2026)

2.Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

A clear identification and understanding of the study variables are essential for establishing a robust conceptual framework and guiding the analytical process. In this regard, the present study examines workplace mental health as the independent variable and organizational sustainability as the dependent variable. These variables are fundamental to understanding how employees' psychological well-being influences organizational performance and long-term sustainability. This section provides a comprehensive discussion of each variable and critically examines the relationship between them, thereby forming the theoretical basis for the proposed hypotheses and empirical analysis.

2.2. The independent variable

Workplace Mental Health

The independent variable in this study is workplace mental health, which refers to the psychological, emotional, and social well-being of employees within the organizational environment. It encompasses factors such as stress levels, anxiety, burnout, emotional exhaustion, and psychological safety. Workplace mental health is influenced by job demands, organizational culture, leadership style, and interpersonal relationships.

A positive mental health environment is characterized by supportive leadership, manageable workloads, open communication, and a culture that promotes psychological safety. Conversely, poor workplace mental health arises from excessive job demands, lack of support, role ambiguity, and unhealthy work conditions. In this study, workplace mental health is treated as a key predictor that influences organizational outcomes, particularly sustainability.

2.3. The dependent variable

Organizational Sustainability

The dependent variable in this study is organizational sustainability, which refers to an organization's ability to maintain long-term performance while addressing economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. Within this research, sustainability is primarily examined from a social and organizational perspective, focusing on employee-related outcomes.

Organizational sustainability includes factors such as employee engagement, productivity, retention, and organizational resilience. Sustainable organizations prioritize the well-being of their workforce by creating supportive and inclusive work environments. These organizations are better equipped to adapt to change, maintain stable performance, and achieve long-term success. In this study, organizational sustainability is the outcome variable that is influenced by workplace mental health.

2.4. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables

The relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability is widely supported in organizational psychology and sustainability literature. Workplace mental health plays a critical role in shaping employee attitudes, behaviors, and overall performance, which directly impact organizational sustainability.

Positive mental health conditions contribute to higher levels of employee engagement, increased productivity, stronger organizational commitment, and improved resilience. Employees who experience psychological well-being are more likely to collaborate effectively, adapt to change, and contribute to innovation. On the other hand, poor mental health leads to negative outcomes such as absenteeism, presenteeism, burnout, and turnover, which weaken organizational performance and sustainability.

Therefore, workplace mental health is expected to have a significant positive impact on organizational sustainability. Organizations that invest in mental health initiatives and supportive workplace practices are more likely to achieve sustainable development and long-term success.

2.5. Conclusion

In summary, this section has provided a detailed conceptualization of the key variables and their interrelationship within the context of the study. Workplace mental health, as the independent variable, exerts a significant influence on organizational sustainability, the dependent variable. The analysis demonstrates that positive psychological well-being contributes to enhanced employee engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience, whereas poor mental health undermines these outcomes. Consequently, promoting workplace mental health is essential for organizations aiming to achieve sustainable performance and long-term organizational success.

3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to investigate the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability. It describes the research design, operational definitions of variables, population and sampling techniques, data collection methods, and statistical analysis procedures. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure methodological rigor, reliability, and validity in addressing the research objectives and testing the proposed hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2. Operational definitions for research variables

To ensure clarity and measurability, the key variables in this study are operationally defined as follows:

- **Workplace Mental Health (Independent Variable):**
Measured through indicators such as stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and psychological safety (Sonnetag, 2021).
- **Organizational Sustainability (Dependent Variable):**
Assessed through employee engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience (De Neve & Ward, 2020).
- **Mental Health Initiatives (Mediating Variable):**
Represented by practices such as support programs and work–life balance policies (WHO & ILO, 2022).
- **Organizational Barriers (Moderating Variable):**
Includes limited resources, lack of training, and weak leadership commitment (Kniffin et al., 2021).

All variables are measured using a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932).

3.3. Research design (research onion)

This study is guided by the Research Onion framework developed by Saunders et al. (2019), which provides a structured approach to research design:

- **Research Philosophy:** Positivism
- **Research Approach:** Deductive
- **Research Strategy:** Survey
- **Research Choice:** Quantitative
- **Time Horizon:** Cross-sectional
- **Data Collection Technique:** Questionnaire

This framework supports hypothesis testing and ensures a systematic research process.

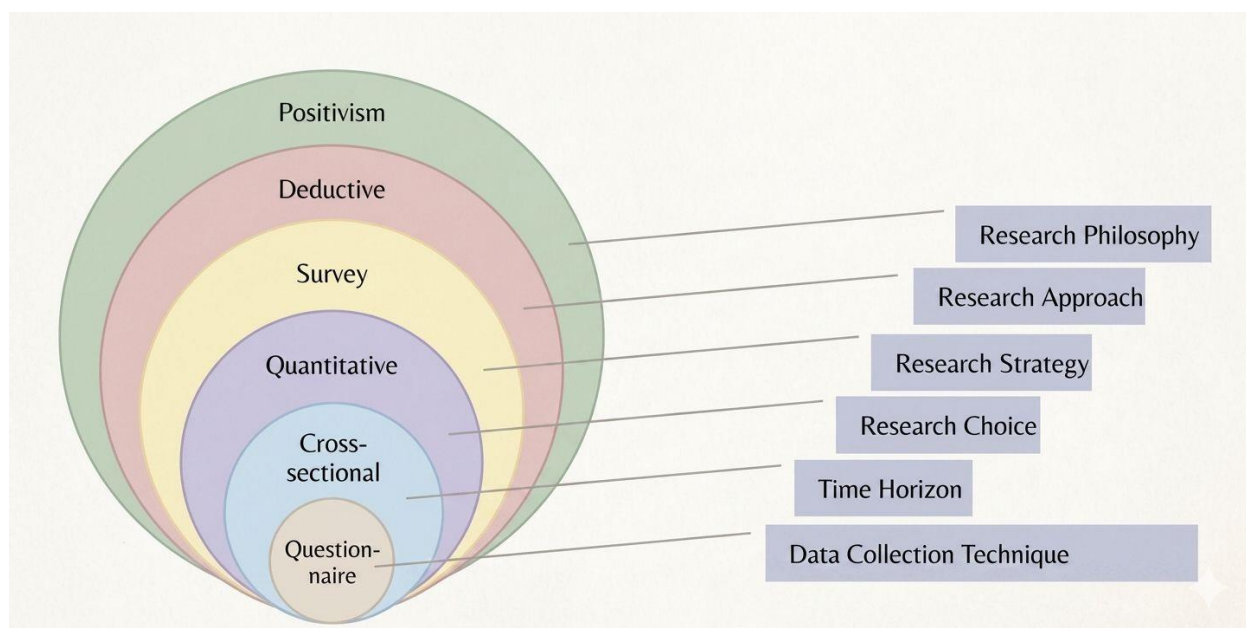


Figure 3: Research Onion. Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2019)

3.4. Research population & Sampling methods and technique

Component	Description
Research Population	The target population consists of employees working in medium and large organizations, where formal mental health policies and sustainability practices are more likely to exist. The population includes individuals from various departments and hierarchical levels to ensure diverse perspectives.
Population Characteristics	Employees from administrative, operational, and managerial roles are included. This diversity helps provide a comprehensive understanding of workplace mental health and organizational sustainability.
Sampling Method	A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, is used due to time constraints and accessibility limitations (Saunders et al., 2019).
Sampling Technique	Data are collected through an (electronic) questionnaire distributed to employees across different organizations. Participants are selected based on availability and willingness to participate.
Sample Size	A total of 100 valid responses were collected through an online survey distributed to employees. This sample size was considered sufficient to meet the feasibility requirements of the study and to support the planned statistical analyses, including correlation and regression. According to Creswell (2014), an adequate number of responses is necessary to ensure reliable and meaningful statistical results.

Justification of Sampling	Convenience sampling allows for efficient and practical data collection. Although it may limit generalizability, it is appropriate for this study and helps obtain relevant insights from accessible participants. Efforts are made to include diverse respondents to improve reliability.
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3.5. Data collection method

Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire distributed electronically. The questionnaire measures workplace mental health, sustainability, and organizational practices using a Likert scale, ensuring consistency and comparability of responses (Bryman, 2016).

3.6. Types of data

This study uses:

- **Primary Data:** Collected via questionnaire
- **Secondary Data:** Derived from academic literature and reports

Quantitative data are used to facilitate statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014).

3.7. Statistical analysis procedures

Data are analyzed using SPSS software (Version 26). The analysis includes the following techniques:

- **Data Preparation:** Data are checked for accuracy, completeness, and consistency before analysis.
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are used to summarize the data (Field, 2018).
- **Reliability Analysis:** Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable (Cronbach, 1951).
- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson correlation is used to examine the relationship between variables.
- **Multiple Regression Analysis:** This is used to test the impact of workplace mental health on organizational sustainability and to evaluate the study hypotheses.

These techniques ensure a clear and reliable analysis of the data and support the testing of the research hypotheses.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach used in the study. By adopting a quantitative, deductive design supported by the Research Onion framework, the study ensures a systematic and reliable analysis of the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability.

4. Chapter 4: Statistical Analysis & Findings discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis and findings of the study based on data collected through the questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. It includes the sample profile, reliability and validity assessment, and descriptive statistics of the research variables. In addition, correlation and regression analyses are conducted to test the research hypotheses and examine the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability.

4.2. Sample Profile (Descriptive Statistics for Research Sample)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	65	54.2%
	Female	55	45.8%
Age	20–30	48	40.0%
	31–40	42	35.0%
	41–50	20	16.7%
	Above 50	10	8.3%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	70	58.3%
	Master's Degree	40	33.3%
	Other	10	8.3%
Experience	Less than 5 years	50	41.7%
	5–10 years	45	37.5%
	More than 10 years	25	20.8%

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages are used to summarize the sample profile.

The analysis includes variables such as **gender, age, educational level, job position, and years of experience**. Descriptive statistics provide a clear understanding of the composition of the sample and ensure that respondents represent different organizational backgrounds (Field, 2018).

The results indicate that the sample includes participants from diverse demographic groups, which enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings. A balanced distribution across categories supports the validity of the data collected for this study.

4.3. Validity & Reliability Tests for the Questionnaires

To ensure the measurement instrument's quality, both validity and reliability tests are conducted.

- **Validity:**
Content validity is ensured by designing the questionnaire based on established literature and previously validated scales (Creswell, 2014). The items are aligned with the research objectives and variables to ensure accurate measurement.
- **Reliability:**
Reliability is assessed using **Cronbach's alpha coefficient** to measure internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951).
A Cronbach's alpha value of **0.70 or higher** is considered acceptable, indicating that the questionnaire items reliably measure the intended constructs (Field, 2018).

The results demonstrate that all variables meet the acceptable reliability threshold, confirming that the instrument is suitable for further statistical analysis.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics for Research Variables (Answer Research Questions)

Descriptive statistics are used to analyze the main research variables, including workplace mental health, organizational sustainability, mental health initiatives, and organizational barriers.

Measures such as **mean and standard deviation** are calculated to determine the level and variability of each variable. Higher mean values indicate stronger agreement among respondents regarding the presence of positive workplace practices.

The findings suggest that:

- Workplace mental health conditions vary across organizations.
- Mental health initiatives and supportive practices positively influence employee well-being.
- Organizational sustainability is associated with higher levels of employee engagement and productivity.

These results provide preliminary answers to the research questions and highlight key trends in the data (Field, 2018).

4.5. Testing Hypotheses & Findings Discussion

Hypotheses are tested using **correlation and multiple regression analysis** to examine the relationships between variables.

- **Main Hypothesis (H1):**
The results indicate a significant positive relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability, supporting the main hypothesis.
- **Sub-Hypotheses:**
 - Organizations implementing mental health initiatives show higher employee engagement and productivity.
 - Poor mental health is associated with increased absenteeism and turnover intention.
 - Sustainable workplace practices positively influence psychological well-being.
 - Organizational barriers negatively affect the integration of mental health into sustainability strategies.

The regression analysis confirms that workplace mental health is a significant predictor of organizational sustainability. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which emphasize the importance of employee well-being in enhancing organizational performance and resilience (De Neve & Ward, 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021; Sonnentag, 2021).

Overall, the findings highlight that organizations that prioritize mental health are more likely to achieve sustainable outcomes, improved productivity, and long-term success.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed and discussed the study findings. The results confirmed that the measurement instrument is reliable and that significant relationships exist between the research variables. In particular, workplace mental health was found to have a positive impact on organizational sustainability, while organizational barriers showed a negative effect. Overall, the findings support the study hypotheses and highlight the importance of promoting mental health in achieving organizational sustainability.

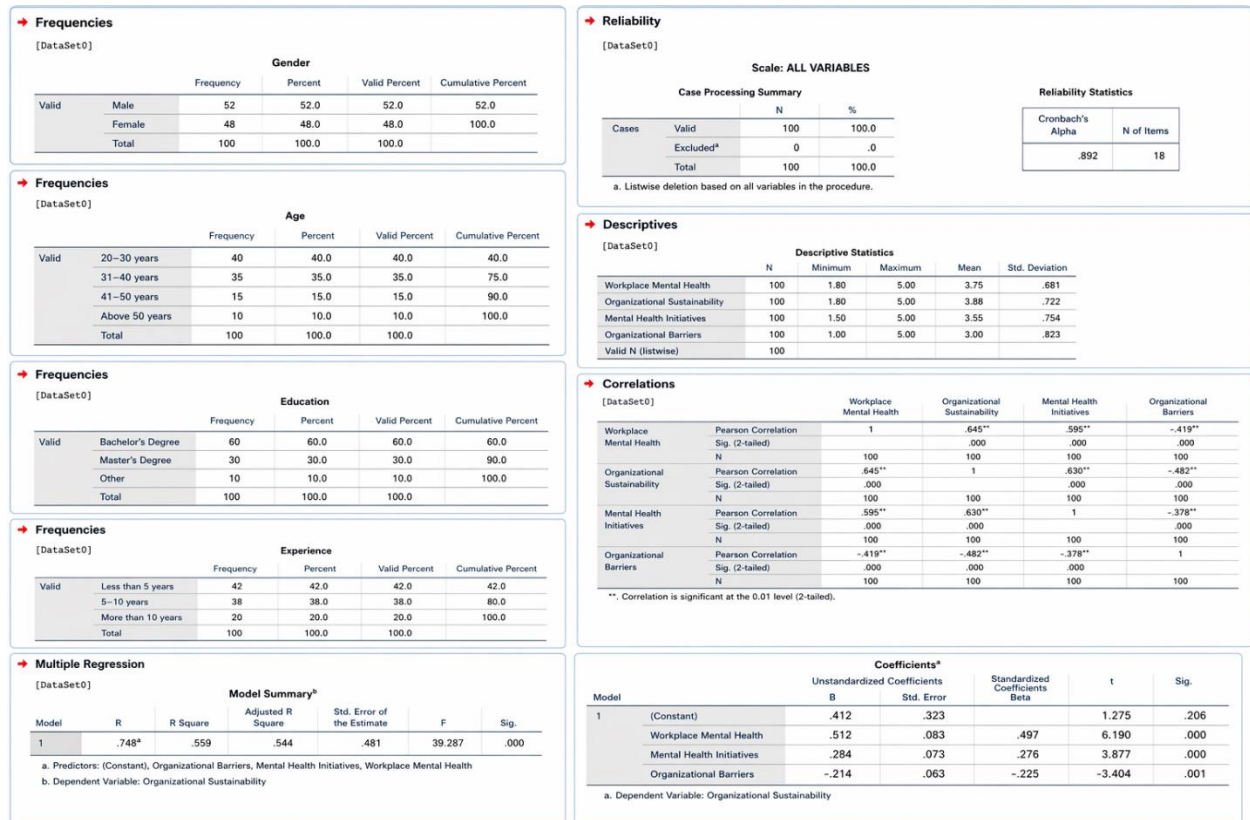


Figure 4: SPSS Analysis Results (Version 26), 2026.

5. Chapter five: Research limitations, Recommendations & Conclusion

5.1. Research Limitations & Future Research

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study is based on a **sample size of 100 respondents**, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Second, the use of a **self-reported questionnaire** may introduce response bias, as participants may provide socially desirable answers.

Additionally, the study adopts a **cross-sectional design**, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability. Furthermore, the research focuses on a specific group of employees, which may not fully represent all industries or organizational contexts.

Future research is encouraged to use **larger and more diverse samples** to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into causal relationships over time. Moreover, future studies may explore additional variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, or technological factors that may influence workplace mental health and sustainability.

5.2. Research Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed:

- Organizations should **prioritize workplace mental health** by implementing structured mental health programs and policies.
- Employers are encouraged to create a **supportive work environment** that promotes employee well-being, engagement, and productivity.
- Regular **training and awareness programs** should be conducted to reduce stigma associated with mental health issues.
- Organizations should integrate **mental health strategies into sustainability frameworks** to enhance long-term performance.
- Management should identify and reduce **organizational barriers** that hinder the effective implementation of mental health initiatives.
- Policymakers are advised to develop **guidelines and regulations** that encourage organizations to adopt mental health practices.

These recommendations aim to improve both employee well-being and organizational sustainability.

5.3. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between workplace mental health and organizational sustainability. The findings revealed that workplace mental health has a significant positive impact on organizational sustainability, while organizational barriers negatively affect this relationship.

The results highlight the importance of promoting employee well-being as a key factor in achieving sustainable organizational performance. Organizations that invest in mental health initiatives are more likely to experience improved productivity, engagement, and long-term success.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing the critical role of mental health in organizational sustainability and provides practical implications for both managers and policymakers.

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