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The Impact of Workplace Diversity on Deviant Behavior in Healthcare: Examining the Mediating Role of Subjective Happiness and the Moderating Effect of Trait Resilience

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Article Details

ABSTRACT

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A diverse workplace plays a critical role in shaping behavior and well-being among healthcare professionals. This study investigates how perceived dissimilarity in the workplace influences deviant behavior, exploring subjective happiness as a mediator and trait resilience as a moderator. Using a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 227 healthcare workers in Karachi. Findings revealed that perceived dissimilarity negatively impacts subjective happiness, which in turn increases deviant behavior. Although trait resilience is associated with reduced deviant behavior, it does not significantly moderate the relationship between subjective happiness and deviance. This study highlights the need for inclusive work environments and emotional well-being initiatives to reduce negative workplace behaviors. The implications extend beyond academic insights to practical strategies that can enhance healthcare organizational performance and staff well-being.

Introduction

When teams or individuals in an organization vary from one another in terms of background, experience, viewpoint, abilities, and personality traits, we say that there is diversity in the workplace. Age, gender, ethnicity, and country are some of the demographic variables that could cause these discrepancies. Other potential determinants include educational attainment and occupational history. Embracing and managing difference can bring different perspectives, foster innovation and contribute to effective teamwork, while also requiring efforts to resolve potential conflicts and promote inclusivity (Roberson, 2019).

For healthcare workers, diversity refers to differences between individuals or teams based on factors such as education, specialization, experience, cultural background and skills. These differences may result from different healthcare professions (physicians, nurses, technicians, etc.), different areas of expertise (cardiology, pediatrics, geriatrics, etc.), and unique personal qualities. Embracing diversity in healthcare can improve collaboration, enable comprehensive patient care, and improve problem solving by leveraging a wide range of perspectives and expertise. However, effective communication, cultural competence, and mutual respect are critical to managing potential challenges and ensuring optimal patient outcomes (O'Donovan, 2018).

Differences among healthcare workers may affect subjective happiness in different ways. Differences in values, communication styles or work approaches can affect team dynamics, potentially leading to conflict and affecting happiness. A mismatch between work roles or a sense of unfulfillment in one's professional life

can contribute to reduced satisfaction and happiness. Balancing work and personal life can be challenging, especially when schedule differences or personal circumstances come into play. The presence of a supportive work environment that values diversity and encourages inclusiveness can positively influence subjective happiness. Therefore, fostering a culture of understanding and support among healthcare workers can improve their overall happiness and well-being (Fan et al., 2019).

According to my perspective, when healthcare workers feel disconnected or have difficulty relating to their colleagues due to differences in values, communication styles, or backgrounds, it can create a sense of isolation or dissatisfaction. This can affect their overall happiness and well-being. Additionally, dissimilarities in job roles or career aspirations may lead to a lack of fulfillment, further impacting subjective happiness. In order to create a welcoming and safe workplace that encourages healthcare employees to be happy and healthy, it is essential to recognize and resolve these differences.

Lower subjective happiness among healthcare workers can lead to production deviance, which refers to intentional actions that undermine work quality, quantity, or efficiency. When healthcare workers are unhappy, they may become disengaged, leading to decreased productivity and a lack of commitment to their tasks. This can result in behaviors such as intentionally slowing down work, cutting corners, or neglecting responsibilities. These actions can negatively impact patient care and organizational functioning. Addressing the factors contributing to lower subjective happiness and promoting a positive work environment are crucial in mitigating production deviance among healthcare workers (Zellars et al., 2011).

A healthcare worker with trait resilience can cope with dissimilarity by leveraging their inherent resilience to adapt and thrive in diverse environments. Their adaptability allows them to embrace different perspectives, ideas, and approaches, enabling them to navigate dissimilarity more effectively. They have the ability to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, finding the positive aspects in unfamiliar or diverse situations. Resilient healthcare workers can also draw upon their inner strength and positive mindset to maintain a sense of optimism and persevere through difficult circumstances. They actively seek support from colleagues, mentors, or professional networks, recognizing the value of collaboration and seeking guidance when faced with dissimilarities. To keep themselves well and deal with the possible stresses that come with being different, they also practice self-care activities like mindfulness or stress management. Overall, their trait resilience empowers them to adapt, learn, and grow in the face of dissimilarity, ultimately enhancing their ability to thrive in diverse healthcare environments (Shacham et al., 2021).

The healthcare industry is characterized by diverse work environments and encounters with challenging situations, leading to dissimilarities among healthcare workers. These dissimilarities, such as conflicting values, differing expectations, and organizational incongruence, have the potential to impact the well-being and behavior of healthcare professionals. Contentment, encompassing factors like job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion, can emerge as a consequence of these dissimilarities, negatively affecting the overall work experience and performance of healthcare workers (Jetha et al., 2021).

The dissimilarity among the healthcare professionals can bring diverse and different perspectives. Moreover, dissimilarities can contribute to the occurrence of deviant behavior, including workplace aggression, counterproductive work behavior, or other forms of undesirable conduct. Such behaviors not only disrupt the smooth functioning of healthcare settings but can also compromise patient safety and quality of care (Byon et al., 2020).

Hence, there are a number of ways in which healthcare staff differences might impact patients' subjective satisfaction. When it comes to healthcare, however, nothing is known about the precise function of resilience trait in the link between dissimilarities and aberrant behavior. To address this knowledge vacuum, this study examines the moderating role of trait resilience, providing evidence that it may act as a buffer among dissimilarities and the consequences of antisocial behavior (Hegney et al., 2015).

For healthcare organizations and policymakers, understanding these relationships is essential. It will help them establish targeted treatments and measures to improve trait resilience and reduce deviant behavior among

healthcare professionals. The ultimate goal of this research is to improve healthcare systems and the health and efficiency of healthcare workers (Kelly et al., 2021).

Keep in mind, nevertheless, that different healthcare providers may react differently to differences. The link between differences and antisocial behavior may be moderated by trait resilience, which is defined as the capacity to adjust and recover from hardship.

Healthcare workers with high levels of trait resilience may be better equipped to navigate the challenges posed by dissimilarities. They may possess greater emotional stability, problem-solving skills, and the ability to seek support from colleagues. As a result, they may experience higher levels of contentment and exhibit fewer tendencies towards deviant behavior, even in the presence of dissimilarities (Vicente et al., 2021).

Literature Review

The influence of workplace dissimilarity on psychological and behavioral outcomes in healthcare settings has gained significant academic attention. According to Harrison et al. (2002), perceived dissimilarity can affect employee satisfaction and increase workplace tension. Deviant workplace behaviors are often seen in environments lacking emotional cohesion and alignment in goals (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) found that subjective happiness directly influences job performance and social cooperation. Connor and Davidson (2003) identified trait resilience as a key predictor of adaptive behavior under stress. Several scholars such as Smith et al. (2020), Ahmed & Khan (2018), Turner (2016), Yousuf et al. (2022), and Brown & Taylor (2019) have also explored how diversity impacts employee behavior and emotional well-being in healthcare systems.

Research Objectives

- To assess the impact of workplace dissimilarity on deviant behavior.
- To examine subjective happiness as a mediator.
- To evaluate trait resilience as a moderator.
- To investigate demographic influences on the studied relationships.

Methodology Sample

A total of 227 participants were selected through purposive sampling from healthcare facilities in Karachi. The sample included nurses, physicians, and allied healthcare professionals aged between 25 and 50 years. Efforts were made to ensure gender and role diversity.

Measures

Data were collected using standardized tools including:

- **Workplace Dissimilarity Index (WDI)** – to assess perceived differences in workplace traits.
- **Deviant Workplace Behavior Scale (DWBS)** – to measure counterproductive behavior.
- **Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)** – to evaluate general emotional well-being.
- **Trait Resilience Inventory (TRI)** – to capture individual capacity for resilience.

Procedure

After obtaining institutional approval and informed consent, participants completed a structured questionnaire. The survey was administered during work breaks to avoid interference with duties. All data were anonymized and analyzed using SPSS.

Results

- **Regression 1:** Dissimilarity significantly predicted lower subjective happiness ($B = 0.718, p < .001$).
- **Regression 2:** Subjective happiness negatively predicted deviant behavior ($B = -0.485, p < .001$).

- **Regression 3:** Mediation analysis confirmed subjective happiness partially mediated the relationship between dissimilarity and deviant behavior.
- **Moderation Analysis:** Trait resilience was not a significant moderator ($p = .243$), though it independently correlated with reduced deviant behavior.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations with Deviant Behavior

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation with Deviant Behavior
Workplace Dissimilarity	3.47	0.68	0.41**
Subjective Happiness	2.95	0.54	-0.35**
Trait Resilience	3.21	0.60	-0.30*

Discussion:

The findings validate that subjective happiness plays a crucial role in the relationship between diversity and behavioral outcomes. Although trait resilience did not significantly moderate the studied relationship, it showed a protective association with workplace behavior. These findings are consistent with prior literature emphasizing emotional well-being over static personality traits in mitigating deviant behavior.

From a managerial perspective, investing in emotional intelligence and workplace well-being initiatives can yield better team performance. Programs such as mindfulness training, peer support groups, and resilience workshops may offer practical tools to healthcare workers. Moreover, diversity and inclusion policies must go beyond compliance; they should focus on psychological safety and interpersonal harmony.

Conclusion

Healthcare organizations must focus on promoting subjective happiness and inclusive environments to reduce deviant behavior. While trait resilience contributes to individual well-being, systemic changes in workplace culture and emotional support systems are more impactful in shaping behavioral outcomes.

The study provides a foundational framework for future research in this domain. Longitudinal studies may help establish causal links, while qualitative inquiries can uncover deeper emotional and cultural insights. Overall, addressing workplace diversity through the lenses of emotion and resilience can lead to more cohesive, productive, and patient-focused healthcare systems.

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Recommendations Based on the findings and scope of this research on the moderating role of trait resilience in the relationship between workplace dissimilarity and deviant behavior among healthcare workers, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop Resilience-Based Training Programs

Healthcare institutions should design and implement training modules aimed at improving individual resilience. Such programs can include stress management, mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral workshops, and peer support initiatives to help staff handle workplace dissimilarities more effectively.

2. Promote Inclusive Workplace Culture

The management should foster a work culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. Sensitization sessions, diversity training, and transparent communication channels can mitigate the negative effects of perceived dissimilarity.

3. Implement Periodic Well-being Assessments

Regular psychological and emotional well-being surveys should be conducted to monitor subjective happiness among staff. Early detection of dissatisfaction may help reduce deviant tendencies by initiating timely counseling or intervention.

4. Integrate Resilience Screening in Hiring and HR Processes

Hospitals and healthcare setups should consider incorporating resilience scales or psychological profiling during recruitment and performance reviews to identify individuals who may need early support or coaching.

5. Institutional Support for Emotional Health

Healthcare facilities must provide accessible psychological services including counseling, emotional support units, and anonymous helplines. Fostering emotional safety encourages openness and reduces internalized dissatisfaction.

6. Conduct Future Research Across Diverse Regions and Roles

Future researchers should investigate the same phenomena in other cities and provinces of Pakistan, involving different designations (e.g., admin staff, paramedics, or technicians), using both qualitative and mixed-method approaches to improve generalizability.

7. Link Organizational Performance to Workforce Well-being

Institutions should explore how reducing deviant behavior through increased subjective happiness and resilience could improve overall healthcare outcomes, staff retention, and patient satisfaction.

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