

EXAMINING THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: CASE OF LEBANON

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ABSTRACT

Mental health issues may not be given the same importance in developing countries as in developed countries because of culture, stigma, religious beliefs, and norms. This negative perception of mental health disorders limits their public knowledge of medical conditions, and as such, their evidence-based treatment strategies are generally poorly or inaccurately understood in developing countries. This study explores the gap between the human experience of disease and the corporate procedures that handle sick leave of workers who suffer from mental health difficulties. The findings illustrate that healthcare policy and government legislation influence and shape employees' experiences through social interactions and institutional processes that coordinate the use of sick leave. These findings have made it feasible to understand how complex biological and physical-based approaches to monitoring attendance employ terminology and categories that do not fit the typical experiences of workers with mental health disorders. In this study, we contribute from the perspective of an emerging country by researching the selected factors (anxiety, depression, perceived social support, and employee productivity) in Beirut-based small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Keywords: Mental Health; Well-Being; Anxiety; Depression; Employee Productivity, Social Exchange Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

The mental health of workers is a pressing policy issue because of the many lives it touches, and the value it adds to the economy. Several quantitative and qualitative studies have demonstrated the social and economic implications of mental illness in the workplace (Dean et al., 2023; Murrin et al., 2023; Sheikhi et al., 2023). Workplace mental-health problems incur substantial direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs include absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, and direct costs such as medical bills and missed productivity. Additionally, mental health difficulties may harm corporate culture, employee morale, and overall workplace productivity (Adler et al., 2023; Kolaas et al., 2023). Compared with more prominent companies, SMEs may not have the means to deal with the financial burden of mental health difficulties in the workplace (Delanerolle et al., 2023; Karabacak et al., 2023). If this happens, more money will be spent on each worker, significantly affecting the business (Adler et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to address and assist workers' mental health and well-being in the workplace (Kolaas et al., 2023) to acknowledge the significant effects of mental health disorders on the economy and organizations. Work-life balance, a healthy work environment, and access to mental health services are ways to reduce stress in the workplace (Delanerolle et al., 2023; Karabacak et al., 2022). By doing so, organizations can help reduce the costs associated with mental health issues in the workplace and improve overall productivity and success (Cardona et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified that 16% and 49% of people worldwide have psychiatric and neurological disorders, and that most live in low- and middle-income countries, respectively (Aghalari et al., 2021). The WHO realizes that to improve health systems in low- and middle-income countries, more research should be prioritized to shed light on mental health disorders and help policymakers develop good governance for mental health issues. Keeping this perspective in mind, we