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## INSIDE WORKPLACE WELL-BEING METHODS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALISTS

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### **Abstract:**

*This study explores workplace-based well-being strategies adopted by human resources (HR) specialists in contemporary organizational contexts, focusing on how well-being is experienced and sustained within the workplace. The research employs a qualitative design based on semi-structured interviews with HR professionals of varying ages and experience levels, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that workplace well-being is primarily shaped by organizational and job-related factors, including workload management, organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, and perceived job security. Participants reported a range of strategies used during working hours to maintain well-being, such as setting and maintaining work boundaries, taking short breaks, fostering supportive relationships with colleagues, and structuring tasks effectively. In addition, the results highlight the importance of individual-level approaches embedded within the workplace, including self-regulation, resilience, cognitive reframing, and proactive coping mechanisms, which collectively support stress management and sustained engagement. Overall, the study contributes to the literature by providing a focused perspective on internal workplace determinants of well-being among HR professionals, emphasizing the continuous interaction between organizational conditions and individual practices, and offering practical insights for organizations seeking to design HR policies and work environments that effectively support employee well-being and performance.*

**Key words:** *Human Resources, Workplace Environment, Well-being Strategies*

### **1. Introduction**

While the literature on employee well-being has traditionally focused on organizational policies, performance, and workplace conditions (Guest, 2017; Turner et al., 2008), recent research suggests that well-being is the result of a broader interaction between professional and personal domains (Bai, 2025; Soh et al., 2016). However, within this broader perspective, the role of the workplace itself remains central, as employees'

psychological, emotional, and social well-being is significantly shaped by organizational factors and by how individuals perceive and experience their work environment (Tov, 2018).

This perspective is particularly relevant for human resources specialists, who occupy a unique position within organizations. Human resources (HR) professionals are responsible for designing and implementing policies aimed at improving employee well-being, engagement, and organizational performance (Nielsen et al., 2017), while simultaneously managing their own professional pressures and expectations. Their role often involves balancing organizational objectives with employees' needs, addressing workplace conflicts, supporting organizational change, and promoting healthy work environments (Molnár & Csehné Papp, 2024). As a result, HR specialists may experience specific well-being challenges that arise from the dual nature of their role as both policy designers and organizational actors embedded within the same work environment (Kaaria, 2024).

In this context, examining the methods that HR specialists use to maintain and enhance their well-being within the workplace becomes an important research topic. Focusing specifically on internal organizational dynamics—such as workload management, workplace relationships, organizational culture, and job-related resources—can provide valuable insights into how well-being is experienced and sustained during working hours. By exploring this dimension, the present study contributes to the literature on workplace well-being by emphasizing the role of organizational practices and individual coping strategies enacted in the work environment, particularly in the case of HR professionals.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Organizational Stressors Affecting Employee Well-being**

Workplace well-being is shaped by a complex interaction of organizational structures, human resource practices, and individual perceptions. Research shows that well-being cannot be explained solely through formal policies, but must also account for employees' subjective perceptions and life-stage needs (Batta et al., 2025). Organizational environments may generate structural and ethical risks that directly affect employee well-being and broader outcomes (Niazi et al., 2024; Suryani et al., 2024; Ploychompoo & Kassab, 2024). At the same time, perceived organizational and HR support plays a key role in shaping psychological well-being, engagement, and commitment (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012). Moreover, the effects of HR practices are not uniform, but depend on their alignment with employees' motivations and expectations (Abdelmotaleb & Saha, 2020; Uddin et al., 2020).

In contemporary corporate environments, particularly project-oriented organizations, managerial priorities often emphasize performance indicators such as productivity, project delivery, and client satisfaction, sometimes at the expense of employee well-being (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Guest, 2017). This imbalance can create systematic risks, especially when efficiency is prioritized over supportive practices

(Gubernator et al., 2025). Consequently, well-being may be treated as a secondary concern rather than a core HRM responsibility (Abdelmoteleb & Saha, 2020), particularly in project-based structures relying on teams delivering outsourced services.

Such environments generate multiple stressors. A primary source is the temporary nature of project work, which creates instability and limited predictability regarding roles and tasks (Fedorova et al., 2019; Țigănașu et al., 2025; Ho & Kuvaas, 2019). Additionally, dynamic workloads and frequent peaks often lead to extended working hours (Ammirato et al., 2024). Role overload and conflict are also common, as employees may work on multiple projects with competing demands (Jaya et al., 2020). Uncertainty regarding future assignments, team composition, and career progression further intensifies stress (Turner et al., 2008), particularly in smaller projects characterized by limited resources and overlapping deadlines (Mishra et al., 2025).

In some cases, competitive pressures may lead organizations to operate with constrained resources, increasing workloads or unpaid overtime. As a result, employee well-being is strongly influenced by work design, project structures, and HRM systems (Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019). In this context, HR specialists play a critical role not only in providing support, but also in designing systems that prevent structural stress. This requires proactive and preventive approaches to well-being management, addressing root causes rather than only their consequences.

## **2.2. Inside Organizational Determinants of Workplace Well-being**

A growing body of literature shows that workplace well-being is strongly influenced by internal organizational practices, particularly those embedded in human resource management systems. These practices shape employees' psychological and professional experiences and contribute to supportive work environments. In project-based and corporate contexts, well-being strategies are typically reflected across key organizational dimensions, including resource management, leadership, recovery mechanisms, social dynamics, and career development (Saini, 2022).

First, well-being is closely linked to the quality of resource management systems. Effective planning and ethical staffing reduce excessive workloads and stress (Turner et al., 2008; Soh et al., 2016), while adequate staffing mitigates structural pressures associated with project-based work. Job security further supports psychological stability and commitment (Cooper et al., 2018). Organizational climate and internal support systems also play a critical role when they promote fairness, transparency, and ethical treatment (Jaskevičiute, 2021). Additionally, stress audits can help identify risks and assess the impact of work practices on well-being (Kuehnl et al., 2019), highlighting the importance of daily HR processes.

Second, line managers contribute significantly to employee well-being through workload management and day-to-day practices (Turner et al., 2008). Compensation and rewards influence perceptions of fairness and support (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012), while recognition, promotion opportunities, and flexible work arrangements enhance motivation (Zhang et al., 2020), satisfaction (Liu & Jantan, 2025), and engagement (Kooij et al., 2013; Soh et al., 2016). Increasing autonomy also improves job satisfaction and psychological

well-being, particularly when employees feel trusted (Ammirato et al., 2024; Azzahra et al., 2025; Viot and Benraiss-Noailles, 2019).

Third, project managers influence well-being through people-centered leadership approaches (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Practices such as fair performance appraisal and constructive feedback strengthen affective commitment (Parent-Lamarche & Dextras-Gauthier, 2024), while initiatives targeting workload reduction, health support, and leadership quality enhance both well-being and performance (Kooij et al., 2013; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Leadership training focused on emotional intelligence and communication further supports healthy work environments (Soh et al., 2016), and task variety and skill development help sustain engagement (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2019).

Recovery mechanisms also play a key role. Planned recovery periods following intensive work phases allow employees to restore psychological resources (Azzahra et al., 2025) and reduce burnout risks (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012). Preventive initiatives, such as resilience training (Yuliana, 2022), personality-based screening (Cooper et al., 2018), and access to psychological support, further help employees cope with high-pressure environments (Soh et al., 2016).

Social dynamics and team cohesion are equally important. Strong interpersonal relationships foster belonging, trust, and support (Bardai et al., 2025), while participation in decision-making and open communication promote transparency and inclusion (Hameed et al., 2022). Peer support systems and transparent communication practices can reduce tensions and strengthen collaboration (Mishra et al., 2025).

Finally, aligning project assignments with long-term career development enhances well-being and satisfaction (Ogbonnaya & Messersmith, 2019). When employees perceive meaningful career progression, engagement and motivation increase (Bai, 2025). Training and development initiatives further support professional growth (Guest, 2017), highlighting the integration of well-being within career management.

However, HRM practices improve well-being only when perceived as fair, supportive, and development-oriented (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012). Their effectiveness depends not only on design (Chandya & Devi, 2025), but also on implementation and communication (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012). While external coping strategies may help manage stress, internal HR practices address its structural sources (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012).

Moreover, well-being strategies should not be universal but adapted to employees' career stages and characteristics. HR analytics, such as age and career-stage analysis, can support targeted interventions (Kooij et al., 2013). Without such differentiation, universal programs risk inefficiency or inequity (Jaya et al., 2020).

### **3. Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research design aimed at exploring the determinants and strategies of workplace well-being among Human Resources specialists. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate given the exploratory nature of the

research and its focus on capturing in-depth, experience-based insights from professionals operating within organizational contexts.

Data were collected through 15 semi-structured interviews conducted with HR professionals selected based on their relevant experience in human resource management. The sample size was guided by the principle of thematic saturation, with interviews conducted until sufficient depth and consistency in the identified themes were achieved. Participants were recruited through a purposive sampling strategy, targeting individuals with specialized expertise in HR. Recruitment was conducted via the LinkedIn platform, which is widely used for accessing professional communities and is particularly suitable for identifying individuals with relevant occupational backgrounds. Additional participants were included through network extension to ensure adequate coverage of relevant professional profiles.

The sample includes participants with diverse socio-demographic and professional characteristics within the Romanian context, enabling a nuanced understanding of workplace well-being across different organizational settings. Information was collected regarding age, level of education (Bachelor's, Master's, or higher), and region of residence. Professional characteristics included years of experience in HR, level of seniority (e.g., Junior, Specialist, Senior, Manager, Director), company size (micro, small, medium, large), work arrangement (remote, hybrid, on-site), and average weekly working hours based on actual workload. An overview of participants' characteristics is presented in Table 1.

The focus on Romania provides a contextually grounded perspective on workplace well-being, contributing to the understanding of HR practices within a specific socio-economic and organizational environment, while also offering insights relevant to similar emerging and Eastern European contexts.

The interviews were guided by a pre-established semi-structured interview protocol, ensuring consistency across participants while allowing flexibility in exploring individual experiences. Interviews were conducted remotely via telephone and lasted approximately 10–20 minutes, following a focused format aimed at capturing targeted, experience-based insights. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Data collection and participant management were systematically organized using spreadsheet-based tools, facilitating the coordination of invitations, scheduling, and response tracking.

Data analysis was conducted using a framework analysis approach, following Ritchie and Spencer (1994). The analytical process involved a systematic review of interview transcripts, during which key ideas and meaning units were identified and organized into thematic categories aligned with the research objectives. The analysis combined a deductive structure, based on the predefined research framework, with openness to emergent insights introduced by participants. Through iterative comparison across cases, recurring patterns and variations were identified, enabling a structured and consistent interpretation of the data. To enhance analytical rigor, attention was given to consistency in coding, transparency in theme development, and systematic cross-case comparison.

A total of 110 individuals were invited to participate in the study. Of these, 7 explicitly declined participation, while the remaining did not respond. The final sample

consisted of participants who voluntarily agreed to take part in the research, a common and accepted feature of qualitative studies involving professional populations.

The study adhered to standard ethical research practices, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and the protection of participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process.

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT and Gemini as language editing support tools. All aspects related to the research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation were conducted exclusively by the authors, who takes full responsibility for the content of this publication.

In the presentation of findings, anonymized participant codes are used to indicate key characteristics such as gender, age, and years of professional experience (e.g., M41,11), supporting contextualized interpretation of the data while ensuring confidentiality.

Finally, the study provides in-depth, contextually grounded insights into the experiences and perspectives of HR specialists, offering valuable contributions to understanding workplace well-being practices within organizational settings.

An overview of the participants' demographic and professional profiles, including age, gender, and years of experience in the HR field, is presented in Table I below. Table I presents the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants, providing essential context for understanding the diversity of perspectives reflected in the findings.

*Table I. Participants' profile*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
Gender	Male	5
	Female	10
Age	21-40	9
	41-50	6
Education (Highest)	Bachelor	5
	Master	10
Work Experience in HR	1 - 5	4
	6 - 10	3
	11 - 21	8
Career Levels	Junior	1
	Specialist	3
	Senior	4
	Manager/ Director	7
Residence (Romanian Regions)	South	6
	Centre	1
	West	1
	North-West	1
	North-East	6
Company Size	Micro (<10 employees)	1
	Small (10-49)	1
	Medium (50-249)	5
	Large (250+)	8
Work Schedule	08:00 – 17:00	3

	09:00 – 18:00	12
Type of Work	Remote	6
	Hybrid	8
	On-site	1
Number of working hours	<40	2
	40	6
	40<	7

## **4. Results**

This section presents the main findings on the determinants of well-being among human resources specialists, with a focus on workplace-related factors. The results are organized thematically, reflecting key dimensions identified in the analysis, including job security, work organization and workload, and boundary management. The findings also highlight workplace-based well-being practices, such as task structuring, interpersonal support, and stress management during working hours. Overall, this section provides a structured overview of how well-being is experienced and maintained within the organizational environment.

### **4.1. General Aspects of Well-being**

#### *Conceptualization of Subjective Well-being among HR Specialists*

The analysis of participants' responses reveals that subjective well-being is understood as a multidimensional construct, encompassing psychological, emotional, physical, and social dimensions. Although definitions vary across individuals, several recurring themes emerge, highlighting both common patterns and individual interpretations shaped by personal and professional experiences.

#### *4.1.1. Well-being as Balance and Stability*

A dominant theme identified across the interviews is the association of well-being with balance, particularly between professional and personal life domains. Participants frequently described well-being as a state of equilibrium that allows them to function effectively across different areas of life. For instance, one respondent defined well-being as “a healthy work–life balance” (M41,11), while others expanded this perspective to include broader life domains, referring to “the balance between professional, personal, and social life” (F46,12).

Similarly, well-being was often described as an internal state of alignment between expectations and reality, where individuals feel that their personal and professional lives are harmoniously integrated. This perspective is reflected in statements emphasizing the importance of achieving a balance between “what resonates with you and what you actually manage to do” (F38,16). These findings suggest that well-being is not perceived

as a static condition, but rather as a dynamic process of maintaining equilibrium across multiple life domains.

#### *4.1.2. Workplace-related Well-being and Organizational Context*

Participants also emphasized the importance of workplace-related factors in shaping their well-being. A recurring theme was the ability to feel comfortable, authentic, and supported within the work environment. For instance, one respondent noted that well-being involves “being able to behave naturally at work, just as in everyday life, and being able to express your opinions freely” (M28,5).

Interpersonal relationships and communication within the workplace were also highlighted as essential components of well-being. One participant described well-being as “having someone to talk to, being able to ask for advice, and not being judged for mistakes, but supported instead” (F39,10). This underscores the importance of supportive organizational cultures characterized by trust, collaboration, and open communication.

Additionally, job-related aspects such as meaningful work, enjoyable tasks, and opportunities for growth were identified as significant contributors to well-being. Participants emphasized that well-being is influenced by “liking what you do, liking the people you work with, the activity itself is important and having opportunities for growth and advancement” (M28,5). These findings highlight the role of organizational practices in shaping employees’ subjective experiences of well-being.

#### *4.1.3. Security, Control, and Decision-making Capacity*

Another important dimension emerging from the data relates to the need for security, predictability, and control over one’s work and life. For some participants, well-being was closely associated with a sense of safety and stability, particularly in relation to the future. One respondent described well-being as “the feeling that tomorrow is a safe day for me and my family” (F35,8), indicating the importance of financial and job security.

In addition, the ability to make decisions without excessive pressure was identified as a key aspect of well-being. Participants emphasized the importance of having sufficient time and support to make decisions without experiencing overwhelming stress or burnout. As one respondent explained, well-being involves “the ability to make decisions without feeling pressured by time or stress, and without reaching burnout” (F42,21). This highlights the role of autonomy and manageable workloads in supporting employees’ well-being.

## **4.2. Well-being Practices Implemented Inside the Workplace**

### *4.2.1. General Strategies for Maintaining Well-being at Work*

The analysis indicates that workplace well-being is maintained through a combination of individual coping strategies, task engagement, interpersonal interactions, and alignment with organizational values. Rather than relying on a single approach, participants described complementary practices supporting well-being during working hours.

A first theme relates to task engagement and intrinsic job satisfaction. Participants emphasized that enjoyment derived from specific activities contributes significantly to well-being. Individual tasks, such as reporting or system-related work, were associated with focus and relaxation, often enhanced by listening to music (M28,5). Similarly, successful task completion reinforced motivation and a sense of accomplishment (M28,5).

Another dimension concerns micro-level routines and self-care practices. Respondents highlighted the importance of structured daily routines, including preparation for work, maintaining personal appearance, organizing meals, and keeping an orderly workspace, all contributing to focus and a positive mental state (F25,4). Short breaks were also used strategically to restore concentration and prevent fatigue (F25,4).

The findings further emphasize the importance of alignment between personal values and the organizational environment. Selecting or remaining in a work context that matches individual expectations was described as a proactive strategy for sustaining well-being (F46,20), enabling other practices to be effective.

Continuous learning and professional development also emerged as key contributors. Activities such as courses, conferences, networking, and individual learning fostered professional growth, control, and long-term satisfaction (F46,20).

Another theme concerns cognitive framing and mindset. Participants noted that well-being depends on how workplace situations are interpreted, with strategies such as reframing negative experiences and focusing on positive aspects supporting stress management and emotional balance (M42,11).

Workplace relationships also play a significant role. Communication with colleagues and managers, particularly in stressful situations, was described as reducing tension and improving emotional states (M28,5). Informal interactions beyond work-related topics further contributed to a supportive environment (M36,15).

Finally, job crafting behaviors were identified as relevant strategies. Participants reported actively seeking engaging tasks and organizing their workspace to enhance comfort and productivity (M36,15), reflecting an active role in shaping their own well-being.

Overall, workplace well-being emerges as the result of a dynamic interplay between individual practices, job-related factors, and organizational context, providing a foundation for more specific strategies explored in the following subsections.

#### *4.2.2. The Role of Breaks in Supporting Workplace Well-being*

The findings indicate that breaks represent a central mechanism through which HR professionals regulate their well-being during working hours. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of both formal and informal breaks, highlighting their role in reducing stress, restoring energy, and maintaining cognitive and emotional balance.

##### **1. Flexible and Self-regulated Break Practices**

A prominent theme emerging from the data is the high degree of flexibility in taking breaks, particularly in organizational contexts that allow autonomy in task management. Several participants reported the absence of strictly predefined break schedules, emphasizing their ability to take breaks according to individual needs and workload demands. For instance, one respondent noted that breaks are taken “whenever needed,”

as long as tasks and meetings are properly managed (F25,4), while another highlighted that “no one restricts breaks” as long as responsibilities are fulfilled (F39,10).

This flexibility is perceived as a significant contributor to well-being, particularly in remote or hybrid work environments, where employees can better align their work rhythms with personal energy levels and concentration capacity.

## 2. Structured Breaks as Anchors of Daily Routine

Despite the flexibility described above, participants also emphasized the importance of structured breaks, particularly lunch breaks, as essential anchors within the workday. Many respondents reported consistently respecting their lunch break, viewing it as a non-negotiable component of their daily routine. For example, one participant described the lunch break as a practice followed “with discipline,” often taken together with colleagues, reinforcing both physical recovery and social interaction (F46,20).

Similarly, others highlighted that maintaining a regular lunch break contributes to a sense of normalcy and prevents unhealthy work patterns, such as skipping meals due to workload pressures (F35,8). These findings suggest that structured breaks provide stability within otherwise flexible work arrangements.

## 3. Micro-breaks and Informal Pauses for Recovery

In addition to formal breaks, respondents frequently referred to the use of micro-breaks, short and often spontaneous interruptions in work activity aimed at reducing fatigue and maintaining focus. These include activities such as short walks, stepping away from the desk, or brief conversations with colleagues. For instance, participants reported taking short breaks between tasks or meetings, particularly during “dead times” in the workflow (M28,5), or intentionally stepping away from the desk at regular intervals to support both physical and psychological well-being (M42,11).

Such micro-breaks are perceived as effective strategies for preventing cognitive overload and sustaining productivity throughout the workday.

## 4. Breaks as Opportunities for Social Interaction

Another significant dimension of breaks relates to their role in facilitating social interaction and emotional support. Many participants described breaks as opportunities to connect with colleagues, either informally or through shared routines. For example, activities such as having coffee together, engaging in casual conversations, or simply spending time with colleagues during lunch were frequently mentioned (F42,21; F38,16).

In remote work contexts, these interactions are often recreated through virtual means, such as informal calls or shared online sessions, which help maintain a sense of connection and belonging (F35,8; F28,2). These findings highlight that breaks serve not only a restorative function but also a relational one, contributing to social well-being.

## 5. Breaks for Physical and Psychological Detachment

Participants also emphasized the importance of using breaks for detachment from work-related demands, both physically and mentally. Activities such as going outside,

engaging in light physical movement, or interacting with pets were described as effective ways to “reset” and return to work with renewed energy (F28,2; F42,20).

In some cases, breaks were intentionally used to create a clear boundary between work and personal roles, particularly in remote work settings. For instance, stepping away from the workspace or engaging in non-work-related activities was seen as essential for maintaining long-term well-being (F35,8).

#### 6. Individual Differences in Break Utilization

While most participants recognized the importance of breaks, the findings also reveal individual differences in their utilization. Some respondents reported actively incorporating regular breaks into their routine, while others acknowledged a tendency to remain continuously engaged in work, even when aware of the potential benefits of taking breaks (M36,15). This suggests that, although organizational flexibility exists, individual habits and work styles play a significant role in shaping break-taking behavior.

Overall, the results demonstrate that breaks function as a critical component of workplace well-being, operating at multiple levels—physical, psychological, and social. Their effectiveness depends not only on their frequency and structure but also on the degree of autonomy employees have in managing them and on individual behavioral patterns.

#### *4.2.3. Workplace Relationships and Collegial Interactions*

The analysis highlights that workplace relationships represent a fundamental dimension of employee well-being, influencing both daily work experiences and overall job satisfaction. Participants consistently emphasized that the quality of collegial interactions shapes emotional states, productivity, and the ability to cope with work-related challenges.

#### 1. Professional Relationships and Functional Collaboration

A first theme emerging from the data refers to the role of professional, task-oriented relationships. Some participants described their interactions with colleagues as primarily formal and focused on work-related activities. For instance, one respondent emphasized maintaining strictly professional communication, avoiding personal discussions in order to preserve efficiency and clarity in collaboration (B41,11). Similarly, in remote organizational contexts, relationships were often described as formal but functional, based on mutual respect, responsiveness, and effective communication (F25,4).

These findings suggest that even in the absence of strong personal connections, well-structured professional relationships can support well-being by ensuring predictability, clarity, and mutual support in task completion.

#### 2. The Importance of Social Connection and Emotional Support

Beyond formal collaboration, many participants highlighted the importance of social and interpersonal connections in enhancing well-being. Relationships with colleagues were frequently associated with emotional support, reduced feelings of isolation, and increased job satisfaction. For example, one respondent noted that even limited interactions with colleagues can have a positive emotional impact, particularly in

remote settings, where the absence of such connections could lead to feelings of loneliness or decreased well-being (F35,8).

Similarly, informal communication, mutual help, and a sense of companionship were described as essential elements of a positive work environment. Participants emphasized that having colleagues to rely on, ask for support, or simply interact with, informally, contributes significantly to maintaining a positive emotional state (F34,6; F39,10).

### 3. Impact of Relationship Quality on Emotional Well-being

The findings also reveal that the quality of workplace relationships has a direct impact on emotional well-being. Positive, harmonious interactions contribute to a stable and supportive work environment, whereas conflicts or tensions can significantly affect employees' mood and performance. One participant explicitly stated that interpersonal conflicts, even if rare, can negatively influence their emotional state and overall daily experience (F42,21).

This highlights the importance of communication, openness, and emotional regulation in maintaining constructive relationships, as well as the role of organizational culture in fostering a collaborative and respectful environment.

### 4. Collaboration, Trust, and Organizational Climate

Another important aspect identified in the data is the role of collaboration and trust in shaping well-being. Participants frequently associated well-being with working in teams characterized by cooperation, mutual assistance, and open communication. For instance, a supportive team environment, where employees do not need to "push" others to complete tasks and where communication flows easily, was described as essential for maintaining well-being (F42,20).

Moreover, the accessibility of colleagues and managers, as well as the existence of transparent communication channels across hierarchical levels, were highlighted as important factors, particularly for onboarding and integration processes (M36,15). These elements contribute to a sense of belonging and organizational support.

### 5. Individual Differences and Career Stage Considerations

The data also suggest that the importance and nature of workplace relationships vary depending on individual preferences and career stages. While some participants prioritize strictly professional interactions, others seek deeper social connections. Additionally, early-career employees tend to value support and guidance for integration, whereas more experienced professionals emphasize meaningful exchanges and value-added discussions (M36,15).

Overall, the findings indicate that workplace relationships play a multifaceted role in shaping well-being, functioning both as a source of emotional support and as a structural component of effective collaboration. Whether formal or informal, these relationships contribute significantly to employees' ability to navigate work demands and maintain a positive and sustainable work experience.

#### *4.2.4. Organizational Culture and Its Influence on Workplace Well-being*

The findings indicate that organizational culture is a key determinant of workplace well-being, shaping both the emotional climate and employees' daily experiences. Participants emphasized that culture is not merely formal, but a lived reality reflected in values, behaviors, and managerial practices.

A recurring theme concerns the importance of a people-oriented and flexible culture. Respondents described environments characterized by openness, active listening, and adaptability, which positively influence well-being (B41,11; M36,15; M26,1). The presence of clearly defined and consistently implemented values, such as collaboration and shared responsibility, was associated with balanced workloads and reduced burnout risk (M28,5), highlighting the importance of translating values into practice.

Participants also emphasized that culture directly affects well-being. A "healthy" culture promotes psychological safety, recognition, and growth opportunities, enabling employees to feel valued (F35,8). In contrast, high-pressure environments may generate stress, although strong team cohesion can mitigate these effects (F42,21).

An important distinction emerged between formal and enacted culture. Some organizations promote well-being values without fully implementing them, while others actively integrate such practices through regular meetings or well-being activities (e.g., meditation), resulting in more positive employee experiences (F46,12).

Organizational culture was also closely linked to leadership. Managers shape employees' perceptions of support through communication, fairness, and respect, which contribute to trust and psychological comfort (F46,20; F39,10).

At the same time, structural elements such as performance targets and workload expectations can act as stressors, even in supportive environments (M26,1). However, realistic expectations and respect for employees' capacity were associated with better well-being outcomes (M42,11).

Alignment between individual and organizational values further enhances well-being. When personal beliefs correspond with organizational principles, employees experience stronger belonging and engagement (M36,15).

Finally, autonomy, reduced micromanagement, and responsibility delegation were linked to higher job satisfaction and well-being (F42,20). Organizational initiatives such as social events or mindfulness activities were also perceived as beneficial, although their accessibility varies depending on work arrangements (F28,2).

Overall, organizational culture emerges as a multidimensional factor influencing well-being through values, leadership, communication, and daily practices, with the strongest impact observed when consistently enacted across all levels.

#### *4.2.5. Workplace Activities and Benefits Supporting Employee Well-being*

The analysis shows that workplace activities and benefits represent a heterogeneous dimension of well-being, varying across organizations in availability and impact. While some companies offer structured initiatives, others rely on limited or informal support.

A distinction emerges between formal programs and implicit benefits. In some cases, well-being is supported mainly through individual benefits, such as office massage or basic amenities (M41,11; M28,5), reflecting a passive approach. In contrast, other organizations provide comprehensive systems, including fitness facilities, relaxation spaces, and access to counseling or subsidized therapy (M28,5), indicating a more holistic perspective.

Collective activities, such as team-building events and social gatherings, also foster interaction and cohesion (F42,21), contributing to a positive climate, particularly in dispersed teams. Remote and hybrid work have shifted these practices toward virtual formats, including online games and remote team-building (F46,12), with varying effectiveness depending on engagement.

Structured programs, such as workshops and webinars on burnout, mental health, and development, support awareness and proactive well-being management (F35,8). Access to coaching or mentoring further enhances personal and professional development (F42,21).

Flexibility emerged as a key factor, supporting alignment between work and personal needs (M26,1). In some cases, it compensates for limited financial incentives (F34,6), suggesting an imbalance between intrinsic and extrinsic support. Health-related benefits, particularly private medical insurance, contribute to security (F39,10; M42,11), while access to educational resources and wellness services supports long-term development (F38,16; M42,11).

However, availability does not guarantee use. Some participants reported limited engagement despite multiple initiatives (F38,16), emphasizing the importance of relevance and accessibility. Informal practices and leadership behaviors also matter, with supportive management sometimes perceived as more impactful than formal benefits (F42,20).

Overall, workplace activities and benefits support well-being through physical, psychological, social, and flexible mechanisms, but their effectiveness depends on both organizational provision and individual engagement.

#### *4.2.6. Work Organization and Workload Dynamics*

The relationship between work organization and workload emerges as a key determinant of employee well-being, reflecting the interplay between structural factors and individual agency. While workload varies across roles, effective work organization is frequently identified as a mitigating factor.

Many participants report manageable workloads, particularly when combined with autonomy and flexibility. For example, one respondent describes a “very good balance” and emphasizes independent work as key to maintaining control (B41,11), while another notes that tasks are “manageable within eight hours,” indicating alignment between demands and time (M28,5).

Workload flexibility is also evident, with fluctuating intensity balanced over time. Participants describe periods of higher demand offset by less demanding days, resulting in overall equilibrium (F25,4; F42,21), provided that high workload does not become constant.

Autonomy in organizing work is consistently highlighted as a critical resource. Respondents emphasize their ability to structure tasks, prioritize responsibilities, and manage time. As one participant notes, workload management depends on “how you structure your day and handle emerging priorities” (F46,12), enabling adaptation to changing demands.

However, effective organization has limits. While planning can reduce pressure, excessive workload remains a significant stressor. As one respondent states, “an excessive volume is an excessive volume,” regardless of efficiency (M42,11), underscoring the structural nature of workload.

High workload is associated with increased stress and risk of errors. One participant reports becoming “more agitated and stressed” under pressure, despite available support (F34,6), suggesting that social support mitigates but does not eliminate strain.

Organizational inefficiencies, particularly in communication and coordination, further intensify workload challenges. Poor inter-team communication can lead to confusion and additional workload (F28,2), while insufficient structure contributes to frustration and reduced efficiency (M36,15).

Conversely, supportive management and realistic planning promote balance. Some participants report collaboratively negotiated deadlines aligned with available resources, reducing pressure and improving satisfaction (F42,20; M36,15).

Finally, professional maturity plays an important role. Experienced employees emphasize prioritization, realistic expectations, and communication of limits, including negotiating deadlines and requesting resources (F46,20).

In conclusion, work organization and workload are dynamic and interdependent. While individual strategies are essential, they must be supported by effective organizational structures and realistic expectations, as excessive demands can undermine well-being despite individual efforts.

#### *4.2.7. Boundary Management in Work Contexts*

The findings indicate that the establishment and maintenance of personal and professional boundaries are critical mechanisms for preserving well-being. These limits are often self-imposed and evolve over time, particularly as employees gain experience and encounter the effects of overwork.

A central theme is the importance of temporal boundaries, especially regarding working hours. Participants emphasize completing tasks within standard hours and disengaging afterward. For example, one respondent highlights finishing work within eight hours and avoiding carrying work-related concerns into personal life (B41,11), while another stresses the effort “not to work overtime” and maintain separation between domains (M28,5).

Boundary-setting is often described as a learned behavior, shaped by prior experiences of excessive workload or burnout. One participant reflects on early career stages involving overtime and strain, which led to clearer limits and personal prioritization (F42,21), indicating that boundaries develop through experience.

Beyond temporal limits, respondents describe cognitive and emotional boundaries. For instance, avoiding the internalization of work-related issues or taking interactions personally was identified as a strategy to reduce emotional exhaustion (F42,21).

Task boundaries and role clarity also emerged as important. Some participants reported refusing tasks outside their scope or interests, demonstrating autonomy and assertiveness in workload management (F25,4), which enhances control and alignment with personal values.

Organizational context significantly shapes the ability to maintain limits. Some respondents described supportive environments where working hours are respected and personal needs accommodated (F46,20), while others reported more intrusive cultures, particularly in corporate settings, requiring stricter personal boundaries, such as avoiding work communication outside working hours (M36,15).

Life circumstances further influence boundary-setting. For example, having a child imposed clear limits on working hours, reinforcing work-life balance (F38,16).

Despite their importance, limits are not always consistently maintained. Some participants reported past difficulties, including excessive work involvement at the expense of personal time (F42,20), while others continue to face challenges in high-pressure environments (F28,2).

Overall, boundaries function as protective mechanisms against overwork and emotional strain. However, their effectiveness depends on the interaction between individual agency, organizational support, and life circumstances.

#### *4.2.8. Perceived Job Security*

Perceptions of job security among respondents reveal a nuanced and often ambivalent relationship between formal employment arrangements and subjective stability. While some participants associate security with contractual status, others emphasize broader organizational and economic conditions as decisive factors.

A recurring theme is the recognition that job security is increasingly uncertain, even in permanent roles. One respondent notes that although a permanent contract suggests stability, “no one guarantees that the job is 100% secure” (B41,11), reflecting awareness of contemporary labor market volatility.

Several participants link insecurity to macroeconomic conditions and organizational restructuring. One interviewee describes a period of global layoffs and labor market decline as “clearly a stressful period when you didn’t know if you would keep your job” (M28,5), highlighting how external dynamics shape perceived stability over time.

Job insecurity is particularly pronounced in volatile or project-based contexts. One respondent reports a persistent concern that “you could be next” following layoffs (F25,4), while another estimates job security at “around 50%” due to uncertain project continuity and client decisions (F42,21).

Contract type further shapes perceptions, as fixed-term employment is associated with heightened stress and uncertainty (M26,1), whereas employment in large, international organizations is perceived as more stable, particularly when not dependent on external clients (F28,2).

Despite these concerns, some participants report relative stability when organizations are expanding or when roles are strategically important. One notes “a certain degree of medium-term certainty” due to company growth (M42,11), while another highlights that HR roles are often retained until later restructuring phases (F39,10).

Adaptability emerges as a key coping mechanism. One respondent states that “there is no certainty in any role” and emphasizes adaptability (F38,16). Internal mobility and reskilling opportunities are also seen as buffers against insecurity (F35,8).

Finally, job security is strongly connected to life planning and psychological well-being, as uncertainty leads individuals to “limit or restrain” future plans (M36,15).

Overall, job security is a multidimensional construct shaped by contracts, organizational context, and labor market conditions, with a prevailing sense of conditional and fragile stability among respondents.

## **5. Conclusions**

This study contributes to the understanding of workplace well-being among human resources specialists by highlighting the central role of organizational conditions and individual strategies in shaping well-being within the workplace. The findings demonstrate that factors such as workload management, organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, and perceived job security are key determinants of employees’ well-being during working hours. At the same time, individual-level resources—such as self-regulation, resilience, and proactive coping—play a critical role in enabling HR professionals to manage stress and maintain engagement.

The study emphasizes that workplace well-being is a multidimensional construct, emerging from the interaction between structural organizational elements and employees’ personal capacities to adapt and respond to job demands. In this context, HR professionals not only act as facilitators of well-being for others but also actively engage in practices that sustain their own well-being.

Overall, the findings underline the importance of adopting a holistic approach to workplace well-being, integrating supportive organizational practices with the development of individual capabilities. Such an approach can enhance both employee well-being and organizational performance, reinforcing the strategic role of HR in fostering sustainable work environments.

### *5.1. Practical implications*

The findings suggest that organizations should actively design workplace environments that support employee well-being through balanced workload management, clear task structuring, and flexible work practices. Fostering a supportive organizational culture and encouraging positive interpersonal relationships can further enhance well-being. Additionally, HR policies should promote boundary-setting, regular breaks, and opportunities for recovery during working hours. Investing in the development of individual capabilities, such as resilience and self-regulation, may also help employees better

manage stress and maintain engagement, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance.

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