
INFLUENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR ON EMPLOYEE DECISION-MAKING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Employee decision-making is an essential component of organizational functioning because employees regularly make decisions related to work responsibilities, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, resource utilization, and responses to changing workplace demands. Although decision-making is often understood in terms of knowledge, experience, and organizational procedures, psychological and behavioural factors also play an important role in determining how employees perceive situations, evaluate alternatives, manage uncertainty, and select appropriate courses of action. Mental health and workplace behaviour are therefore important factors for understanding employee decision-making. Mental health influences concentration, emotional regulation, motivation, confidence, resilience, and the capacity to cope with workplace demands, while workplace behaviour shapes communication, cooperation, conflict management, interpersonal relationships, adaptability, and responsibility. Research on workplace decision-making suggests that exhaustion, job demands, and available job resources can influence decision processes and employee functioning (Ceschi et al., 2017). Similarly, psychological safety can support interpersonal risk-taking, learning behaviour, and constructive participation within teams (Edmondson, 1999). The present conceptual article examines the influence of mental health and workplace behaviour on employee decision-making without relying on primary data or statistical analysis. It discusses the psychological mechanisms through which mental health may affect decision-making and the behavioural processes through which workplace interactions may facilitate or constrain decisions. The article further highlights the importance of supportive

organizational environments, leadership, psychological safety, role clarity, employee autonomy, and organizational support. The discussion suggests that organizations should consider employee psychological well-being and workplace behaviour alongside professional knowledge and technical competencies when seeking to improve decision-making. The article provides a conceptual basis for future empirical research and organizational interventions.

KEYWORDS: Mental health, workplace behaviour, employee decision-making, psychological well-being, resilience, self-efficacy, organizational behaviour, workplace psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Employee decision-making is central to the effective functioning of organizations. Employees make decisions throughout their working lives, from routine operational choices to complex decisions involving uncertainty, competing priorities, interpersonal relationships, ethical considerations, and organizational change. Decisions made by employees can influence task performance, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and organizational functioning.

Consequently, understanding the factors that shape employee decision-making is an important concern within organizational psychology and human resource management.

Decision-making is not solely a rational cognitive process. Employees bring their psychological experiences, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and behavioural tendencies into workplace situations. Their psychological state can influence how they perceive problems, process information, assess risks, and respond to pressure. Ceschi et al. (2017) specifically connected workplace decision-making with psychological and organizational factors such as decision-making competency, self-regulation, exhaustion, job demands, and job resources. Their work indicates that decision-making processes and work-environment conditions should be considered together rather than treated as completely separate phenomena.

Mental health is particularly relevant because psychological well-being affects an individual's capacity to cope with stress, regulate emotions, maintain concentration, develop relationships, and function effectively. The World Health Organization describes mental health as a state of well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, work well, and contribute to their communities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Thus,

mental health is directly relevant to the capacity of employees to function effectively within organizational environments.

Workplace behaviour is equally important because employees operate within social and organizational systems. Their decisions are influenced not only by personal characteristics but also by communication patterns, leadership relationships, organizational expectations, teamwork, psychological safety, and interpersonal interactions. A supportive workplace may encourage employees to discuss problems, ask questions, seek feedback, and consider alternatives. In contrast, an unsupportive environment may discourage communication and encourage defensive or avoidant responses.

The present article therefore examines the influence of mental health and workplace behaviour on employee decision-making from a conceptual perspective. The focus is on understanding the psychological and behavioural processes that may shape workplace decisions rather than presenting primary empirical data or statistical relationships.

Mental Health in the Workplace

Mental health is an important dimension of employee functioning. It involves psychological well-being, emotional balance, coping capacity, interpersonal functioning, and the ability to respond constructively to everyday challenges. Mental health should not be understood simply as the absence of mental illness. A psychologically healthy employee may experience workplace pressure while retaining psychological resources that help manage challenges and maintain effective functioning.

The relationship between work and mental health is multidirectional. Work can provide purpose, social connection, identity, financial security, and opportunities for personal development. At the same time, excessive workload, limited control, poor interpersonal relationships, discrimination, bullying, unclear roles, and unsupportive organizational environments may negatively affect psychological well-being. The WHO and International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasize the importance of preventing psychosocial risks, promoting mental health, and supporting workers within organizational settings (WHO & ILO, 2022).

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective provides a useful theoretical basis for understanding these relationships. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), working conditions can broadly be understood in terms of job demands and job resources. Job demands require sustained physical or psychological effort, whereas job resources can help employees achieve work goals, cope with demands, and support motivation and well-being.

These concepts are highly relevant to employee decision-making. Excessive demands may consume psychological resources, while adequate resources such as supervisor support, feedback, autonomy, and opportunities for development may facilitate effective functioning. Ceschi et al. (2017) similarly demonstrated the importance of job demands, job resources, and exhaustion in understanding workplace decision-making and performance.

The psychological resources of employees are particularly relevant to decision-making. Characteristics such as self-efficacy, resilience, emotional maturity, and perceived control may influence how individuals respond to challenging circumstances. Previous work by Bharti (2020) has examined psychological health, self-efficacy, resilience, and health locus of control, providing useful psychological perspectives on coping and functioning. Bharti's work on psychological health among caregivers also emphasizes the importance of psychological resources in managing demanding circumstances (Bharti, 2020).

Resilience may help individuals recover from setbacks and continue functioning when faced with challenges. Self-efficacy may influence whether employees believe they can successfully address a problem or perform a particular task. Bandura (1997) conceptualized self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Such beliefs may be relevant to workplace decision-making because employees frequently have to make judgments under uncertainty and accept responsibility for their actions.

Workplace Behaviour as a Psychological and Organizational Process

Workplace behaviour refers to the ways employees act, communicate, cooperate, respond to organizational expectations, and interact with colleagues and supervisors. It encompasses both task-related behaviour and interpersonal behaviour.

Constructive workplace behaviour includes effective communication, cooperation, responsibility, adaptability, respect for others, constructive conflict management, and willingness to participate in organizational activities. Such behaviours may create conditions in which employees can obtain relevant information, exchange ideas, ask questions, and seek feedback before making decisions.

Communication is particularly important because employees rarely possess all the information required for complex workplace decisions. Information may be distributed among colleagues, supervisors, departments, or organizational systems. Employees who communicate openly can

obtain additional perspectives and clarify uncertainties. Conversely, poor communication can create misunderstandings, information gaps, and uncertainty.

Teamwork also plays an important role. Collaborative decision-making enables employees to consider diverse experiences and viewpoints. However, collaboration is more effective when employees feel safe expressing alternative opinions. Edmondson (1999) introduced the concept of psychological safety as a shared belief that a team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. Her research connected psychological safety with learning behaviour and team performance, demonstrating the importance of the social environment in organizational functioning.

Psychological safety is particularly relevant to decision-making because employees may need to question assumptions, identify problems, acknowledge mistakes, or propose alternatives. When employees fear negative interpersonal consequences, they may withhold information or avoid challenging existing decisions. A psychologically safe environment can therefore encourage more open communication and learning.

Workplace behaviour is also influenced by organizational culture and leadership. Leaders establish expectations regarding communication, accountability, cooperation, and acceptable behaviour. Supportive leadership may encourage participation, whereas excessively punitive environments may discourage employees from communicating concerns.

Mental Health and Employee Decision-Making

Mental health can influence employee decision-making through several psychological processes.

First, psychological well-being may support attention and concentration. Effective decisions require employees to identify relevant information, distinguish important issues from distractions, and maintain attention on the problem. Psychological distress and exhaustion may interfere with these processes. Ceschi et al. (2017) specifically examined exhaustion and decision-making within the workplace and highlighted the importance of psychological and work-environment conditions in decision processes.

Second, mental health is related to emotional regulation. Workplace decisions may involve disagreement, uncertainty, criticism, competing interests, and potential consequences. Employees who can regulate emotional responses may be more capable of pausing before reacting and considering alternative courses of action. Emotional regulation may therefore support more deliberate and balanced decision-making.

Third, psychological well-being may influence self-confidence and self-efficacy. Employees

who believe they are capable of addressing workplace challenges may be more willing to evaluate alternatives and accept responsibility for decisions. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory provides a useful foundation for understanding how beliefs about personal capability may influence effort, persistence, and behavioural choices.

Fourth, mental health can affect motivation and engagement. Decision-making often requires sustained effort, information processing, and willingness to consider consequences. Employees who are psychologically engaged may be more willing to invest effort in understanding complex workplace situations. The JD-R literature suggests that job resources can support motivation and engagement, while excessive demands can contribute to strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Finally, resilience may influence decision-making during challenging circumstances. Resilient employees may be better positioned to recover from unsuccessful decisions, learn from mistakes, and adapt future behaviour. The relevance of resilience and self-efficacy to psychological functioning is also reflected in Bharti's work on Indian caregivers of persons with chronic mental illness (Bharti, 2020). Although this research concerns caregiving rather than organizational decision-making, the psychological constructs provide a useful conceptual basis for understanding coping resources.

Workplace Behaviour and Employee Decision-Making

Workplace behaviour can influence decision-making by shaping the social context in which decisions are developed and implemented.

Communication behaviour is fundamental to informed decision-making. Employees need opportunities to exchange information, clarify expectations, discuss problems, and obtain feedback. Open communication can make decision-making more collaborative and reduce uncertainty.

Cooperative behaviour can also facilitate decision-making. Employees who cooperate with colleagues are more likely to share knowledge and consider different viewpoints. In team-based environments, cooperation can help integrate individual knowledge into collective decisions. Psychological safety can further encourage employees to contribute ideas and express concerns without excessive fear of interpersonal consequences (Edmondson, 1999).

Conflict management is another important behavioural dimension. Differences in opinion are unavoidable in organizations. Constructive disagreement can encourage critical evaluation and prevent premature agreement. However, interpersonal conflict that becomes personal or hostile may reduce communication and make decision-making more difficult.

Responsible behaviour also affects decisions. Employees are expected to consider organizational policies, ethical standards, colleagues, customers, and other stakeholders. Responsible workplace behaviour encourages employees to consider the broader consequences of their decisions rather than focusing exclusively on immediate personal outcomes.

Adaptability is increasingly important because organizational environments change continuously. Employees may need to revise decisions when new information becomes available. Adaptive behaviour enables employees to respond to changing circumstances instead of remaining committed to ineffective approaches.

Thus, workplace behaviour can influence both the process and quality of employee decision-making. Positive behavioural patterns can provide information, social support, feedback, and opportunities for reflection, while negative behavioural patterns can create barriers to effective decisions.

Interaction Between Mental Health and Workplace Behaviour

Mental health and workplace behaviour should not be considered completely separate influences. They may interact continuously within the workplace.

An employee's psychological condition can influence how the employee communicates, cooperates, manages conflict, and responds to colleagues. Psychological well-being may support constructive communication and greater willingness to participate in teamwork. Conversely, psychological strain may contribute to withdrawal, irritability, reduced engagement, or difficulties in interpersonal interaction.

At the same time, workplace experiences can influence mental health. Supportive relationships, respectful leadership, autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for participation may strengthen psychological well-being. In contrast, persistent interpersonal conflict, excessive demands, lack of control, and negative workplace behaviour may contribute to psychological strain.

The WHO and ILO identify psychosocial risks such as excessive workload, limited support, negative behaviours, low control, and other poor working conditions as important concerns for mental health at work (WHO & ILO, 2022).

The JD-R model also provides an explanation for this interaction. Job demands may consume employee energy and contribute to strain, whereas job resources can support goal attainment, motivation, and coping (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thus, the psychological state of an employee and the behavioural characteristics of the workplace may

influence each other over time.

This reciprocal relationship is important for understanding decision-making. Employees do not make decisions in a psychological vacuum. Their decisions emerge from interactions between individual psychological resources and workplace conditions. A psychologically healthy employee may function more effectively in a supportive environment, while a supportive environment may also strengthen the employee's psychological resources.

Organizational Environment and Decision-Making

The organizational environment provides the context within which mental health and workplace behaviour operate. Leadership style, organizational culture, workload, role clarity, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, and psychological safety can influence employee experiences.

Leadership is particularly significant. Managers influence workplace expectations, communication patterns, resource availability, feedback, and employees' perceptions of support. Supportive leadership may encourage employees to express concerns and participate in discussions. Edmondson (1999) emphasized the importance of contextual support and team leader coaching in creating conditions conducive to learning and team functioning.

Role clarity is also important. Employees need to understand their responsibilities, authority, and expectations. When roles are unclear, employees may experience uncertainty regarding which decisions they should make and what consequences may follow.

Employee autonomy can support decision-making by giving employees opportunities to exercise judgment within appropriate boundaries. Autonomy may encourage ownership and responsibility, particularly when employees possess the knowledge and resources required to perform their roles. From the perspective of self-determination theory, autonomy is an important psychological need associated with motivation and self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Psychological safety is another important organizational condition. When employees feel safe expressing concerns, asking questions, or acknowledging mistakes, they may be more likely to participate actively in decision-making. Edmondson (1999) demonstrated the relevance of psychological safety to learning behaviour within teams.

The WHO guidelines on mental health at work recommend organizational interventions, manager training, worker training, and individual-level interventions to promote mental health and enable people to participate effectively in work (WHO, 2022).

Implications for Human Resource Management

The relationship between mental health, workplace behaviour, and decision-making has important implications for human resource management. Organizations should recognize that employee effectiveness is influenced by psychological as well as technical factors.

Human resource professionals can contribute by developing workplace practices that promote psychological well-being, respectful communication, employee participation, and constructive relationships. Mental health initiatives should not be limited to responding to psychological problems after they occur. Preventive approaches can focus on improving working conditions, reducing psychosocial risks, and strengthening organizational resources. The WHO and ILO policy brief emphasizes prevention of work-related mental health conditions, protection and promotion of mental health, and support for workers experiencing mental health conditions (WHO & ILO, 2022).

Managerial training is another important area. Managers can be trained to communicate appropriately, recognize workplace distress, support employees, manage conflict, and create psychologically healthy working environments. The WHO guidelines specifically include manager training and organizational interventions among recommended approaches to mental health at work (WHO, 2022).

Organizations may also integrate decision-making skills into employee development programmes. Training can include problem-solving, critical thinking, emotional regulation, communication, conflict management, ethical decision-making, and stress-management skills.

Role of Psychological Resources in Workplace Decision-Making

Psychological resources such as self-efficacy, resilience, emotional maturity, and perceived control deserve particular attention when considering employee decision-making.

Self-efficacy can influence an employee's willingness to approach difficult decisions. Employees who perceive themselves as capable may be more willing to evaluate alternatives and accept responsibility for outcomes. Bandura (1997) provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding this relationship.

Resilience can help employees manage setbacks. Decision-making inevitably involves the possibility of error. A resilient employee may be more willing to learn from unsuccessful outcomes and adapt future behaviour.

Emotional maturity may help employees manage interpersonal and emotional dimensions of decision-making. Employees frequently need to balance personal preferences with

organizational responsibilities and the interests of colleagues or stakeholders. Bharti and Singh (2026) examined psychological correlates related to emotional maturity and value orientation, providing a broader psychological perspective that can inform discussion of emotional functioning in decision contexts.

Perceived control may also influence decision-making. Employees who believe they have some control over workplace outcomes may be more willing to take initiative and engage actively with problems. Bharti's work on health locus of control, self-efficacy, resilience, and psychological health provides relevant conceptual foundations for examining such psychological resources (Bharti, 2020).

The psychological resource perspective complements the JD-R framework because both approaches emphasize the importance of resources in helping individuals manage demands and maintain effective functioning (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Implications for Future Research

The conceptual perspective presented in this article provides several directions for future research. Empirical studies may examine the relationship between mental health and employee decision-making across different occupational contexts. Researchers may also examine whether workplace behaviour strengthens or weakens the relationship between psychological well-being and decision quality.

Future research could consider specific dimensions of mental health, such as psychological well-being, stress, emotional regulation, resilience, self-efficacy, and psychological safety. Similarly, workplace behaviour could be examined through communication, teamwork, organizational citizenship, conflict management, adaptability, and responsible behaviour.

Research may also explore organizational factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, workload, role clarity, autonomy, and organizational support. The JD-R perspective provides a useful foundation for examining how workplace demands and resources may influence employee well-being and functioning (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Ceschi et al. (2017) provide particularly relevant support for future research because their work explicitly connects decision-making competency and decision-environment management with job demands, job resources, exhaustion, and employee performance.

Qualitative research may also be valuable for understanding employees' lived experiences of workplace decision-making. Interviews and case studies could explore how employees perceive

psychological pressure, workplace relationships, leadership, autonomy, and organizational expectations when making difficult decisions.

CONCLUSION

Employee decision-making is a complex process shaped by psychological, behavioural, interpersonal, and organizational factors. Mental health can influence concentration, emotional regulation, motivation, self-confidence, resilience, and the ability to cope with workplace demands. Workplace behaviour can influence communication, cooperation, conflict management, information sharing, responsibility, and adaptability. These factors may therefore play an important role in determining how employees approach workplace decisions.

Existing organizational psychology literature supports the view that decision-making cannot be separated completely from the conditions in which employees work. Ceschi et al. (2017) demonstrate the relevance of exhaustion, job demands, job resources, and decision-making competencies, while Edmondson (1999) highlights the importance of psychological safety for constructive team functioning. The JD-R perspective further explains how demands and resources may shape employee well-being and functioning (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Mental health and workplace behaviour should therefore not be viewed independently. Psychological well-being can influence workplace behaviour, while workplace experiences can influence psychological well-being. Organizational conditions such as leadership, workload, role clarity, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, and psychological safety may further shape these relationships.

The central implication of this conceptual analysis is that improving employee decision-making requires more than technical training. Organizations also need to create psychologically supportive and behaviourally constructive work environments. Promoting mental health, encouraging respectful communication, strengthening employee resilience and self-efficacy, and creating psychologically safe workplaces may establish conditions in which employees can make thoughtful, responsible, and effective decisions.

The proposed conceptual perspective provides a foundation for future empirical investigation into the psychological and behavioural determinants of employee decision-making. It also highlights the importance of integrating mental health promotion and positive workplace behaviour into broader organizational development and human resource practices.

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