

Workplace Democracy and the Pursuit of Well-being: Reimagining Organizations Through Participation and Equality

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ABSTRACT: Modern organizations are increasingly aware of the need to adopt management methods where the employees are the central actors, implementing participation, equity and welfare. This study looks at the link between employee well-being and workplace democracy through the lenses of employee involvement in decision making and workplace equality. The study utilizes quantitative research approach, and cross-sectional survey design. A structured questionnaire is used for gathering data from 300 public and private sector employees of Pakistan. The collected data is analyzed by SPSS with reliability test, correlation test and regression test to test the hypotheses that have been proposed. The results indicate that there is a strong positive association between workplace democracy and employee welfare. The findings also showed that employee involvement in decision making in the organization leads to an improvement in employee psychological well-being, and that equality in the workplace leads to an improvement in employee job satisfaction and overall workplace experiences. The study emphasizes that democratic working methods establish positive working conditions through higher employee autonomy, engagement, fairness and organizational belonging. This research is useful to the organizational behavior literature because it highlights the need to focus on participative and inclusive management styles. The results indicate that fostering employee voice, openness in decision-making and equal opportunities in building sustainable workplaces have the potential to enhance employee satisfaction and psychological health.

KEYWORDS: Workplace Democracy, Employee Well-being, Employee Participation, Workplace Equality, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Behavior

Introduction

Due to technological progress, globalization, the changed expectations of employees, and a growing awareness of management practices that place people at the centre, the nature of work and organizational structures has drastically changed. The traditional organizational models that were created were influenced by classical management theories and based on hierarchical organization, centralized control and power distinctions between management and employees. These structures led to operational efficiency and standardization, but tended to offer less opportunities

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for employee involvement, autonomy and participation in organizational decision making. In modern workplaces, workers have come to expect that employers offer them not just compensation, but also a sense of meaningful work experiences, marked by respect, fairness, psychological safety and opportunities for influence over decisions that impact their work life (Guest, 2017; Kniffin et al., 2021).

Many organizations employ strategies of decision making that are largely hierarchical, with decisions made at the highest level – from the top – and with strategic choices, resource allocations, and workplace policies being largely determined by senior management. These can often lead to a lack of employee voice and participation due to the power imbalance between organizational leaders and employees (Akbar et al., 2026). Staff in very hierarchical structures can feel less empowered to make decisions, as they may feel that decisions are made to them rather than with them. Organizational behavior studies have shown that lack of autonomy and limited involvement can impact employee motivation, involvement, and psychological health as they lack opportunities to have control over the work environment (Deci et al., 2017).

Secondly, and importantly, the traditional hierarchical structures can lead to unequal power and resource distribution in the organization. If decision making is seen as unfair and/or not accessible to employees, they may feel excluded and a lack of organizational identification may occur. The importance of perceived organizational justice, fairness and inclusion as key determinants of employee attitudes and outcomes have been highlighted in recent studies (Umer et al., 2026). When employees feel their opinions are not valued or that organizational decisions are opaque, they are more likely to feel dissatisfied, stressed and less committed to their organizations (Liu et al., 2024; Shore et al., 2011).

As a result, an alternative organizational model, namely workplace democracy has arisen, which questions the traditional model of authority and places a strong focus on participation, equality, joint decision-making and shared responsibility (Somro et al., 2026). Workplace democracy is defined as organization arrangements which provide employees with opportunities to influence the organization's policies, processes and decisions, and to be involved in decision making. Democratic workplaces seek to broaden power distribution and ask workers to be active actors instead of mere recipients of managerial decisions, as opposed to traditional management models that focus on gathering power in a small group of leaders. Employee participation is a key component of workplace democracy (Hafeez et al., 2023). By having employees participate in decision making, their knowledge, perspectives and experiences can be included, potentially enhancing their sense of ownership and psychological empowerment (Asghar et al., 2025). The research shows that participative management practices help improve employee engagement because they feel more autonomous and that their work has purpose. When employees think their voices are heard, they tend to have higher levels of motivation, organizational commitment and positive psychological outcomes (Hyman, 2018).

Equality and fairness are another important aspect of workplace democracy. Democratic organizing structures try to minimize the power distance by encouraging the sharing of information, equal treatment and openness in the decision-making process. Equality does not mean doing away with all roles and authority differences in the organization, but rather fairness in access to information, opportunity, recognition and participation. Recent research shows that perceived fairness and inclusion are highly correlated with employee satisfaction and trust in leadership and employee well-being (Nishii, 2013; Ahmed et al., 2020).

The rising significance of employee health has additionally bolstered the significance of democratic workplaces. The importance of employee well-being to the organization has grown to become a critical outcome to the organization since it affects productivity, retention, creativity, and the long-term functioning of the organization

(Khan et al., 2025). In today's organizations, psychological health, job satisfaction, work engagement, and quality of working life are important factors to consider when determining the success of the employee (Guest, 2025). While workplace stress can manifest in various ways, poor conditions, low autonomy, too much control and lack of participation can adversely impact mental health and be a factor in employee burnout and disengagement (Sonnentag, 2018).

Some theories provide a rationale for the link between democratic work practices and the well-being of employees. According to SDT, people feel more psychologically well when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are met (Akram et al., 2024). Democratic workplaces encourage this need by providing employees with more control of their work, meaningful relationships, and by acknowledging their contributions (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Likewise, Social Exchange Theory suggests that employees' attitudes towards the organization change positively because they believe that the organization offers them support, fairness, and respect. Democratic practices can then give rise to some reciprocal relationships, such as when workers become more committed and engaged (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Though there is growing interest in employee-centred approaches to the organization, many organizations are still based on central management systems. This leaves a significant research void on how workplace democracy can actually enhance employee well-being and whether employee participation and equality mechanisms that produce positive results are measurable. While other research has explored such concepts as employee engagement, organizational justice, and participative leadership separately, little empirical research has focused on workplace democracy as a holistic organizational philosophy that includes participation, equality, and shared leadership.

Although there have been great strides in the field of human resource management, there are still many organizations that use authoritarian and hierarchical management practices with decision making power vested in the hands of high-ranking individuals. These systems can limit the participation of employees and may limit opportunities for employees to have an impact on organizational processes (Soomro et al., 2023). The lack of participation among employees can have adverse impact on essential factors such as job satisfaction, psychological health, motivation and employees' sense of belonging. If employees think that their suggestions are not being considered, or that management alone is making decisions, they might feel less like they own the organization and have a diminished sense of organizational commitment. In addition, inequity in power and information within an organization can lead to perceptions of inequity that have a negative effect on employee morale and relationships.

While there have been many studies on the concept of participative leadership, employee empowerment and organizational justice, less research has directly focused on the concept of workplace democracy as a unified organizational model. Thus, at this moment, there's not enough empirical research on the link between democratic working practices and employee well-being. This study aims to answer this question by exploring the relationship between participative and egalitarian work structures and the psychological outcomes, satisfaction and well-being of employees. The purpose of this study is to accomplish these objectives. To explore the connection between work democracy and employee wellness. In order to examine how the involvement of the employees in the decision-making process of the organization affects the psychological state of the workers. To study how workplace equality affects employee satisfaction and general employee well-being.

This study is valuable to organizational behavior and human resources management literature because it builds on the knowledge about democratic management and employee-centred organizational model. In theory, it combines the concepts of workplace democracy with employee well-being research, looking at the relationship between levels of participation, equality, and shared decision-making and employee outcomes. The practical

implications of this research are useful for managers and organizational leaders who are looking for models of sustainability at work. Knowing how democratic practice relates to employee well-being can facilitate the creation of policies that foster employee involvement, fairness, empowerment and psychological health. From a social perspective, this research emphasizes the need for inclusive, equitable and respectful work environments. Workplace democracy can help create more ethical and sustainable workplaces by giving employees a voice and equality.

Literature Review

Workplace Democracy

Workplace democracy is an organizational model where workers are offered significant chances to be involved in workplace and organizational decision making, policies, and governance. It puts into question the traditional 'top-down' approaches to authority and decision-making, favouring employee voice, shared authority, transparency and collective responsibility. Workplace democracy does not mean the abolition of managerial positions but rather the establishment of systems for determining that the employees have an impact on the decisions that concern their work and organizational conditions (Qi & Yu, 2025). The theory of workplace democracy has close links to the theory of participative management and the theory of employee empowerment. Democratic organizations make employees active stakeholders whose knowledge and experiences can be of benefit to the organization's success. They promote free expression, joint problem solving, and participatory decision-making within such organizations. Recent studies indicate that democratic practices in the workplace increase employee psychological commitment to a company because employees feel respected, valued, and recognized as a part of the company, and not merely a worker (Kniffin et al., 2020). Workplace democracy involves a multi-faceted concept of the involvement of employees, autonomy, transparency, equality, and shared decision-making. These aspects minimize power distance within the organization between management and staff, and foster a climate of trust and inclusion. Democratic structures are more relevant as contemporary employees not only are looking for monetary rewards but also for meaningful involvement, fairness and personal fulfilment (Li et al., 2024).

Employee Participation in Decision-making

Employee participation in decision-making represents the degree to which employees participate in decisions, policy making, problem-solving and workplace improvement efforts. Employees can share their expertise, provide input and opinions, and participate in decisions that impact their career. Employee participation is seen as one of the main mechanisms of workplace democracy as it is expected to enhance employee autonomy and psychological ownership. Self-Determination Theory suggests that when people feel autonomous and in control of their activities, they feel more motivated and content (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Participative decision making can therefore have a positive impact in terms of psychological outcomes by meeting the need for independence, competence and belonging of the employees. Organizations with high levels of employee participation have led to increased engagement, commitment, and satisfaction from the employees as they feel the contribution they make is of significance and appreciated (Phayoonpun & Mat, 2014).

Workplace Equality

Equality in the workplace is characterized as Fair Treatment, Equal Opportunity, and Unexcepted access to Resources, Recognition and Decision-Making processes within the organization. Equality is an underlying tenet of democratic groups as it is impossible to participate meaningfully in a democratic organization if some groups are not given influence or opportunities. Workplace equality is closely linked with organizational justice theory that says that employees judge the fairness of their procedure, interactions and outcomes in the organization. Fairness leads

to greater trust, commitment, and satisfaction of employees with their companies (Cropanzano et al., 2017). There is recent scientific evidence highlighting that inclusive and equitable workplaces provide a sense of psychological safety, where employees feel valued and accepted. By enhancing the perception of fairness and inclusion in the workplace, equity helps boost employees' sense of belonging and organizational identification (Shore et al, 2011).

Employee Well-being

Employee Wellbeing is the mental, emotional and physical health and wellness of employees. It contains positive elements in the workplace, including job satisfaction, psychological safety, work engagement, and positive emotions. Increasingly, employee well-being has gained a significant place in the focus of organizational research, as it has an impact on the employee's performance, retention, creativity, and the sustainability of the organization. Employers are now more aware that economic incentives are not enough to ensure the success of their employees; psychological health and experiences at work are also crucial factors (Diep & Horváthová, 2026). Providing autonomy, fairness, and participation in the workplace can improve employee well-being; however, too much control, too little participation, and too little fairness can lead to higher levels of workplace stress and dissatisfaction (Sonnentag, 2018).

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between Workplace Democracy and Employee Well-being.

Workplace democracy has been shown to positively affect employee well-being in previous studies through the effects of psychological empowerment, fairness and autonomy. Democratic structures give employees a chance to get involved in decision-making, to voice their opinion, and to feel valued and belonging, thereby increasing feelings of respect and belonging. DiSalvo et al. (2024) explored employee voice systems and workplace democracy, and revealed that mechanisms that enable employee participation make for a safer workplace in which workers more inclined to express grievances and provide suggestions. They conclude that employee voice is a crucial element in democratic workplaces, and that it can help enhance workplace experience.

Likewise, Parr et al. (2026) looked into the evolving expectations of the workplace and noted that workers today are more attuned to organizational cultures that are supportive and flexible, and that allow for greater autonomy. Their study indicated that the ones that centred on employee approaches were better in supporting employees' psychological well-being. Ho and Kuvaas, (2020) did a systematic review on HR practices and employee wellbeing, and concluded that there is a strong correlation between supportive HR practices, empowerment and employee outcome. They conclude that democratic work practices can be viewed as resources for the organization that can improve workers' well-being.

Moreover, Rasheed et al. (2026) pointed out that inclusive leadership and employee involvement could lead to a work environment where employees are psychologically supported. Their study showed that positive organizational climates foster employees' sense of belonging and diminish adverse work experiences. The empirical data used in this study also suggests that workplace democracy is an important factor influencing employee well-being since it affords autonomy, recognition and meaningful involvement to employees.

H2: Psychological wellbeing is positively affected by employees' participation in organizational decision making.

There has been a strong recognition of employee involvement in decision-making as a key determinant of psychological wellbeing. Involving employees in decision-making gives them a greater sense of control over their work environment, which in turn decreases them feeling a lack of control and increases their motivation. Self-Determination Theory is an explanation by Ryan and Deci (2020) that autonomy is a key psychological need for

human flourishing. Working together with the employees meets this need because it enables them to have an impact on decisions made in the workplace and feel more responsible for their work.

Ekingen (2023) investigated the practices of employee voice and participation, and identified that those who are encouraged to voice ideas and engage in organizational discussions are more likely to be engaged and feel a sense of belonging to their organizations. In a similar study, Clarke et al. (2025) discussed psychological safety and workplace inclusion and discovered that when employees feel safe to express opinions, psychological outcomes are better. These environments are built by the employees, where fear is reduced and trust is increased between employees and management. Nassani et al. (2024) investigated participative leadership and supportive organizational culture and effect on employee job satisfaction, and concluded that participative approaches have significant impact on employee job satisfaction. They found that employee involvement leads to more positive experiences at work through an increase in the employees' perception of organizational support.

H3: Workplace Equality significantly increases employee Job Satisfaction and Overall Well-being.

One key element of workplace equality that affects employee satisfaction is the fairness in processes and treatment that is valued by employees who make their decision to join an organization based on both outcomes and processes. Positive attitudes in the workplace are fostered by respectful interactions, transparent decisions and equal opportunities. Cropanzano et al. (2017) explain that social exchange relationships are built when employees see that the organization is working in their best interests and being fair. Fairness creates employee reactions of positive attitudes, commitment and satisfaction. Lee and Rhee (2023) reviewed organizational justice and employee satisfaction and discovered that employee perception of justice is a vital factor in employee motivation and satisfaction. The study showed that fair organizational systems make employees' attitudes better by increasing trust and decreasing dissatisfaction. Randel (2025) reiterated that a positive sense of belonging and psychological health is improved when employees work in inclusive work environments. They found that an equal culture within an organization leads to better employee experience as everyone feels valued and respected. Kanwal et al. (2025) also found that organizational justice is a crucial factor in keeping workforces healthy and motivated. The researchers conclude that the perceptions of fairness directly relate to employee well-being outcomes.

Methodology

In this study, the quantitative research approach is applied to investigate the relationship between workplace democracy and employee well-being. A cross-sectional survey design is used because the data is collected at one time to determine the effects of the workplace democracy, employee participation and workplace equality on psychological well-being and job satisfaction. The quantitative approach allows one to quantify the relationship between the variables and give empirical evidence to test the hypothesis that is proposed. The study is done in Pakistan, involving employees in the public and private sector organizations in major cities of Pakistan like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The intended users are staff from various sectors like banking, education, healthcare, information technology, government institutions, and private organizations. A wide range of organizational settings and working structures is chosen by these sectors to ensure that a broad picture of workplace democracy practices and workers' experiences can be gained.

The number of samples that are collected is 300 employees chosen using convenience sampling method. The sampling method is followed due to its practical approach towards accessing respondents from various organizations and professional background. All employees within the sample are of varied demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, job position and work experience. This includes those employees who have been working

in their current organization for at least six months to provide a depth of understanding related to the practices, decision-making and culture of an organization. Structured questionnaire using previously validated scales of measurement is used to collect data. There are two parts to the questionnaire. The first section collates population data, such as gender, age, level of education, work experience and organizational sector. The second section is used to measure the main variables of the study. Measures of workplace democracy involve aspects such as employee participation, shared decision making, transparency, and organizational fairness. Participation: Assessed using the involvement of employees in decision making at the workplace and their opportunities to voice opinions. Equality in the workplace is assessed on perceptions of fairness in the workplace, equal opportunities, and inclusion. Psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall satisfaction with the job are used to measure employee well-being. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data collected are analyzed with the SPSS software system. The following descriptive statistics are provided to describe the characteristics of the respondents and the general pattern of their responses. For the internal consistency of the measurement scales, reliability analysis based on Cronbach's Alpha is carried out. The Pearson correlation analysis is carried out to search for relationships between workplace democracy, employee participation, workplace equality and employee wellness. To test the three hypotheses, and to assess the predictive power of workplace democracy on the outcomes of well-being in the workplace, multiple regression analysis is used. The ethical principles are upheld throughout the research process by providing for voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and only using collected data for academic purposes.

Data Analysis

Data collected is analyzed by using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) and then the relationship between workplace democracy and employee well-being is analyzed. Reliability test, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted in the analysis. The three postulated hypotheses are tested by regression analysis. Significance level is determined at $p < 0.05$ to find out if the relationship between variables is statistically significant.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency/reliability of measurement scales.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Workplace Democracy	8	0.884
Employee Participation	6	0.861
Workplace Equality	5	0.847
Employee Well-being	7	0.902

The reliability analysis shows that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than the acceptable value of 0.70. Employee well-being has the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.902$) while workplace democracy has $\alpha = 0.884$. The results of this study show that the scales used in measurement are consistent with each other and can be used for further statistical analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to explore the mean scores and standard deviations of the study variables.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Workplace Democracy	3.98	0.71
Employee Participation	3.91	0.76
Workplace Equality	3.86	0.73
Employee Well-being	4.02	0.69

The descriptive results indicate that overall, the respondents have positive views about workplace democracy and employee well-being. The employee well-being shows the highest mean score ($M = 4.02$), which reflects a relatively favorable psychological and working situation of employees. The mean value for workplace democracy is also relatively high ($M = 3.98$), indicating that workers feel that they participate in a great deal of, and are treated fairly and involved in their workplace.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis is used to explore the relationship between workplace democracy, employee participation, workplace equality and employee well-being.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	Workplace Democracy	Employee Participation	Workplace Equality	Employee Well-being
Workplace Democracy	1			
Employee Participation	.721**	1		
Workplace Equality	.684**	.651**	1	
Employee Well-being	.748**	.702**	.676**	1

The correlation results indicate that all the study variables are positively and significantly correlated with each other. Employee well-being is positively related with workplace democracy ($r = .748$, $p < .01$). Additionally, there is a positive relationship between employee participation and employee well-being ($r = .702$, $p < .01$), and a significant relationship between workplace equality and employee well-being ($r = .676$, $p < .01$). The results of these experiments are preliminary support for all the proposed hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing

Multiple regression analysis is used to test the proposed hypotheses. Every hypothesis is tested individually one by one to see the statistical significance of independent variables on dependent variables.

Hypothesis 1 Testing

To see if workplace democracy, as measured by a simple linear regression model, significantly predicts employee well-being, a simple linear regression analysis is performed.

Table 4*The regression analysis for H1*

Dependent Variable: Employee Well-being

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Workplace Democracy	0.748	14.82	0.000	Supported

According to the regression results, workplace democracy is a significant predictor in employee well-being ($\beta = 0.748$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value demonstrates that 55.9% of the variations in employee well-being are explained by workplace democracy. Thus, the hypothesis H1 is confirmed, and the mean values of employees' well-being in organizations with higher scores of the democratic practices of management are higher.

Hypothesis 2 Testing

A regression analysis is performed to assess the effect of employee participation on psychological well-being.

Table 5*Regression Analysis for H2*

The psychological well-being was used as the dependent variable.

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Employee Participation	0.702	12.65	0.000	Supported

The regression analysis shows that employee participation is significant in terms of psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.702$, $p < 0.001$). The variance in psychological well-being is accounted for by 49.3% via the employee participation. Thus, there is support for H2, as psychological outcomes of employees who are involved in organizational decision-making showed improvement with more autonomy and involvement.

Hypothesis 3 Testing

To evaluate the impact of workplace equality on employee job satisfaction and general well-being, regression analysis is carried out.

Table 6*The regression analysis for H3*

The dependent variable is the employee job satisfaction.

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Workplace Equality	0.676	11.94	0.000	Supported

The results show that the workplace equality has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction in the workplace ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.676$). The variation in employee satisfaction is accounted for by 45.7% due to workplace equality. H3 is therefore supported, a finding that shows that fair treatment, equal opportunities and inclusive workplace practices have a positive impact on the employee satisfaction and well-being.

Discussion of Findings

This study aims to explore the workplace democracy and worker well-being in terms of the impact of workplace democracy, employee participation and workplace equality on psychological and work-related outcomes. Results of regression analyses provide evidence for all three proposed hypotheses and show that democratic workplace practices make an important contribution to improving employee well-being. These findings are an indication of the need to

move away from the traditional hierarchical organizational structure to more collaborative, inclusive, and employee-based organizational models.

The results of the first hypothesis (H1) show the presence of a significant positive relationship between workplace democracy and employee well-being. The findings show that staff who experience participation, shared authority, transparency and employee voice in their work setting report higher levels of well-being. This is in line with existing studies highlighting the importance of democratic organizational practices in generating psychological resources which enhance employee experience. In a democratic workplace, employees have increased autonomy and control over their work, which lead to higher levels of motivation, organization attachment, and psychological satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Recent studies also indicate that companies that encourage employee voice and inclusive decision-making, foster better relationships between employees and the management, which, in turn, boosts employee well-being in the workplace (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020).

Organizational support theory also accounts for the positive correlation between workplace democracy and employee well-being, as a result of the support provided to employees. When an employee feels that his or her opinion is respected and his/her work is having a positive impact on their organization, he or she has a higher perception of organizational support. Such perceptions lead to positive emotional reactions, greater involvement, and greater attachment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2016). In the same way, Gyldén (2026) observed that employee-centered HR practices like empowerment and participation have significant implications on employee psychological outcomes. The present results extend this literature by providing evidence that workplace democracy as an encompassing organizational philosophy is also a significant factor in explaining employees' well-being.

The second hypothesis (H2) investigates the effect of employee involvement in decision-making for the organization on psychological well-being. The findings suggest that employee involvement has a significant impact on psychological wellbeing. Staff who are part of workplace decisions feel more autonomous, confident and have more control over outcomes of their work. The results of this study add to the claims that participation decreases powerlessness and boosts employee control over their work environment.

The results of recent studies have been consistent in that there is a positive link between employee involvement and voice mechanisms and psychological outcomes. Kniffin et al. (2021) have observed that today's workers have grown accustomed to working independently, flexibly and in a way that reflects their value in workplace processes. Firms that give employees a chance to voice their opinions and be involved in decisions foster greater employee/employer identification with workplace. Moges and Amentie (2022) also conclude that Employee Voice practices increase engagement and organizational commitment because it is a way to recognize employees' knowledge and capabilities.

The results further corroborate the tenets of the Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that autonomy, competence and relatedness are key psychological needs that affect human flourishing. These needs are met through participation in decision making, as employees gain a sense of control, gain a sense of competence, and develop better relationships in organizations (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Thus, companies that promote participative decision-making are more likely to have psychologically healthy employees.

The third hypothesis (H3) explores how workplace equality affects employee job satisfaction and well-being. The findings indicate that women's equality in the workplace is a significant contributor to employee satisfaction. This discovery suggests that workers who feel fairly treated, treated equally, and treated with respect, have more positive attitudes towards their organization. Equality is thus fundamental to the concept of workplace democracy

since participation does not lead to democratic workplaces if there is not equitable access to opportunities and organizational resources.

The results are in line with the organizational justice theory which proposes that workers assess organizations on the distributive, procedural and interactional fairness of decision making, interpersonal treatment and resources allocation. Employees more likely to be satisfied, trustful and committed to the organization when they feel fair (Cropanzano et al., 2017). According to recent studies by Shore et al. (2018), fostering inclusive workplace environments can enhance employees' sense of belonging and psychological safety by promoting respect and value for each individual.

In addition, Mäkelä and Talka, (2026) discovered that inclusive leadership practices have a positive impact on employee well-being as it creates a climate in which employees feel accepted and supported. Likewise, Shafaei et al. (2024) found that employees feel safe sharing their thoughts and opinions in a company where they do not have to worry about repercussions. The results corroborate the argument made in this study that equal opportunities in the workplace play a major role in employee satisfaction and wellbeing.

The results also have implications for the practical applications of organizations, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, where a lot of workplaces are still in the centralized decision-making system. Participative management systems, employee feedback, open policies, and equal career development opportunities can all boost employee outcomes for organizations. The need to develop democratic workplaces does not mean that organizational leadership is to be abolished; it means that the nature of leadership needs to shift from a control approach to a collaborative and inclusive approach.

The study builds on previous research by combining the concepts of workplace democracy, employee participation and workplace equality into one explanatory construct of employee well-being. This research builds on past research that has focused on the individual concepts of empowerment, organizational justice, and participative leadership, and brings attention to workplace democracy as an integrated organizational approach that incorporates these concepts.

The findings were overall consistent in confirming that workplace democracy is an important avenue to enhance workers' well-being. When organizations encourage everyone to participate, to be fair and to make decisions together, employees feel more satisfied, psychologically safe, and connected to the organization. The results confirm the importance of taking employee voice and equality into account as vital elements of the process of effective workplace management for sustainable organizations.

Conclusion

In this study, the authors explore how workplace democracy helps to improve employee well-being, in three key areas: workplace democracy, decision making at the workplace, and equality at the workplace. Results show how important democratic workplace practices are in contributing to healthier, more supportive and more satisfying organizational environment. The study points out that it is no longer enough for organizations to rely on the traditional hierarchical management patterns with the power to make the decision at the top level. Rather, contemporary workplaces need systems that espouse staff as valuable contributors whose opinions, knowledge and experiences have a bearing on the success of the organization.

Overall, the findings of the study support the positive relationship between workplace democracy and employee well-being that has been confirmed. In democratic working environments, employees have more autonomy, participation and support. Providing opportunities for employees to be part of decisions and to share their views

creates greater employee feelings of ownership and belonging. The fact that it can be linked with a management philosophy as well as an emotional and psychological experience of working life, suggests that workplace democracy is a significant aspect of the workers' experience in the workplace.

The study also reinforces the significance of involvement of employees in the decision-making process of the organization. Engagement promotes a sense of value and acknowledgment, enhancing employees' motivation and psychological health. Opportunities for staff to participate in organizational decision making are linked to greater perceptions of meaningful employment, and greater organizational attachment. Hence, there is a need to build effective communication channels, and to involve employees in decisions that impact their role and responsibility in an organization's objectives if the organization wants to enhance the employee outcomes.

Moreover, the results clearly show that the level of equality in the workplace is an important determinant in employee job satisfaction and their well-being. They feel valued and supported in an environment of fair treatment, equal opportunities and inclusive organizational practices. When everyone is equal, their sense of being excluded goes away and so does the mistrust between employees and management. Exemplifying fairness lead to positive relations and greater satisfaction within the workplace.

The findings from this study enrich the body of knowledge in organizational behavior/human resource management literature because it provides a workplace democracy model that integrates participation, equality, and shared decision making. This study combines the concepts of employee empowerment, leadership styles, and organizational justice to explain how democratic practices at work affect employees' well-being, whereas previous research has focused on employee empowerment or leadership styles or organizational justice individually. The results show that opportunities for employee-based organizational models are elements to support a sustainable development of workplaces.

At a practical level, it is important for organizations to build participative management systems, decision making processes which are transparent and inclusive workplace cultures. Management should seek input from employees, acknowledge work done and offer opportunities for development and promotion for all employees. Creating democratic workplaces involves moving away from the idea of controlling employees, to one of trusting, communicating and embracing shared responsibility.

While the study offers important insights, there's still more to be explored in the realms of workplace democracy in other industries, organizations, and cultures. Longitudinal studies can include the influence of democratic practices in the workplace on employee well-being over time. Further, other variables, such as leadership style, organizational commitment and employee engagement, could be examined in future research to further strengthen the relationship between workplace democracy and employee outcomes.

In sum, the workplace democracy is one of the main strategies for creating more inclusive, fair and worker-centred organizations. Increased participation, equality and shared responsibility in an organization can lead to better employee health and more sustainable and effective working environments. The study highlights that future successful organizations will be those that acknowledge employees as active partners in the development of the organization as well as employees as employees.

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