Investigating the Effect of Perceived Workplace Climate on the Well-being of Academic Staff at Makerere University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyse how workplace climate affects the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University. The study was prompted by the reportedly persistent ill-being of academic staff at Makerere University in the recent past. The study followed a concurrent design, where the quantitative approach partook a cross-sectional survey design and the qualitative used a phenomenological survey design. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 383 academic staff and interviewing four heads of departments and four academic staff distributed in three colleges and one school. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The qualitative data was analysed through thematic and content analysis inductively. Later, both data sets converged during interpretation to obtain common implications. Qualitative findings indicated participants had varying perspectives on the workplace climate for instance, participants' voices ranged from challenging to supportive and adaptable, stressful and rewarding. This implied that such mixed feedback from different voices had different implications and consequences for individual participants. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, (r = .529, n = 286, p = .000> 0.05), and multiple analysed by linear regression $R^2 = 0.281$, p =0,000 >.05). F statistic = 37.550, p= 0.00>0.05, Beta= 0.350, p= 0.00>0.05. The findings indicated a statistically significant positive relationship and effect between well-being and workplace climate in terms of work pleasure, job rewards, and career growth opportunities.

Keywords: well-being, workplace climate, workplace well-being

This study delves into the relationship between workplace climate and the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University, examining how factors like interpersonal dynamics, communication, and institutional support impact their psychological and emotional welfare. As higher education continues to evolve, understanding the connection between workplace climate and well-being is crucial. Through empirical analysis, this research aimed to uncover the specific

aspects of the workplace climate that contribute to or hinder the well-being of academic staff, offering insights to enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, the University's academic mission.

The problem of ill-being of employees in organizations is not a new phenomenon. In higher education, this problem is gaining ground in many countries. In the UK 90 percent of academics report working while sick (Kinman & Wray, 2021). In Northern Ireland mental health accounted for approximately 48.2% of the variance in academics (Shen & Slater, 2021). In Africa, job-specific and organizational stressors resulting from high job-related demands at approximately 89.3 percent affect South African academic staff, 76.8 percent (administrators), and 96. 8 percent, of researchers (du Plessis, 2019). In Nigeria, there was a significant contribution of health-seeking behaviour, and illness cognition factors among the psychological well-being of lecturers (Oluwole et al., 2022). In Uganda, results indicated that there are high stress levels at 74.4 percent among Makerere University academic staff (Atugonza et al., 2021). Results indicated that more than half (58 percent) of academic staff at Makerere University had moderate levels of burnout while 38 percent of them had high levels of burnout (Kabunga, 2020). Mugizi et al. (2021) revealed that compensation determination and administration are important in enhancing the academic staff's well-being in universities. However, none of these studies focused on the effect of the workplace climate on the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretically, this study was guided by Organisational Support Theory (OST) propounded by Eisenberger etal. (1986). OST postulates that employees will attempt to work for those organizations wherein a pleasant work environment is provided and employees' contributions are properly valued and care for well-being (Malve-Ahlroth, 2020). The theory assumes that employees perceive their organization as supportive when favourable rewards and job conditions are provided, and employees stimulate employee reciprocity in the form of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, communicating a positive valuation of their contributions to supporting the organization achieve its goals (Eisenberger et al., 2013). OST holds that interpersonal relationships, caring, approval, and respect connoted by supervisors fulfil socio-emotional needs, leading employees to incorporate organizational membership and role status into their social identity leading to managerial effectiveness (Eisenberger et al., 2016).

In this study, there were three concepts which were investigated namely; employee well-being, workplace well-being, and workplace climate. According to Ruggeri et al. (2020), employee well-being refers to a combination of feeling good and functioning well, the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships. Meanwhile, Bennett et al. (2017) defined well-being at work as reflecting life satisfaction, the prevalence of positive emotions and moods of

individuals on their job, and in particular the feelings that the work provides the opportunities to develop their potential for self-actualization. The second concept of workplace well-being was defined by Nielsen et al. (2017) as a state of an individual's mental, physical, and general health as well as experiences of satisfaction both at work and outside of work. It describes all aspects of an individual's working life including the quality and safety of the working physical environment, the climate at work, and work organization (Burke & Richardson, 2019). Aryanti et al. (2020) defined workplace well-being as a sense of accomplishment achieved from work that is associated with the feelings of workers in general and also the intrinsic and extrinsic work values. In this study, workplace well-being was looked at in terms of work satisfaction, organizational respect for employees, employer care, and intrusion of work into private life. The third concept was workplace climate. Workplace climate refers to shared perceptions, feelings, and attitudes employees have about the essential features of the organization which contemplates the established norms, values, and attitudes of the organization's culture and influences employees' behaviour either positively or negatively during a particular period in their organization (Madhukar & Sharma, 2017; Okoli, 2018).

Contextually, this study took place at Makerere University. According to Uganda's Auditor General's Report of 2015, out of 2,774 established academic staff positions for Makerere University, only 1,333 (or 48 percent) were filled - leaving a gap of 1,441 (or 52 percent). This report collaborated with the Rwendeirwe Report 2017 which indicated that between 2015 and 2016 over 69 left the University. Researchers like Ssali et al. (2019) indicated that between 2009 and 2013 the University lost 50 senior academic staff for other universities, and in 2015 and 2016, over 69 left. Ndyabahika (2018) noted that between 2013 and 2014, 477 lectures left. These reviews have indicated that academic staff leave due to uncompetitive terms of service, poor retention, and sluggish recruitment. These statistics are not only perturbing but are pointers to yet bigger problems to come in the provision of quality higher education. They may prompt us to ask: why has Makerere University consistently been failing to retain qualified academic staff? In this study, the researcher attempted to examine whether there is a relationship between the workplace climate of university academic staff and well-being in the workplace.

Problem Statement

Academic staff well-being in higher education institutions like Makerere is critical for its realization of quality higher education (Mugizi et al., 2021). At Makerere University, strategies have been put in place to enhance the well-being opportunities for collaborative research, Ph.D. scholarships, skill building, scientific writing, and sources of research funding schemes (Nabatte, 2019; Semeere et al., 2021). Despite these improved strategies towards improving academic staff well-being, some sponsored academic staff exhibited high intent to quit the University soon after graduating or even before serving the University (Mwesigwa et al. 2020; Ndyabahika, 2018; Ssali et al. 2019; Rwendeirwe, 2017).

This high turnover gives an impression of ill-being among the academic staff (Atugonza et al. 2021; Kabunga, 2020). Could it be that the interventions are not addressing the root causes of ill-being? If so, proper well-being analysis needs to be done, otherwise, Makerere University will continue using interventions that do not address the root causes of ill-being. Therefore, this paper presents the findings of a study that attempted to understand how the well-being of academic staff is affected by the workplace climate.

Purpose

This study aimed to analyse the effect of workplace climate on the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University.

Literature Review

As academics spend much of their working life teaching, researching, and community engagement, understanding how the workplace environment may contribute to promoting well-being in higher education institutions (Tham & Holland, 2018; Evanoff et al., 2020; Okoli, 2018). In developing countries, teaching hasn't been considered a prestigious profession compared to other professions like lawyers and doctors due to the worrying working conditions that compromise their profession due to job demands (Atugonza et al., 2021). However, as educational institutions seek to provide quality teaching, they may not be willing to invest in employee well-being unless they can see a clear profit case for doing so (Tumusiime, 2021; Mudrak et al., 2018). This research aimed to analyze how the workplace climate affects the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University in terms of work pleasure, job rewards, and career growth and development opportunities.

Some scholars have investigated the impact of workplace climate on the well-being of employees in different organizations. For instance, Schultz et al. (2015) assessed the relationship between work climate and employee well-being in an online study comprising working US residents. The results revealed that supportive work climates enhanced employees' basic psychological needs at work promoting employee work well-being. Benevene et al. (2019) investigated the effects of dispositional happiness and self-esteem, as dispositional traits, on the health of teachers, as well as to understand the role played by the working environment in generating positive affection. The results revealed that teacher happiness at work partially mediates the relationship between dispositional happiness and teacher health. Also, Viitala et al. (2015) examined the connections between organizational climate and well-being at work using employees from public day-care centres in Finland. The findings showed that work climates were more strongly connected to well-being. Fedorova and Ponomareva (2017) assessed developing university human resource potential as the basis for its intellectual capital among academic staff and found that professional and growth opportunities are positively related to employee well-being among academic staff. Muwanguzi et al. (2022) examined whether intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, job characteristics, and personal characteristics are significant predictors

of job satisfaction among academic staff at Makerere University and their findings indicated that intrinsic factors predicted job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors of effective supervision, co-worker relationships, and satisfaction with salary predicted job satisfaction. Lunyolo and Bakkabulindi (2017) explored how the work environment related to lecturer productivity in a college at Makerere University while using the interpretative approach. Their findings indicated that rewards, resources, and performance feedback given to the lecturers were inadequate and therefore an obstacle to their productivity at work. Kasule (2015) examined the impact of the work environment on academic staff job performance, in the case of Kyambogo University using a quantitative approach. His findings found that the prevalent work environment significantly affects the job performance of dons.

Several scholars have investigated different factors that impact the well-being of academic employees in different academic institutions of higher learning. Larson et al. (2019) examined the well-being of higher education and the findings emphasized the centrality of psychological needs in understanding the correlation between the environment and faculty well-being. Morrish (2019) explored the causes of poor mental health among higher education staff in the period 2009 to 2016 in UK academic environments. The study results described higher education institutions as anxiety machines characterized by excessive workloads, workload models, audits, and metrics that dominated the working lives of academics, and precarious contracts affected academics' well-being. Mudrak et al. (2018) investigated how job demands/resources in the academic environment interlink with multiple dimensions of faculty well-being. The findings revealed that job resources were largely related to work engagement and job satisfaction. The findings further revealed that job demands were mainly correlated with stress, mostly through work-family. Van Niekerk and Van Gent (2021) carried out a cross-sectional explorative study to determine the mental health and well-being of staff members at an Eastern Cape university during the COVID-19 pandemic levels 4 and 5 Lockdown. The findings revealed a strong negative correlation between psychological distress and mental well-being. Kinman and Wray (2022) assessed the prevalence of sickness presenteeism among academic employees, identifying the factors that encourage such behaviour and the implications for well-being and performance. The results revealed that (90 percent) of participants reported working while sick at least sometimes, with more than half (52 percent) doing so often or always. Similarly, Wray and Kinman (2022) investigated the psychosocial hazards experienced by academic staff working in UK institutions over time. Their study findings indicated an increase in most of the psychosocial hazards over time, majorly for job demands, control, role, and relationships, indicating a clear cause for concern. Mugizi et al. (2021) examined the impact of compensation management on academic staff's employee well-being in private universities in Uganda during the COVID-19 lockdown. The results revealed that compensation management predicted employee well-being in private universities. Kinman (2019) examined

different rewards using the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model of job stress to predict mental and physical health in academic employees working in UK universities. The findings revealed that higher extrinsic effort, lower esteem and security rewards, and an imbalance between efforts and esteem rewards predicted academic staff mental health status. He also noted that physical health symptoms were predicted by higher extrinsic effort and lower security rewards. None of these studies directly related workplace climate to well-being, which this study focused on.

Finally, a few scholars have also investigated whether academic staff well-being is impacted by workplace climate. Bennett et al. (2018) examined how workplace conditions help workers grow across all enabling workplace managers and leaders to wisely use existing knowledge to create workplace well-being. Their findings revealed that positive worker relationships predict well-being and also help to protect well-being in the face of negative interpersonal factors. The findings further noted that employees experience well-being when provided with resources, rewards, and benefits. Rahim et al. (2020) examined the moderating role of organizational climate on the relationship between work-life balance and individual well-being at the University of Malaysia. The findings indicated that work-life balance for staff only impacted their psychological well-being. However, contrary to our expectations, the results revealed that organizational climate did not moderate the relationship between work-life balance and individual well-being. Zábrodská et al. (2014) used correlational and regression analyses to ascertain the relationship between the work environment and the well-being of academic faculties in public Czech universities. Their results further indicated that the workplace environment predicted a significant portion of the variance in burnout and stress. All these studies had contextual, conceptual, theoretical, and methodological gaps which the current study aimed to address.

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

Three colleges and one school were identified whose target population was 569 and the sample size for each college / school was determined by proportionate stratified sampling. The researcher used 286 academic staff at Makerere University including professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, and assistant lecturers to determine perceptions of supervisory relationships and their well-being using self-report questionnaires. The qualitative sample comprised four academic staff and four heads of department who were perceived to hold in-depth information.

Data Collection

Since the researcher used a mixed method approach, a convergent parallel survey design was employed in particular the quantitative approach used a survey design, and the qualitative used a phenomenological design. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires comprised three sections, sections A, B, and C. The questions in

section A were on the background characteristics of the respondents, section B on the well-being of academic staff with questions on work satisfaction, organization respect for employees, care from employer, and intrusion of work into private life. Section C covered workplace environment with questions on perceived climate, supervisory relationships, and peer group interaction. The self-administered questionnaires had close-ended items based on the nominal scale with appropriate alternatives given for section A and an ordinal scale based on the five-point Likert from a minimum of 1 through 5 for sections B on well-being and C work climate. Closed-ended questions were selected because they are easy to administer, code analyses, and allow comparisons and quantification producing fully completed data while avoiding irrelevant responses. An interview guide had questions that corresponded with the search question that required participants to give their perceptions of the current workplace climate and how it enhanced their overall well-being. The design of the interview items was a semi-structured interview that allowed the participants to provide detailed information because of the probing questions as a means of follow-up. The researcher personally conducted interviews with four academic staff and four heads of department from the three colleges and one school.

Data Analysis
The analysis of data was done at different levels, namely univariate, bivariate level, and multi-variate. At the univariate level, data analyses were based on descriptive statistics. At the bivariate level, the researcher correlated the dependent variable (DV) well-being with each of the dimensions of the workplace climate using the Pearson Product Moment correlation. At multi-variate levels, the researcher used multi-linear regression with each regressed against the DV (well-being). The qualitative data was analysed through thematic and content analysis inductively.

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Results
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Workplace and well-being dimensions
The study aimed to analyse how the perceived workplace climate affects the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University. The variables were academic staff workplace well-being as the dependent variable and workplace climate as the independent variable. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of workplace well-being.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Academic Staff Well-being Dimensions

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Work satisfaction	3.35	.97
Organization respect for employee	2.89	. 88
Care from employer	2.67	.93
Intrusion of work into private life	3.52	.84
Average	3.10	.90

Table I shows the descriptive value of the variable under investigation. Items for each factor were measured using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = rarely, and 1 = Never. The result indicates that all measures are either moderately or highly scored with an average value of 3.10. The results implied moderate scores of care from employers, and organizational respect for employees while there were high scores on work satisfaction and intrusion of work into private life. This suggests that neither the respondents' organization respects them nor the head of the department cares about their well-being.

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Workplace Climate

Perceived work climate was studied using 10 items. The question items were scaled on the Five Point Likert where; 5= Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Not Sure, 2 = Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree. The results on perceived workplace climate are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Workplace Climate

Perceived Workplace Climate	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
The work environment in this department is good	31 (10.9%)	118 (41.4%)	16 (5.6%)	102 (35.4%)	19 (6.7%)	2.86
I enjoy telling others about my place of work	19 (7.0%)	71 (24.9%)	20 (7.0%)	134 (46.4%)	42 (14.7)	3.38
My head of department gives me the autonomy to do my work	19 (6.7%)	55 (19.2%)	8 (2.8%)	148 (51.7%)	56 (19.6%)	3.58
My head of department makes me feel like an important team member	35 (12.3%)	148 (51.6%)	27 (9.5%)	48 (16.8%)	28 (9.8%)	2.60
This institution caters to my compensation interests	69 (24.2%)	127 (44.4%)	38 (13.3%)	41 (14.3%)	11 (3.8%)	2.29
I am treated with respect in my department	45 (15.5%)	137 (48.2%)	27 (9.5%)	59 (20.8%)	18 (6.0%)	2.54
My head of department values my contribution to its well-being	51 (17.9%)	135 (47.2%)	23 (8.0%)	66 (23.1%)	11 (3.8%)	2.48
This department supports my training programs	60 (21.0%)	113 (39.5%)	23 (8.0%)	72 (25.2%)	18 (6.3%)	2.56
My head of department gives me enough time for my work task	60 (20.8%)	130 (45.8%)	18 6.3%)	68 (23.6%)	10 (3.5%)	2.43
My head of department recognizes my work effort	82 (28.4%)	100. (35.1%)	30 (10.5%)	63 (22.1%)	11 (3.9%)	2.38

Source: Field Data (2023)

The findings in Table 2 on whether the work environment in the respondents' department is good, cumulatively the majority of the respondents (52.3%) disagreed while 42.1% agreed and 5.6% were not sure. The mean = 2.86 less than 3 suggesting disagreements among respondents. This suggested that the respondents' work environment in the department wasn't good. As to whether the respondents enjoy telling others about their place of work, the majority (61.1%) of the respondents agreed while 31.9% disagreed and 7.0% were not sure. The mean = 3.38 exceeding 3 implying that the respondents significantly enjoyed telling others about their place of work. As regards whether the respondents' heads of department give them the autonomy to do their work, a majority of respondents (71.3%) agreed while 25.9% disagreed and 2.8% were not sure. The mean = 3.58 exceeding three, this suggested that the respondents significantly agreed that their heads of department give them the autonomy to do their work.

Concerning whether the respondents' heads of department make them feel like important team members, the majority percentage (63.9%) of respondents disagreed while 26.6% agreed and 9.5% were not sure. The mean = 2.60 less than code3 suggesting disagreement among the respondents. This implied that the respondents significantly disagreed that their heads of department make them feel like important team members. As regards whether the respondents' institution caters to their compensation interests, a majority of respondents (68.6%) disagreed while 18.1% agreed and 13.3% were not sure. The mean = 2.29 less than code3 suggesting disagreement among the respondents. This implied that the respondents weren't in agreement that the institution caters to their compensation interests.

On whether the respondents were treated with respect in their departments, cumulatively the majority of the respondents (63.7%) disagreed while 26.8% agreed and 9.5% were not sure. The mean = 2.54 less than code 3 implying a disagreement among the respondents. This suggested that the respondents were not in agreement that they were treated with respect in the departments. As to whether the respondents' heads of department value their contribution to the universities' well-being, the majority (65.1%) of the respondents disagreed while 26.9% agreed and 8.0% were not sure. The mean = 2.48 less than code 3 implying that the respondents disagreed on the item. This suggested that the respondents were not in agreement that the heads of the department did value their contribution to the universities' well-being.

Concerning whether the respondents' department supports their training programs, the majority percentage (60.5%) of respondents disagreed while 31.5% agreed and 8.0% were not sure. The mean = 2.56 less than code 3 suggesting a disagreement among the respondents. This signifies that respondents disagreed that their departments support their training programs. As regards whether the respondents' heads of department give them enough time for their work tasks, a majority of respondents (66.6%) disagreed while 27.1% agreed and 6.3% were not sure. The mean = 2.43 less than code 3 suggesting disagreement on the item. This implied that the respondents disagreed that the heads of the department give

them enough time for their work tasks. As regards whether the respondents' heads of department recognize their work effort, a majority of respondents (63.5 %) disagreed while 26.0% agreed and 10.5% were not sure. The mean = 2.38 less than code 3 which on the scale used corresponded to disagree suggesting that, the respondents' heads of the department did not recognize their work effort. The overall mean 3.87 as shown in Table 3 implied that the respondents agreed that their institution provides a good workplace.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Workplace Well-being Dimensions

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Workplace Climate	2.71	.79777
Supervisory relationships	2.82	. 95557
Peer Group Interaction	2.56	. 94651
Total	3.87	.89995

Examining the Relationship between workplace climate and Academic Staff Well Being at Makerere University

The study went further and looked at the relationship between workplace climate and academic staff well-being. Deductively, the investigators hypothesized to conduct correlations. Hypothesis H_1: Workplace climate significantly affects academic staff well-being at Makerere University. H_0: Workplace climate does not affect academic staff well-being at Makerere University.

A Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression were run to test the relationship and the effect respectively. The results from Pearson's correlation technique are presented in Table.4

Table
Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between Workplace Climate and Academic Staff Well-being at Makerere University

		Well-being	Perceived work climate
Well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	.529[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	286	286
Perceived work climate	Pearson Correlation	.529[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	286	286

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Pearson's correlation coefficient index, the results were statistically significant, with a moderate positive correlation between well-being and perceived work climate (r = .529, n = 286, p > .000). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative one accepted, that workplace climate

significantly affects academic staff well-being at Makerere University. Furthermore, a simple regression analysis on the relationship between Workplace climate and academic staff well-being at Makerere University was done. Findings are presented in Table 5a.

Table 5a

Model Summary on Work Climate and Academic Staff Well-being at Makerere University

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.529	.280	.277	.47916

From Table 5a, the R^2 is 0.277 which meant that the work climate only predicted 27.7% of the change in academic staff well-being in Makerere University. The remaining 73.7% was accounted for by other factors not included in this study. However, on analysis of the variance among variables, Table 5b provides results.

Table 5b

ANOVA on Workplace Climate and Academic Staff Well-Being of Academic Staff at Makerere University

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	25.046	1	25.046	109.088	.000
1	Residual	64.517	281	.230		
	Total	89.563	286	25.046		

The regression was F = 109.088 and sig = 0.000 less than 0.05. This implied that workplace climate positively affects academic staff well-being at Makerere University.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative analysis was done according to the research question that sought to investigate the extent to which the workplace climate effectively enhances the well-being of academic staff at Makerere University. The findings revealed that Makerere University is characterized by varying views, with some describing it as challenging and competitive, while others find it dynamic, supportive, and adaptable. 'The high workload and administrative burdens pose challenges to maintaining a healthy work-life balance, leading to burnout and mental health issues for the academic staff at Makerere University'. These are the voices from one key interview informant (KII 1). Other informants had this to say:

In my opinion, the current workplace climate at Makerere University is stressful and challenging. The high workload and administrative burdens make it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. As a result, academic staff may experience burnout and mental health issues, which can have a significant impact on their well-being. (KII 2)

As someone who has worked at Makerere University, I would describe the current workplace climate as dynamic and fast-paced. While this can be exciting, it can also be demanding and exhausting. Academic staff must keep up with changes and developments in their fields, which can require long hours and intensive research. However, the University provides support for academic staff and has implemented initiatives to enhance their well-being. (KII 3)

Discussion

These findings are in congruence with Lunyolo and Bakkabulindi (2017) and Kasule (2015) who focused on the work environment and its impact on productivity and job performance among academic staff in a Ugandan context. These studies provide insights into the influence of the work environment on various outcomes related to academic staff well-being. Abu and Oludeyi (2018) examined the influence of workplace architecture on job satisfaction and well-being among academic staff in Nigerian universities. Their findings highlight the significance of workplace architecture in creating a conducive environment that promotes well-being.

In the current study, the results there is significantly moderate positive correlation between well-being and work climate (r = .533, n = 284, p < .000). The findings are in line with Rahim et al. (2020) who indicated that work-life balance for staff only impacted their psychological well-being. Morrish (2019) revealed that excessive workloads, workload models, audits, and metrics that dominated the working lives of academics, and precarious contracts affected academics' well-being. Studies by Ohadomere and Ogamba (2021) are in line with the findings that highlighted that higher education institutions should put in place wellness interventions and programs to help support the mental health of academic staff to increase their job satisfaction and emotional well-being. Kinman and Wray's (2021) findings identified the factors that caused the prevalence of sickness presenteeism and the implications for well-being and performance in universities. Wray and Kinman's (2022) findings indicated that psychosocial hazards among academic staff, which were caused by job demands compromised academic staff well-being.

The results on the simple linear regression showed the adjusted R^2 = 0.277 which implied that the workplace climate at Makerere University accounted for 27.7% of the change in academic staff well-being, the remaining 72.3% were accounted for by other factors not within this study. This indicates a significant positive relationship between workplace climate and well-being. These findings are in line with other scholars such as Kinman (2019) who found

that higher extrinsic effort, lower esteem and security rewards, and an imbalance between efforts and esteem rewards predicted academic staff mental well-being. He also noted that physical health symptoms were predicted by higher extrinsic effort and lower security rewards. Mugizi et al. (2021) who indicated that compensation determination and administration are important in enhancing the academic staff's well-being in private universities also revealed a positive significance with well-being. While Larson et al. (2017, findings emphasized the centrality of psychological needs, they also indicated in correlation between the environment and faculty well-being. Mudrak et al. (2018) are also in line with the findings that revealed that job resources were largely related to work engagement and job satisfaction while job demands were mainly correlated with stress or health impairment processes. Bennett et al. (2018) are also in agreement with the findings who opined that employees provided with resources, rewards, and benefits experience higher levels of well-being. An interesting finding by Viitala et al. (2015) also suggests that workplace climate is more strongly connected with increased levels of well-being in employee well-being.

The results in Table 5b show a high F-value (109.088) and a significant p-value (0.000), indicating that the relationship between workplace climate and academic staff well-being is statistically significant. This further supports the finding that workplace climate significantly predicts well-being among academic staff at Makerere University. These findings are in congruence with the empirical studies of researchers such as Zábrodská, et al. (2014) who indicated that the workplace environment predicted a significant portion of the variance in burnout and stress. Rahim et al. (2020) also in line with the findings indicated that work-life balance for academic staff in Malaysian universities impacted their psychological well-being. Bell et al., (2012) are also in line with the findings that revealed that perceived job stress resulting from threat and pressure-type stressors predicted poorer work-life balance and ill-being. du Plessis' (2019) also agreed with the findings whose regression analysis revealed that occupation stressors that highly are a strong predictor of academic staff well-being. Also in line with the study findings was Lovainio et al. (2015) who revealed that stressful work environments led to decreasing employee well-being.

Conclusion
Conclusively, the study highlights the varying perspectives on the workplace climate, ranging from challenging to supportive and adaptable workplace climate. The high workload and administrative burdens pose challenges to maintaining work-life balance, leading to burnout and mental health issues. Strong emphasis was on providing adequate resources, clear communication, supportive colleagues, recognition, and feedback, as contributing to enhancing the well-being of academic staff. The findings reveal that academic staff's well-being is significantly influenced by the workplace climate. However, all dimensions of workplace climate need improvement since the level of disagreement with statements expressed in the affirmative was high (Table 2). These findings are vital for Makerere University and similar

institutions seeking to enhance the overall well-being of their academic staff, as they create a supportive and thriving environment for academic staff. The implications of this research extend to the broader context of higher education institutions, as nurturing a positive and conducive workplace environment is essential for attracting and retaining high-quality academic talent, which, in turn, contributes to the institution's ability to fulfil its educational mission and meet the dynamic needs of society. Future direction for research could delve deeper into specific interventions and strategies that can optimize workplace climate and consequently enhance academic staff well-being, ultimately benefiting the entire academic community and the pursuit of quality higher education.

Recommendations

The University management should prioritize work-life balance through effective workload management, put in place training programs that target academic staff needs, and create a supportive workplace environment to promote staff well-being.

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