

Illegitimate Tasks, Stress and Mental Health: A Study of the Correlates and Consequences of Toxic Workplaces

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Abstract

Employee well-being is greatly impacted by workplace dynamics, and one major stressor that contributes to psychological anguish is unlawful tasks. Illegitimate tasks—those deemed needless or irrational—violate workers' sense of justice and professional identity, which increases stress levels at work. This study investigates the relationship between stress, anxiety, depression, illegitimate tasks, and the more general idea of a toxic workplace. Since illegal tasks erode job satisfaction and foster sentiments of unfairness and resentment, they are closely linked to occupational stress. Illegitimate activities are also frequently a sign of a hostile workplace culture that includes bullying, a lack of transparency, bad leadership, and irrational demands. Because toxic workplaces promote unhealthy power dynamics, interpersonal disputes, and a lack of organizational support, they worsen the negative impacts of stressors. Workers in these settings may suffer from burnout, cognitive decline, and a higher risk of turnover and absenteeism. In addition to worsening mental health in individuals, the combined psychological toll of these issues lowers morale and productivity at work. Proactive organizational tactics, such as transparent task delegation, equitable workload sharing, and encouraging leadership, are needed to address these problems. Illegitimate tasks and toxic job conditions can be lessened with interventions including encouraging open communication, providing mental health supports, and cultivating a pleasant work culture. Future studies should look more closely at the psychological effects over the long run and consider practical ways to improve worker satisfaction and organizational viability.

Keywords: Illegitimate Tasks, Mental Health, Toxic Workplace.

Introduction

Workplace environments play a crucial role in shaping employees' mental health, productivity, and overall well-being. While positive and supportive workplaces enhance motivation and efficiency, toxic workplaces can severely impact psychological health, leading to stress, anxiety, and depression (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Among the many factors contributing to workplace toxicity, illegitimate tasks are particularly harmful as they undermine an employee's sense of competence and fairness, leading to negative emotional and psychological consequences (Semmer et al., 2015).

A toxic workplace is characterized by unhealthy organizational culture, poor management, excessive work pressure, lack of support, and unethical practices. Employees in toxic workplaces

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often experience undue criticism, discrimination, workplace bullying, and an overwhelming workload (Houshmand et al., 2012). One significant aspect of workplace toxicity is the assignment of illegitimate tasks—tasks that employees perceive as unreasonable, unfair, or beyond their role expectations. Illegitimate tasks violate norms of fairness and respect, making employees feel undervalued and misused (Eatough et al., 2016).

Illegitimate tasks are classified into two types: unnecessary and unreasonable tasks. Unnecessary tasks refer to assignments that lack purpose or efficiency, such as redundant paperwork or unnecessary meetings. Unreasonable tasks, on the other hand, go beyond the employee's role and responsibilities, such as requiring an IT professional to perform administrative work. When employees are forced to complete such tasks, they experience role conflict and a decline in job satisfaction, which can contribute to workplace stress and anxiety (Semmer et al., 2015).

Stress is a common outcome of toxic workplaces and illegitimate tasks. Employees who are subjected to unfair treatment, excessive workload, or non-standard responsibilities experience increased stress levels, which negatively impact their psychological and physical health (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Workplace stress manifests in various ways, including fatigue, irritability, lack of concentration, and burnout. Prolonged exposure to stress can lead to more severe mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression (Cooper et al., 2001).

Anxiety is another crucial mediator linking workplace conditions to depression. Employees facing toxic workplace environments and illegitimate tasks often feel overwhelmed, uncertain, and worried about their job security or performance (Huang et al., 2018). Chronic anxiety can reduce confidence, increase procrastination, and impair decision-making abilities. If anxiety is not managed effectively, it can lead to heightened emotional distress and withdrawal from work-related activities.

Depression is one of the most severe consequences of workplace toxicity, stress, and anxiety. Employees dealing with persistent stress and anxiety often feel helpless, unmotivated, and disconnected from their professional and personal lives (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). Symptoms of workplace-induced depression include loss of interest in work, reduced productivity, social withdrawal, and in extreme cases, suicidal thoughts. Organizations that fail to address these issues risk high employee turnover, decreased job performance, and long-term reputational damage (Cooper et al., 2001).

Understanding the correlation between illegitimate tasks, stress, anxiety, depression, and a toxic workplace is essential for organizations, employees, and policymakers. Workplace mental health is a growing concern, with research indicating its significant impact on employee well-being, productivity, and organizational outcomes (Sonnentag & Frese, 2018). Addressing these factors can lead to healthier workplaces, improved employee satisfaction, and better overall performance. Mental health issues arising from toxic workplaces, illegitimate tasks, and high-stress environments have been linked to decreased job satisfaction and increased burnout (Shirom, 2011). Employees subjected to undue stress and unfair work assignments often experience emotional exhaustion, detachment from work, and reduced motivation. Long-term exposure to workplace stressors increases the risk of developing anxiety disorders and depressive symptoms (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This highlights the need for organizations to create a supportive work culture that prioritizes employee mental health.

The negative effects of workplace toxicity and illegitimate tasks extend to organizational performance. Employees dealing with high levels of stress and anxiety exhibit lower engagement, creativity, and efficiency (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015). Increased absenteeism and high turnover rates are common in toxic work environments, leading to additional costs for recruitment and training

(Salanova et al., 2010). Organizations that fail to address these workplace challenges suffer from decreased overall productivity and long-term sustainability concerns.

Legal and ethical implications surrounding workplace mental health are gaining attention globally. Labor laws and corporate policies are increasingly emphasizing the importance of fair treatment, psychological safety, and well-being at work (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Organizations with a history of workplace toxicity and poor mental health management risk legal consequences, such as lawsuits, penalties, and damage to their public reputation. Ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility require organizations to implement fair job practices and promote a positive work environment.

Employers and policymakers play a crucial role in mitigating the adverse effects of illegitimate tasks and toxic workplaces. Implementing employee well-being programs, fostering transparent communication, and ensuring a balanced workload can significantly improve job satisfaction and mental health outcomes (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2014). By addressing workplace toxicity, organizations can enhance employee retention, improve performance, and create a more sustainable work culture.

Despite growing research on workplace stress, anxiety, and depression, limited studies have specifically examined the role of illegitimate tasks as a key contributing factor to workplace toxicity. Additionally, existing literature often focuses on general workplace stressors without exploring the cumulative impact of illegitimate tasks on mental health outcomes (Semmer et al., 2019). There is also a need for empirical studies linking these variables in diverse organizational settings to determine cultural and industry-specific differences (Kottwitz et al., 2020).

Workplace toxicity, stress, anxiety, and depression continue to rise, impacting employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Illegitimate tasks contribute significantly to stress and mental health issues, yet they remain an underexplored workplace phenomenon (Eatough et al., 2016). This research seeks to address the lack of studies on how illegitimate tasks contribute to stress, anxiety, and depression in a toxic work environment. Understanding this relationship can help develop interventions for improving employee well-being and workplace culture.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Illegitimate tasks are tasks that employees feel are unnecessary, irrelevant, or excessive in relation to their job responsibilities. These tasks fall outside the employee's primary duties and often create feelings of frustration, dissatisfaction, and stress. According to Scherer et al. (2019), when employees are asked to perform tasks that seem irrelevant to their role or unnecessary, it creates stress. This may lead to burnout and anxiety in the workplace (as noted by Barling et al., 2017) because these tasks are seen as additional burdens that interfere with more meaningful or productive work. The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model by Bakker & Demerouti (2007) explains that when employees are exposed to excessive demands—like illegitimate tasks—they are more likely to experience stress and burnout. Stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) further explains that stress arises when individuals feel they cannot cope with the demands placed upon them. If employees perceive their workload as excessive, particularly with tasks that don't seem relevant to their role, they are likely to feel stressed. This stress can then lead to more serious mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), especially in environments where workplace stress is exacerbated by a toxic workplace (an environment where negative behavior, poor relationships, or unhealthy dynamics thrive).

Hypothesis 1a: This hypothesis suggests that illegitimate tasks mediate the relationship between a toxic workplace and stress. In other words, a toxic workplace may increase stress through the creation of unnecessary or irrelevant tasks, which in turn heightens stress levels among employees. Anxiety is described as a heightened state of nervousness or worry, often triggered by stressors in the work environment (Sonnentag, 2018). When employees feel overwhelmed by illegitimate tasks, they tend to experience greater uncertainty and job insecurity, which can lead to anxiety. The Emotional Regulation Theory by Gross (2002) explains that individuals' coping mechanisms are crucial in dealing with anxiety. If employees lack effective coping strategies, they may experience increased anxiety, which in turn can exacerbate stress. Research shows that anxiety, when left unchecked, can lead to depression (Kessler et al., 2003), especially in individuals working in environments with high stress and negative workplace dynamics.

Hypothesis 1b: This hypothesis posits that anxiety mediates the relationship between stress and depression. Employees who are stressed due to illegitimate tasks or a toxic workplace may develop anxiety, which, if not addressed, could lead to depression.

While individual coping strategies are important, team cooperation in the workplace can significantly moderate the impact of illegitimate tasks on stress and anxiety. Team cooperation refers to the way colleagues work together, provide emotional support, and help each other cope with stressful situations. When employees are in a cooperative team environment, they may experience lower levels of stress and anxiety because the support from colleagues can help alleviate the burden of illegitimate tasks. In a toxic workplace, high levels of team cooperation can serve as a buffer, reducing the negative effects of stressors and preventing mental health issues like depression (Bakker et al., 2014). Team cooperation in the workplace plays a crucial role in reducing the negative effects of illegitimate tasks on stress and anxiety. When employees work together in a cooperative environment, they can share the workload, provide emotional support, and help each other cope with stressors, such as tasks they perceive as unnecessary or irrelevant to their role. This shared support system can alleviate feelings of isolation and overwhelm, making it easier for employees to manage stress. Even in toxic workplaces, where negative social dynamics can heighten stress, high levels of team cooperation can act as a buffer, preventing mental health issues like depression and reducing the overall impact of stressors. By offering practical help, emotional reassurance, and healthier coping mechanisms, team cooperation fosters resilience and helps mitigate the harmful effects of illegitimate tasks.

Hypothesis 2a: This hypothesis suggests that team cooperation moderates the relationship between illegitimate tasks and stress, meaning that employees working in teams with high cooperation will experience less stress from illegitimate tasks than those in low-cooperation teams.

Hypothesis 2b: This hypothesis states that team cooperation moderates the relationship between illegitimate tasks and anxiety, so that employees in high-cooperation teams will experience lower levels of anxiety from illegitimate tasks than those in low-cooperation teams.

The passage concludes by proposing a moderated mediation model that examines how illegitimate tasks influence stress, anxiety, and depression, and how team cooperation moderates these relationships. This model aims to understand the mechanisms that link illegitimate tasks to mental health outcomes, while considering the buffering role of team cooperation.

Hypothesis 3a: This hypothesis suggests that team cooperation moderates the indirect effect of illegitimate tasks on stress. The relationship between illegitimate tasks and stress is influenced by the level of team cooperation, where higher team cooperation reduces the effect of illegitimate tasks on stress.

Hypothesis 3b: This hypothesis extends the previous one, proposing that team cooperation moderates the indirect effect of illegitimate tasks on depression through stress. In other words, team cooperation not only affects stress but also how stress influences the likelihood of developing depression.

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

The blue-collar workers of Arvind Limited, a well-known textile firm, provided the study's data. In order to prevent frequent approach biases, the data was collected over a period of several months. We invited every employee of Arvind Limited, which had 326 total, to take part in the survey using every resource at our disposal. We gave paper questionnaires to every employee taking part in the survey with the assistance of supervisors and the HR team. 221 surveys, or a response rate of 67.8%, were utilized in the study after incomplete and irregular questionnaires were removed. Additional File 1 contains the questionnaire's items.

Table 1 displays the demographic data of the participants. Among these responders, 138 were women (62.4%) and 83 were men (37.6%). While 144 (65.2%) employees had more than three years of experience, none had more than ten years, and seventy-seven (34.8%) people had fewer than three years of experience in the textile sector.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

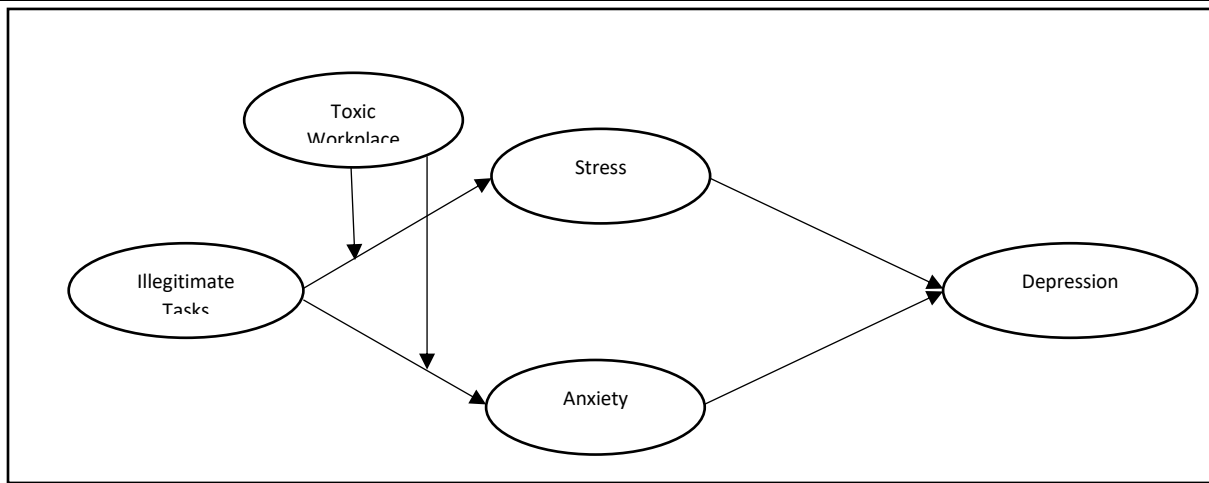


Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Variable	Category	N = 221	Percentage
Gender	Male	83	37.6%
	Female	138	62.4%
Experience in textile industry	< 3 years	77	34.8%
	> 3 years	144	65.2%
Income level	Below average industry wage	34	15.4%

In terms of income levels, 187 (84.6%) employees reported earnings above the average wage for blue-collar workers in the textile business, while 34 (15.4%) employees reported earnings below the industry average.

Measures

The Bern Illegitimate duties Scale (BITS), created by Semmer et al. (2010, 2015), assesses duties that workers believe are needless (ineffective or pointless) or unjustified (beyond their expected role). The scale, which is based on the Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) theory, evaluates the legality of occupational tasks using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = frequently). "Do you have to carry out tasks that you believe should be done by someone else?" is one example item. "Do you have to complete tasks that seem to have no real purpose?" and "Is it unreasonable?" (superfluous). According to research by Eatough et al. (2016), regularly carrying out illegal tasks has a detrimental effect on workplace well-being by raising stress levels and decreasing job satisfaction.

By measuring experiences of disrespectful and undermining actions, the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS), created by Cortina et al. (2001), is frequently used to gauge toxic workplace situations. The measure assesses how frequently workers experience unpleasant or dismissive behaviors at work and consists of items scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = very often). The question, "How often has someone at work ignored or excluded you during the past month?" is an example of a WIS item. According to research by Schilpzand et al. (2016), rudeness at work is associated with higher stress levels, lower job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates. This shows how negatively toxic work environments affect employees' performance and mental health.

A popular tool for determining the severity of generalized anxiety disorder is the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7). Seven items make up the GAD-7, and each one is scored on a 4-point Likert scale that goes from 0 ("Not at all") to 3 ("Nearly every day"). Over the course of the previous two weeks, participants are asked how frequently they have experienced certain anxiety-related symptoms. "Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge?" is an example of a scale item. Higher scores indicate more severe anxiety. The total score goes from 0 to 21.

An instrument that is frequently used to gauge the severity of depression is the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9). Nine items make up the PHQ-9, and each one is scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Not at all") to 3 ("Nearly every day"). Over the course of the last two weeks, respondents are asked to rate the frequency with which they have been disturbed by particular depressive symptoms. "Little interest or pleasure in doing things?" is an example item from the scale. More severe depression is indicated by higher total scores, which range from 0 to 27.

Result

Before examining the hypotheses, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity by using LISREL 8.80. Table 3 describes the results of confirmatory factor analysis. Our baseline model included illegitimate task, Depression, Anxiety, stress and toxic workplace. The five-factor model had an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 397.89$, $df = 136$, $p \leq .000$; RMSEA = 0.12, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.81). Additionally, all factor loadings were significant, indicating convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). We also compared different alternative four-factor models by randomly combining two variables (see Table 1). The five-factor model fit the data considerably better than all of the alternative four-factor models. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the constructs was confirmed, and all five constructs were applied in further analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and zero-order Pearson correlations of all the key variables. Results found that illegitimate task was positively related to anxiety ($r = 0.349$, $p < 0.010$), Stress ($r = 0.771$, $p < 0.010$), and Depression ($r = 0.432$, $p < 0.010$). In addition, both Anxiety ($r = 0.602$, $p < 0.010$) and Stress ($r = 0.740$, $p < 0.01$) were positively related to depression. These results initially support our hypothesis.

Table 2: Information about measured variables

Variable	Source	Sample item	Cronbach's alpha
Illegitimate Task	Cohen et al. (1997)	"I am asked to complete tasks that do not contribute to my work objectives."	0.78
Anxiety	Spielberger et al. (1970)	"I feel calm."	0.84
Stress	Cohen et al. (1983)	"In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?"	0.75
Depression	Aaron T. Beck in 1961	"I have lost interest in things I used to enjoy."	0.94
Toxic Workplace	Kaiser (2007)	"My supervisor creates an environment where people are afraid to speak up."	0.89

Table 3: Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Five-factor model	242.40		135	0.81	0.95	0.077
Four-factor model: combining Stress and Anxiety	759.05	492.61	120	0.82	0.82	0.19
Four-factor model: combining Stress and Depression	701.19	179.49	120	0.94	0.95	0.14
Four-factor model: combining Anxiety and Depression	740.99	219.55	120	0.87	0.86	0.15
Four-factor model: Toxic Workplace and Stress	1059.73	108.74	120	0.87	0.86	0.15
Four-factor model: Toxic Workplace and Anxiety	1000.35	55.48	120	0.81	0.86	0.15

Note: TLI Tucker-Lewis index, CFI comparative fit index, RMSEA root-mean-square error of approximation ** $p < 0.01$

Hypothesis Test

To evaluate our theories, we used hierarchical multiple regression analysis. We hypothesized in hypotheses 1a and 1b that the association between depression and illegitimate tasks is mediated by stress (H1b) and anxiety (H1a). We examine these theories using the methodology described by Baron and Kenny (1986): First, the criterion (depression) must be related to the predictor (illegitimate task); second, the predictor and mediator (stress and anxiety); third, the mediator and criteria must be related; and fourth, the predictor's impact on the criteria must be lessened once the mediator has been taken into account. Illegitimate tasks were positively associated with depression ($\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$, M7), anxiety ($\beta = 0.269$, $p \leq 0.001$, M1), and stress ($\beta = 0.536$, $p \leq 0.001$, M4), as seen in Table 2. Depression was positively correlated with anxiety ($\beta = 0.133$, $p < 0.050$) and anxiety ($\beta = 0.450$, $p \leq 0.001$). Illegitimate task did not substantially correlate with depression after adjusting for the two mediators ($\beta = 0.077$, n.s.). As a result, the association between

depression and illegitimate task was partially and completely mediated by anxiety and passion. As a result, H1a and H1b received backing. The association between illegal tasks and anxiety and depression is moderated by a hostile workplace, according to hypotheses 2a and 2b, respectively.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	MeanSD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	0.2760.481								
2. Income	3.0210.4550.279**								
3. Depression	2.5880.7980.152*								
4. Illegitimate Task	3.7720.6520.021								
5. Anxiety	3.8290.6550.01t7								
6. Stress	3.6910.6610.045								
7. Depression	3.0000.6610.142*								
8. Toxic workplace	3.0000.957-0.116								

Note: Cronbach's alpha appears along the diagonal in the brackets. Gender is coded "0" = female, "1" = male

Discussion

Workplace well-being is a critical factor in employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall mental health. However, various workplace stressors contribute to employee distress, including illegitimate tasks—tasks that violate norms of role expectations and are perceived as unnecessary or unreasonable. Illegitimate tasks, a concept from the Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) theory, are linked to adverse psychological outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, their prevalence can indicate or contribute to a toxic workplace culture, exacerbating employee dissatisfaction and turnover. This discussion explores the correlation between illegitimate tasks and these psychological stressors, emphasizing their impact on workplace toxicity.

Illegitimate tasks are categorized into two types: unnecessary tasks and unreasonable tasks. Unnecessary tasks refer to assignments that serve no clear purpose, such as redundant paperwork or excessive reporting requirements. Unreasonable tasks, on the other hand, fall outside an employee's job description and are perceived as unfair, such as a highly skilled employee being asked to perform menial and engagement within the organization.

Table 5 Results of hierarchical regression analyses

	Anxiety		Stress			Depression		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Control variables	– 0.016	0.007	0.003	0.018	0.043	0.062	0.088	0.087
Gender								
GPA	0.002	– 0.018	– 0.039	0.108*	0.096	0.176	0.038	– 0.020
Intention	0.158*	0.167*	0.186**	0.278***	0.255***	0.082***	0.409***	0.283***
Independent variables	0.270***	0.185**	0.192**	0.546***	0.493***	0.450***	0.358***	0.087
Illegitimate task								
Moderator		0.284***	0.273***		0.187***	0.291***		
Toxic workplace								
Interaction			0.193*			0.152***		
Illegitimate task × toxic workplace								
Mediator								0.134*
Anxiety								
Stress								0.450***
R2	0.146	0.197	0.243	0.531	0.439	0.567	0.852	0.691
ΔR2	0.057***	0.053***	0.086**	0.237***	0.048***	0.026***	0.295***	0.158***

Illegitimate tasks contribute to increased stress levels as they add to employees' workloads without contributing meaningfully to their professional growth or job performance. Stress arises when employees feel their skills are underutilized or when they experience time constraints due to excessive nonessential work. Chronic exposure to stress due to illegitimate tasks can lead to burnout, fatigue, and reduced overall performance. Employees subjected to illegitimate tasks may experience heightened anxiety due to uncertainty regarding their roles and expectations. The perceived injustice of being assigned such tasks can lead to constant worry about job security and performance evaluations. Anxiety can also stem from the pressure to complete illegitimate tasks alongside their actual responsibilities, leading to cognitive overload and emotional exhaustion. The prolonged exposure to stress and anxiety resulting from illegitimate tasks can increase the risk of depression. Employees who feel undervalued, disrespected, or burdened by irrelevant tasks may experience feelings of worthlessness and despair. This can lead to disengagement, absenteeism, and even long-term mental health struggles.

A toxic workplace is characterized by poor communication, lack of respect, and a culture of blame and exploitation. Illegitimate tasks are often a symptom of a toxic work environment, as they reflect poor leadership, inefficiency, and a disregard for employee well-being. Several workplace dynamics reinforce this connection. Toxic leaders may assign illegitimate tasks as a means of asserting control, undermining employees, or masking managerial incompetence. Poor delegation skills and a lack of empathy often result in unfair work distribution, where employees are burdened with tasks that do not align with their roles. Organizations with unclear job roles, redundant processes, or a culture of micromanagement often generate illegitimate tasks. These inefficiencies not only frustrate employees but also lead to resentment and disengagement. Employees in such

environments may feel their time is wasted on menial, non-value-adding work, diminishing their sense of purpose and motivation. When illegitimate tasks become a norm, they contribute to low morale, as employees feel unappreciated and misused. This dissatisfaction can lead to high turnover rates, as employees seek healthier work environments that recognize their skills and contributions. Organizations that fail to address the issue may suffer from decreased productivity, reputational damage, and difficulty attracting top talent.

To foster a healthier work environment and minimize the impact of illegitimate tasks, organizations should implement the following strategies. Defining job roles and expectations can help prevent employees from being assigned irrelevant tasks. Organizations should ensure that employees' responsibilities align with their skills, experience, and job descriptions. Leaders should be trained in effective delegation, empathy, and transparency. Open communication channels can allow employees to express concerns about their workload and role expectations, reducing misunderstandings and resentment. Giving employees more control over their tasks and work schedules can help mitigate the negative effects of illegitimate tasks. Autonomy fosters engagement and a sense of ownership, making employees more resilient to workplace stressors. Organizations should implement efficient task allocation systems to ensure that work is distributed fairly. Periodic workload assessments can help identify and eliminate unnecessary tasks, enhancing efficiency and reducing stress. Encouraging a culture of respect, recognition, and fairness can improve employee satisfaction and mental well-being. Organizations should foster an environment where employees feel valued for their contributions rather than burdened with non-essential tasks.

Illegitimate tasks are a significant workplace stressor that contributes to stress, anxiety, depression, and toxic work environments. By understanding the correlation between these factors, organizations can take proactive steps to mitigate their impact and foster a healthier, more productive work culture. Clear job roles, effective leadership, employee empowerment, and efficient workload management are essential strategies to minimize the prevalence of illegitimate tasks and their detrimental effects. Addressing this issue not only improves employee well-being but also enhances organizational success and sustainability.

Illegitimate tasks are a significant workplace stressor that contributes to stress, anxiety, depression, and toxic work environments. By understanding the correlation between these factors, organizations can take proactive steps to mitigate their impact and foster a healthier, more productive work culture. Clear job roles, effective leadership, employee empowerment, and efficient workload management are essential strategies to minimize the prevalence of illegitimate tasks and their detrimental effects. Addressing this issue not only improves employee well-being but also enhances organizational success and sustainability. The detrimental effects of illegitimate tasks extend beyond individual employees and affect overall workplace dynamics. Organizations that allow such practices to persist risk fostering a negative environment where dissatisfaction, disengagement, and high turnover become the norm. Conversely, proactive measures to eliminate illegitimate tasks can create a positive work atmosphere, boost employee morale, and improve long-term productivity. Companies must recognize the importance of fostering a supportive and fair workplace culture, where employees feel respected, valued, and capable of fulfilling their professional roles effectively. Through conscious efforts to address workplace inefficiencies and ensure just task delegation, businesses can cultivate an environment that promotes mental well-being and organizational success.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

There are numerous limitations to this study on the relationship between unlawful duties, stress, anxiety, depression, and a toxic workplace in India's Arvind Textile Industry. First, the study uses self-reported data, which might be biased by things like recollection errors or social desirability. Second, the findings may not be as broadly applicable as they may be because the sample size does not accurately reflect the industry's varied workforce. Third, although not thoroughly investigated in this study, outside variables like individual circumstances, prevailing economic conditions, and corporate policies may also have an impact on stress and mental health. Furthermore, it is unable to demonstrate causality between variables due to the cross-sectional design.

To better understand the long-term effects of unlawful activities on employees' mental health, longitudinal studies should be carried out in future study. The study's generalizability might be enhanced by extending it to several textile industries in India. Furthermore, qualitative information obtained from focus groups or interviews may offer more in-depth viewpoints on workers' experiences. Future research might also look into intervention techniques that lessen workplace stress and support mental health, providing useful answers for businesses looking to boost worker happiness and output.

Conclusion

Employee productivity, job happiness, and general mental health are all significantly impacted by workplace well-being. However, unlawful tasks and other working stresses are major contributors to employee misery. Illegitimate tasks are viewed as needless or irrational, and they go against role expectations. Such tasks have negative psychological repercussions, such as tension, anxiety, and sadness, according to the tension-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) theory. Additionally, they fuel discontent, low morale, and high turnover rates by creating toxic work environments. Unnecessary and unreasonable duties are the two types of illegal tasks. While unreasonable tasks—like giving highly skilled individuals menial work—fall outside of their job description, unnecessary tasks—like needless paperwork—serve no purpose.

Illegitimate task add to workloads without fostering professional development, which raises stress levels. Uncertain positions, unequal task distribution, and heavy workloads cause worry in workers, which eventually results in emotional weariness. Long-term exposure to these stressors increases the risk of depression and makes workers feel demotivated, disengaged, and underappreciated.

Illegitimate tasks frequently lead to a toxic workplace, which is a reflection of ineffective management, bad leadership, and a lack of appreciation for the efforts of employees. To reduce these detrimental effects, organizations should create clear work roles, enhance delegation, and encourage equity. Employee well-being and organizational success can be improved by establishing a more enjoyable and productive work environment through the implementation of organized policies, encouraging open communication, and making sure that tasks are distributed fairly.

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