



## The Influence of Job Autonomy and Corporate Ethics on the Psychological Well-Being of Health Workers in Makurdi

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### Abstract

*This study examined the influence of job autonomy and corporate ethics on the psychological well-being of health workers in Makurdi, Benue State. Psychological well-being is a critical factor in the effectiveness and sustainability of healthcare delivery, making it important to understand organizational factors that may enhance or hinder it. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from a total of 197 health workers, comprising 106 males and 91 females, aged between 26 and 60 years, with a mean age of 43 years. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Three standardized instruments were used for data collection: the Job Autonomy Scale, the Corporate Ethics Scale, and the Psychological Well-Being Scale. Data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that job autonomy did not have a significant independent influence*



*on the psychological well-being of health workers, leading to the rejection of the first hypothesis. However, corporate ethics had a significant influence on psychological well-being, resulting in the acceptance of the second hypothesis. Additionally, the results indicated that job autonomy and corporate ethics jointly influenced the psychological well-being of health workers. This suggests that while job autonomy alone may not significantly predict psychological well-being, its interaction with strong corporate ethical practices can enhance employees' mental and emotional health. Based on these findings, the study recommends that healthcare organizations prioritize ethical standards and supportive work environments to promote the psychological well-being of their workforce. Suggestions for further research were also provided.*

**Keywords:** Job Autonomy, Corporate Ethics, Psychological Well-Being, Health Workers, Organizational Behavior.

### **Introduction**

In Nigeria, more than 15 million people are engaged in paid employment (Jones & Lowndes, 2010). Over the years, organizations have focused more on protecting employees' physical health, while less attention has been given to their psychological well-being. Until recently, many employers did not clearly understand their role in managing workers' mental health, and there was little guidance on good workplace mental health practices (Winefield et al., 2012). Previous studies have shown that employee productivity is influenced by psychological factors such as thoughts, feelings, and behavior at work. Employees with high psychological well-being often feel happy, supported, confident, and satisfied with their lives. High well-being has also been linked to better physical health and improved work outcomes (Winefield et al., 2012). Research has shown that psychological well-being is important for creativity, innovation, job engagement, and a sense of achievement in organizations (Wright, 2010).

The concept of psychological well-being dates back to early studies such as the Hawthorne experiments, which examined how work conditions affect employee performance. More recent studies suggest that psychological well-being can predict future job performance, although some researchers argue that the exact relationship is still not fully understood (Schepers, 2008).

Organizational structure also plays an important role in employee well-being and performance. When employees experience poor psychological health, productivity often decreases. However, employees with high psychological well-being tend to perform better at work. Changes in work structure and job roles can create stress for employees, making it important to understand how workplace factors affect well-being. Employees with high well-being are generally more productive and healthier than those with low well-being (Ryff, 2014). They show positive attitudes, handle challenges better, and are more engaged in their work (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In contrast, employees with low well-being may feel threatened by change and respond negatively to work situations.

One important factor linked to psychological well-being is job autonomy. Job autonomy refers to the level of freedom and control employees have in deciding how and when to do their work. Studies have shown that low job autonomy is associated with mental health problems, sickness absence, job turnover, and stress-related illnesses (Theorell et al., 2015; Madsen et al., 2017). When employees are given more autonomy, they are better able to cope with job demands and stress. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JDR) model, job autonomy is a valuable work resource that helps reduce stress, improve performance, and promote personal growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Research consistently shows that higher job autonomy is linked to better psychological well-being (Thompson & Prottas, 2006; Sheldon et al., 2005).

Another important factor affecting employee well-being is corporate ethics. Corporate ethics refers to the values and standards that guide what is right or wrong in an organization. Ethical practices such as honesty, fairness, and respect help create a positive work environment. Unethical practices like bribery, theft, and rule violations can damage employee well-being and organizational performance (Ferrell et al., 2005). Studies have shown that strong ethical climates reduce employee stress, turnover



intentions, and low psychological well-being (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Pettijohn et al., 2008). Ethical leadership also improves job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity while reducing misconduct and workplace conflict (Jurkiewicz, 2012).

On the other hand, unethical behavior in organizations can negatively affect employees' mental, emotional, and physical health. Such practices can lead to feelings of injustice, harassment, bullying, and lack of respect at work (Giacalone et al., 2016). Leaders play a key role in shaping ethical behavior by setting good examples and promoting ethical decision-making. Both job autonomy and corporate ethics are important organizational factors that can influence employees' psychological well-being. Since health workers face high job demands and stress, it is important to understand how these factors affect their well-being. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of job autonomy and corporate ethics on the psychological well-being of health workers in Uyo.

Research has shown that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices generally lead to positive organizational outcomes (Jackson, Schuler, & Jiang, 2014). However, some HR practices can create tension between improving organizational performance and supporting employees' psychological well-being. For example, an emphasis on high-performance work systems often increases work pressure and job demands, which can negatively affect employees' mental health (Aryee & Seidu, 2012; Combs et al., 2006). Several workplace practices have been found to harm employees' psychological well-being, leading to low productivity, high turnover intentions, and poor health outcomes. One major factor is the lack of job autonomy. Employees who have little control over their work are more likely to experience high stress levels. Jobs where workers feel controlled or powerless have been linked to serious health problems such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and cardiovascular issues (Otake, 2012). Low job autonomy is also associated with reduced work enthusiasm, dissatisfaction, and increased conflict among employees.

Workplace stress, often referred to as job burnout, involves physical and emotional exhaustion caused by poor working conditions. Common causes include lack of control over work, unhealthy workplace relationships, bullying, work overload, monotonous tasks, and poor work-life balance. Studies have reported high levels of



psychological distress among workers globally, including in Africa and Nigeria, with prevalence rates ranging from moderate to very high (Lia, 2020). Research further indicates that allowing employees some freedom in decision-making reduces absenteeism and improves job performance, while rigid control increases health risks and turnover intentions (Walumbwa, 2012). Organizations with strict and inflexible rules often limit employee growth, resulting in low job involvement and higher turnover. Poor management practices, micromanagement, and unethical workplace environments also contribute to negative employee behaviors and dissatisfaction.

Based on these issues, this study aims to examine the individual and joint influence of job autonomy and corporate ethics on the psychological well-being of employees.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of job autonomy and corporate ethics on the psychological well-being of health workers. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the factors responsible for low job autonomy in the workplace and how they affect the psychological well-being of employees.
- ii. Determine the role of job autonomy and corporate ethics in promoting psychological well-being among health workers.
- iii. Identify strategies and interventions that can help reduce psychological problems among employees, which often lead to low productivity, turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behaviors.
- iv. Create awareness among employers and human resource managers about the negative effects of an unfavorable workplace climate on employees' psychological well-being and organizational productivity.
- v. Suggest measures that can help employees protect and maintain good mental health despite workplace stress and challenges.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Job Autonomy**

Self-Determination Theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005)

Self-determination theory explains how autonomy influences motivation and behavior in the workplace. According to this theory, employees are more motivated and perform better when they feel they have control over their work and can carry out tasks in their own way (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The theory identifies three basic psychological needs that must be satisfied for individuals to function effectively: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci et al., 2000). Among these needs, autonomy plays a central role. When employees perceive their jobs as autonomous, they experience a stronger sense of self-determination. This feeling increases their internal motivation and encourages positive work attitudes, commitment, and improved performance. Autonomy allows employees to decide how to organize their work, manage their time, and choose work methods, which supports personal growth and self-development.

First, high job autonomy enables employees to feel responsible for their work, increasing intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm. As a result, employees become more proactive and are more likely to generate ideas that benefit both themselves and the organization. Second, autonomy gives employees flexibility to reflect on their work, adjust strategies, and set personal development goals. Third, job autonomy promotes creativity and innovation by allowing employees to explore new ways of performing tasks. Finally, autonomy encourages communication and information sharing among colleagues, which helps employees learn from others and improve their skills. Intrinsic motivation plays a key role in how job autonomy leads to self-development. Employees with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to take advantage of the freedom provided by autonomy and invest effort in personal and professional growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Therefore, even when employees have similar levels of autonomy, differences in intrinsic motivation can lead to different outcomes.

In highly autonomous work environments, employees feel empowered and confident, leading to positive and proactive behaviors (Deci, 2001). Team-related factors, such



as team connectivity, can further strengthen these effects by enhancing employees' sense of self-determination and motivation.

## **Review of Cooperate Ethics**

### **Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1942)**

Cognitive Dissonance Theory, proposed by Festinger (1942), explains how individuals experience psychological discomfort when there is a conflict between their beliefs, values, attitudes, and actual experiences. According to the theory, people naturally seek consistency in their thoughts and actions. When inconsistency or conflict occurs, it creates a state of mental tension known as cognitive dissonance. Individuals are then motivated to reduce this discomfort by changing their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. In the workplace, cognitive dissonance often arises when employees' personal values do not align with organizational practices or expectations. For example, employees who value fairness and honesty may experience psychological discomfort when working in organizations that tolerate unethical practices or unfair treatment. This mismatch between personal values and workplace realities can lead to emotional stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced psychological well-being.

Festinger's theory suggests that employees may attempt to reduce dissonance in several ways. Some may adjust their attitudes by lowering their expectations or justifying the organization's behavior. Others may change their behavior by reducing work effort, withdrawing emotionally, or showing low job satisfaction. In more extreme cases, employees may leave the organization entirely to restore psychological balance. Research has shown that changes in leadership style or organizational culture can also increase cognitive dissonance among employees. Morieux and Sutherland (1988) noted that conflicts often arise when new management introduces values or working methods that clash with existing organizational culture. Such conflicts can increase stress and reduce job satisfaction among employees. Similarly, studies have found that employees who experience value conflicts at work report higher stress levels and lower satisfaction (Koh & Boo, 2001; Viswesvaran et al., 1998).

In relation to this study, cognitive dissonance theory helps explain how low job autonomy and unethical organizational practices can create psychological conflict for



employees. When health workers are unable to act in line with their professional values or lack control over their work, they may experience dissonance, leading to poor psychological well-being and negative work outcomes.

### **Review of psychological well-being**

#### **Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000)**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation, personality development, and psychological well-being. Developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), the theory emphasizes the conditions that support or undermine human flourishing, psychological growth, and engagement. SDT assumes that humans are inherently active, curious, and socially connected, with an innate desire to learn, grow, and develop meaningful relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The theory focuses on the social and environmental factors that enhance or hinder these natural tendencies.

**Autonomy:** **Autonomy** refers to the need to feel that one is the origin of one's own actions and decisions. In the workplace, autonomy allows employees to have control over how they complete tasks, make decisions, and organize their work. When employees perceive autonomy, they feel empowered, responsible for their actions, and intrinsically motivated to perform well (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy is not about being free from structure or accountability but rather having the freedom to choose how to act within a supportive framework. Research shows that autonomy at work leads to higher engagement, creativity, and job satisfaction. Employees with autonomy are more likely to take initiative, develop innovative solutions, and pursue professional growth. Conversely, low autonomy can lead to stress, burnout, dissatisfaction, and disengagement, as employees feel controlled and restricted (Ryan et al., 2006).



**Competence:** **Competence** is the need to feel effective and capable in one's actions. It involves having the skills, knowledge, and resources to successfully complete tasks and achieve goals. In the workplace, competence is fostered through training, feedback, and opportunities to learn and apply new skills. When employees feel competent, they experience confidence, satisfaction, and motivation to tackle challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Lack of competence can create feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and helplessness, negatively affecting psychological well-being. For example, employees who are poorly trained or unsupported may feel overwhelmed by work demands, leading to stress and low productivity. Supporting competence is therefore essential for both employee development and organizational effectiveness.

**Relatedness:** **Relatedness** refers to the need to feel connected to others, to belong, and to experience meaningful relationships. In the workplace, this is expressed through supportive colleagues, positive team dynamics, and constructive relationships with supervisors. When employees feel connected and valued, they are more likely to cooperate, share knowledge, and remain engaged (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A lack of relatedness can result in feelings of isolation, disengagement, and decreased job satisfaction. Workplace practices that encourage collaboration, social support, and recognition help satisfy this need, improving both individual well-being and overall organizational performance.

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Intrinsic motivation is the natural drive to seek out challenges, learn, and engage in meaningful activities for their own sake rather than for external rewards. SDT emphasizes that intrinsic motivation is strongest when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. Employees who are intrinsically motivated are more creative, persistent, and proactive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation differs from extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards such as pay, promotions, or recognition. While extrinsic factors can influence behavior, research shows that sustainable engagement, satisfaction, and well-being are most strongly associated with intrinsic motivation.

**Internalization: Individuals adopt external values, norms, or behaviors and integrate them into their own belief system through this process.** In the workplace, internalization allows employees to align personal and organizational goals, leading to more authentic engagement and commitment. For example, when employees internalize the organization's ethical values, they are more likely to act in accordance with these principles even without supervision. Internalization is influenced by the social environment. Supportive leadership, ethical organizational culture, and opportunities for participation enhance internalization, whereas controlling, unethical, or unsupportive environments can hinder it, reducing motivation and psychological well-being.

**Need Satisfaction and Well-Being:** SDT proposes that psychological well-being depends on the satisfaction of the three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are supported in the workplace, employees experience higher vitality, engagement, motivation, and overall well-being. On the other hand, the **frustration or thwarting** of these needs leads to diminished self-motivation, stress, disengagement, and even the development of psychological disorders (Ryan et al., 2006). Need satisfaction not only influences individual well-being but also drives organizational outcomes such as productivity, creativity, retention, and job satisfaction. Conversely, unmet needs and frustration can contribute to absenteeism, turnover, and low organizational commitment.

**Application to Workplace Context:** In the context of health workers, SDT suggests that providing job autonomy, opportunities to develop competence, and fostering supportive relationships can significantly enhance psychological well-being. Employees who feel their basic psychological needs are met are more likely to exhibit motivation, commitment, and proactive behavior. Conversely, workplaces that restrict autonomy, undermine competence, or lack ethical and social support can trigger stress, burnout, and reduced organizational performance.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Job Autonomy**

Job autonomy refers to the degree of freedom and discretion employees have in planning, organizing, and executing their work (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). While traditional views associate autonomy with independence, **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** conceptualizes autonomy as interdependence, where employees regulate their own actions while aligning with organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy-supportive environments enhance employees' intrinsic motivation, engagement, and self-development, even in low-skilled or routine jobs (Nie et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2014).

Job autonomy allows employees to allocate time and resources, choose working methods, innovate, and reflect on their performance, thereby fostering personal and professional growth (Deci et al., 2000). Greater autonomy has been associated with higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved psychological well-being, although excessive responsibility or unclear expectations may sometimes lead to anxiety and decreased productivity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Adebayo & Ezeanya, 2010). From an occupational health perspective, job autonomy is considered a key psychosocial factor influencing workplace stress and employee health (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2010; Leka & Cox, 2010). High-autonomy roles, when combined with appropriate resources and support, promote mental health, reduce absenteeism, and improve organizational performance (Hausser et al., 2010; Bakker et al., 2010).

### **Work Ethics**

Work ethics represent a set of principles and standards that guide behavior in the workplace, emphasizing honesty, diligence, and responsibility (Faramrz-Qarmalak, 2011; Shabanibaha et al., 2018). It is a cultural norm that values doing the right thing and recognizes the intrinsic value of work (Yankelovich, 2009). In Islamic work ethics, principles such as avoiding laziness, performing legitimate and beneficial work, and practicing altruism are emphasized (Ali et al., 2007). Organizational ethics, or corporate ethics, guide decisions about right and wrong within a professional context and play a vital role in shaping employee behavior and organizational culture (Ponder

& Golob, 2007; Vuontisjarvi, 2006). Effective ethics programs strengthen teamwork, increase productivity, foster employee growth, align behavior with organizational priorities, and enhance organizational reputation (Gholami, 2007).

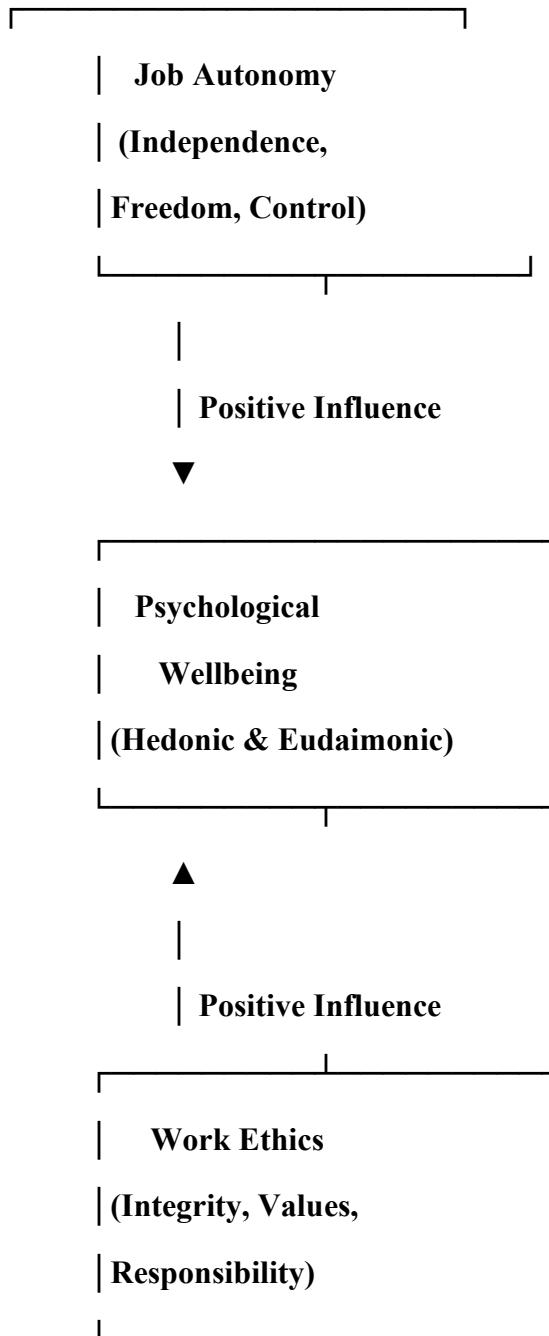
Work ethics are shaped by both community culture and professional knowledge, meaning ethical standards vary across societies and professions (Asadi, 2010). Senior management plays a key role in internalizing ethical behavior among employees. Reinforcement of ethical actions encourages staff to adopt moral values as intrinsic principles, which positively influences psychological well-being (Hermes, 2016; Taghvaei, 2016; Alinajafi, 2014).

### **Psychological Well-Being (PWB)**

Psychological well-being (PWB) encompasses both hedonic well-being, which relates to positive emotions and satisfaction, and eudaimonic well-being, which reflects meaningful functioning and self-realization (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Guest, 2017). Employees with higher PWB tend to be healthier, more satisfied, and more productive, while those with lower PWB may experience stress, pessimism, and reduced work capacity (Cartwright & Cooper, 2008; Ryff, 2014). Research highlights several antecedents of PWB in the workplace, including leadership style (Arnold, 2017; Rahimnia & Sharifirad, 2015), organizational support (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009), meaningful work (Arnold & Walsh, 2015), HR practices (Baluch, 2017), and emotional intelligence (Carmeli et al., 2009). Positive PWB improves flexibility, creativity, engagement, and resilience while also contributing to longer life, better health, and higher overall life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

Organizations that invest in employee PWB benefit from improved performance, productivity, loyalty, and reduced turnover. Employees also experience increased optimism, efficacy, resilience, and life satisfaction, demonstrating that well-being is a critical factor for both organizational and personal success (Guest, 2017; Robertson & Cooper, 2009).

## Conceptual Diagram





### **Interpretation:**

- i. **Job Autonomy PWB:** Encourages self-motivation, creativity, and engagement.
- ii. **Work Ethics PWB:** Promotes fairness, responsibility, and a supportive culture.
- iii. **Combined Effect:** Both together enhance employee well-being and organizational performance.

### **Empirical Review**

#### *Job Autonomy and Psychological Well-Being*

Research consistently demonstrates that job autonomy positively influences employees' psychological well-being. When employees have control over the nature and execution of their tasks, they tend to experience improved relationships with colleagues and higher overall job satisfaction, which contributes to enhanced well-being (Boxall & Macky, 2014). Similarly, autonomy in scheduling and time management, allowing employees to determine the start and end of their work hours, is associated with reduced stress and improved psychological health (Nijp et al., 2012). Petrou et al. (2012), through a five-day diary study, found that employees with greater job autonomy report higher levels of well-being, supported by findings from Wheatley (2017) and Sheldon et al. (2005). Self-determination theory explains that autonomy satisfies a fundamental psychological need, fostering intrinsic motivation and positive mental health outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Keyes, 2007).

However, high autonomy can also create challenges. Excessive freedom may lead to role ambiguity or increased demands, potentially reducing well-being, particularly in knowledge-intensive roles (Sorensen et al., 2007; Vaananen & Toivanen, 2018). Workers in low-skilled positions, with limited control over tasks, often face higher levels of alienation, fatigue, and reduced job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of balancing autonomy with structured support (Marmost, 2005; de Jonge et al., 2000; Pelfrene et al., 2002).

#### *Work Ethics and Psychological Well-Being*

Employees' perceptions of organizational ethics significantly affect their psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall health (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006). Ethical work practices encompassing fairness, honesty, and integrity create a positive work

environment, reduce absenteeism, and enhance employee engagement (Peterson & Wilson, 2002). Empirical studies indicate that ethical behavior in the workplace improves well-being. For instance, Ajala (2013) reported that employees who experience meaningful work, interconnectedness, and purpose demonstrate higher psychological well-being and reduced stress. Similarly, Alam and Rizvi (2012) found that public sector employees, often subject to structured ethical frameworks, report higher well-being than private sector employees. Baptiste (2008) emphasized that supportive management and trust between employees and supervisors positively influence employee well-being, independent of formal HR practices.

Conversely, unethical organizational practices negatively impact employee well-being, with effects extending to family, peers, and the wider organizational climate. Such practices are associated with psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and increased incidences of workplace injustice, harassment, and bullying (Giacalone et al., 2016; Jurkiewicz, 2016). Research also highlights the role of ethical leadership in fostering well-being. Leaders who model ethical behavior and clearly communicate expectations enhance employees' psychological empowerment and engagement (Zhu, 2008). Supervisors influence subordinate behavior through their management of work demands and provision of social support, thereby shaping overall well-being (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004; Harris & Kacmar, 2006; Liu et al., 2010). Chughtai et al. (2015) found that ethical leadership significantly enhances employees' work engagement and reduces emotional exhaustion, demonstrating the positive link between ethical conduct and psychological health.

Despite substantial research on the separate effects of job autonomy and work ethics on psychological well-being, few studies have examined their interaction effects. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding how these factors jointly influence employee well-being and organizational outcomes.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires administered to health workers. This design was



considered appropriate because it allows for the assessment of relationships among variables within a defined population at a single point in time.

### **Study Setting**

The study was conducted in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Participants were drawn from three public health facilities: Federal Medical Center, Makurdi; Benue State University Teaching Hospital; and Madonna Hospital, Makurdi. These hospitals were randomly selected from a list of twelve public and private hospitals within Makurdi.

### **Participants and Sampling**

A total of 197 health workers participated in the study, comprising 106 males and 91 females. Participants' ages ranged from 26 to 60 years ( $M = 43$  years). Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their status as health workers in the selected hospitals. The hospitals were selected using simple random sampling.

### **Instruments**

Three validated instruments were used for data collection:

#### *Job Autonomy Scale*

Job autonomy was measured using the Job Autonomy Scale developed by Breugh (1985). The scale consists of nine items measuring three dimensions: work method autonomy, work schedule autonomy, and work criteria autonomy. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The scale demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. Previous Nigerian studies have also reported strong reliability for this instrument.

#### *Corporate Ethics Scale*

Corporate ethics was assessed using the Corporate Ethics Scale developed by DeBode et al. (2008). The scale comprises 13 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94. Prior use of the scale in Nigerian studies further supports its reliability and validity.

### *Psychological Well-Being Scale*

Psychological well-being was measured using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff and Keyes (1995). The scale assesses six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relations, and purpose in life. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale recorded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88, indicating high internal consistency.

### Procedure

Ethical approval and institutional permission were obtained prior to data collection. Participants were provided with informed consent forms explaining the purpose of the study and assuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. With the assistance of trained research assistants, questionnaires were administered and retrieved on-site. Only properly completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis, yielding a total sample of 197 respondents.

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a  $2 \times 2$  Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for unequal sample sizes. This statistical technique was used to examine the main and interaction effects of job autonomy and corporate ethics on psychological well-being.

### Result

**Table 1: Mean and frequencies showing differences in demographic factors on psychological well-being among participants (N = 197)**

Variables	N	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender				
Male	106	53.8	46.1	6.9
Female	91	46.2	45.2	5.7
Total	197	100.0	45.7	6.4

**Educational**

**Qualification**

NCE	70	26.6	43.9	6.9
HND	17	3.6	51.4	3.6
B.SC	27	17.2	47.7	5.7
MSC	83	41.1	45.3	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>

**Years of Services**

1-3 years	65	33.0	46.9	6.2
4-6 years	79	40.1	43.3	6.6
7-9 years	40	20.3	48.1	5.6
10 years and above	13	6.6	47.0	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>

**Marital Status**

Single	39	19.8	44.2	6.7
Married	158	80.2	46.0	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>45,7</b>	<b>6.4</b>

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 1** presents the demographic characteristics of the participants and their mean psychological well-being scores across gender, educational qualification, years of service, and marital status.

**Table 2: Summary of mean and standard deviation score of age of participants on psychological well-being**

Age Group	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard Error of Mean
Below 30	45.16	6.47	1.49
31-40	41.52	6.28	1.17
41-50	46.56	5.92	0.59
51-60	46.36	6.74	1.02
61 and above	47.83	3.92	1.60

**Table 2** presents the mean psychological well-being scores across age groups. Participants aged 61 years and above recorded the highest mean score, while those aged 31–40 years reported the lowest mean psychological well-being. Overall, psychological well-being tended to be higher among older age groups compared to younger participants.

**Table 3: Zero-order correlations among job autonomy, corporate ethics, and psychological well-being**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Job autonomy (JOB AUT)	—	0.24**	-0.15*
2. Corporate ethics (CORPE)	0.24**	—	0.63**
3. Psychological wellbeing (PSYCWELB)	-0.15*	0.63**	—

**Note.** \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

As shown in Table 3, job autonomy was **positively correlated** with corporate ethics,  $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < .01$ . Job autonomy was **negatively correlated** with psychological well-being,  $r = -0.15$ ,  $p < .05$ . Corporate ethics was **positively correlated** with psychological well-being,  $r = 0.63$ ,  $p < .01$ .

**Table 4:** Multiple regression predicting psychological well-being from job autonomy and corporate ethics

Predictor	B	t	p
Job autonomy	-0.002	-0.042	> .05
Corporate ethics	0.635	11.103	< .01

**Model summary:**

$R = 0.634, R^2 = 0.402, F(2, N - 2) = 65.237, p < .01$

**Note.** N = 197 Outcome variable: Psychological wellbeing. Predictors: Job autonomy and corporate ethics.

Description: A multiple regression was conducted to examine the effect of job autonomy and corporate ethics on psychological well-being. The overall model was significant,  $F(2, N - 2) = 65.24, p < .01$ , explaining 40.2% of the variance in psychological well-being ( $R = 0.634, R^2 = 0.402$ ). Individually, corporate ethics was a significant positive predictor of psychological well-being ( $B = 0.635, t = 11.10, p < .01$ ), whereas job autonomy was not a significant predictor ( $B = -0.002, t = -0.042, p > .05$ ).

**Results**

**Hypothesis 1: Job autonomy and psychological well-being**

As shown in Table 3, job autonomy was negatively correlated with psychological well-being ( $r = -0.15, p < .05$ ), suggesting a small inverse relationship. However, regression analysis in Table 4 indicated that job autonomy was **not a significant predictor** of psychological well-being ( $B = -0.002; t = -0.042; p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis that job autonomy significantly influences psychological well-being was **rejected**.

**Hypothesis 2: Corporate ethics and psychological well-being**

Table 3 shows that corporate ethics was positively correlated with psychological well-being ( $r = 0.63, p < .01$ ). Consistently, regression results (Table 4) revealed that

corporate ethics **significantly predicts** psychological well-being ( $B = 0.635$ ;  $t = 11.103$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the hypothesis that corporate ethics significantly influences psychological well-being was **accepted**.

### **Joint Influence of Job Autonomy and Corporate Ethics**

Finally, regression analysis indicated that the combination of job autonomy and corporate ethics had a **significant joint effect** on psychological well-being ( $F(2,197) = 65.237$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). This shows that while job autonomy alone was not significant, together with corporate ethics, these variables explain a substantial portion of variance in psychological well-being.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study revealed several important insights into the relationship between job autonomy, corporate ethics, and psychological well-being. The first finding showed that job autonomy was not an independent predictor of psychological well-being ( $B = -0.002$ ;  $t = -0.042$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), suggesting that job autonomy does not significantly influence employees' psychological well-being. This indicates a slight negative relationship between job autonomy and well-being, and therefore the hypothesis that job autonomy would significantly affect psychological well-being was not supported. This outcome is consistent with the work of Sørensen, et al. (2007), who reported that higher levels of autonomy may lead to role ambiguity and increased job demands, potentially reducing psychological well-being. Similarly, Giacalone et al. (2016) found that unethical organizational practices can negatively impact employee well-being, not only affecting the employees themselves but also extending to their families and those who witness such practices. However, this finding contrasts with the results of Boxall and Macky, (2014), who reported that autonomy at work generally has positive effects on employees' well-being.

In contrast, corporate ethics was found to be a significant predictor of psychological well-being ( $B = 0.635$ ;  $t = 11.103$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a strong positive relationship. This supports the hypothesis that corporate ethics positively influences psychological well-being. The finding aligns with the research of Ajala, (2013), who demonstrated that ethical workplace practices, meaningful work, and a sense of interconnectedness

are positively associated with employees' well-being across industrial sectors. Likewise, Chughtai et al. (2015) provided evidence that ethical leadership enhances employees' work engagement and reduces emotional exhaustion, thereby promoting overall well-being.

Furthermore, the study found that job autonomy and corporate ethics jointly influence psychological well-being ( $F(2,197) = 65.237; p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that while job autonomy alone may not significantly affect well-being, its combined effect with corporate ethics contributes substantially to employees' psychological well-being. This highlights the importance of considering both organizational structures and ethical practices when seeking to enhance employee well-being. Future research could explore the mechanisms underlying this joint effect to better understand how these factors interact.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the influence of job autonomy and corporate ethics on psychological well-being among 197 health workers from three hospitals in the Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, using a cross-sectional survey design and purposive sampling. The findings revealed that job autonomy does not significantly influence psychological well-being, while corporate ethics has a significant positive impact. Additionally, the combination of job autonomy and corporate ethics was found to jointly affect psychological well-being, indicating that the interaction between organizational practices and ethical standards is important for enhancing employee well-being. Overall, these results highlight the important role of corporate ethics in promoting psychological well-being, while suggesting that autonomy alone may not be sufficient to improve employees' mental health. The study contributes to existing literature by highlighting the nuanced relationship between workplace autonomy, ethics, and well-being and suggests that organizations should focus on ethical practices alongside structural factors to support employee health and satisfaction.

## **Implications**

The findings of this study carry several important implications for organizations, employees, and policymakers. The first finding, which revealed that job autonomy was not an independent predictor of psychological well-being, suggests that simply providing employees with autonomy in the workplace does not automatically guarantee enhanced psychological well-being. This implies that while autonomy may be desirable, other factors such as workload, role clarity, or organizational support may play a stronger role in determining employees' mental health. Additionally, it indicates that a lack of autonomy does not necessarily harm psychological well-being, highlighting the complex relationship between workplace freedom and employee mental health.

The second finding demonstrated that corporate ethics is a significant predictor of psychological well-being. This implies that ethical practices within an organization such as fairness, transparency, integrity, and accountability can have a tangible positive impact on employees' mental health. A strong ethical climate fosters trust, reduces stress, and encourages a sense of security among employees, which in turn enhances overall well-being. This finding highlights the important role of organizational values and ethical behavior in promoting a psychologically healthy work environment.

The third finding, which showed that job autonomy and corporate ethics jointly influence psychological well-being, suggests that while autonomy alone may not be sufficient, its combination with strong corporate ethics can significantly contribute to employees' psychological health. This implies that organizations seeking to enhance well-being should not consider these factors in isolation but rather as complementary elements of a supportive work environment. Together, they can create conditions that empower employees while simultaneously fostering trust, fairness, and moral support.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the implications of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for organizations, employees, and government agencies.



- i. Employers should ensure a high ethical standard in the workplace, promoting fairness, transparency, and accountability, as this can enhance employees' psychological well-being.
- ii. Organizations should provide supportive structures, such as clear role expectations, reasonable workloads, and access to counseling or wellness programs, to foster a mentally healthy work environment.
- iii. Employees should take proactive measures to protect their psychological well-being, including practicing stress management, taking regular breaks, and seeking social support when needed.
- iv. Employees striving for job autonomy should be mindful of potential challenges and prioritize their mental health, ensuring that efforts toward independence do not create excessive stress or role conflict.
- v. Government agencies should implement initiatives and policies aimed at improving employee well-being, such as workplace mental health campaigns, training programs, and wellness support services.
- vi. Organizations should recognize the combined effect of corporate ethics and job autonomy on psychological well-being, designing policies and practices that integrate ethical leadership with meaningful opportunities for autonomy to maximize employees' overall mental health.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the difficulty in accessing participants, as they were often busy attending to patients. As a result, some participants were unable to allocate sufficient time to complete the questionnaires, which may have affected the accuracy and depth of their responses.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings of this study, given the relatively small sample size. Future research should aim to use larger and more diverse samples to address this limitation and to provide stronger confirmation of the present

study's findings. Additionally, expanding the study to different healthcare settings or regions could enhance the applicability and robustness of the results.

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