Assessing the Role of Workplace Counseling and Emotional Well-Being in Professional Development

Baby Shakeela T S

Assistant Professor, JNTC Edavanna

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ABSTRACT

Workplace mental health initiatives have moved from being employee benefits to becoming core strategic goals in modern organizations. This study looks closely at how the availability and quality of workplace counseling are related to employee emotional well-being (measured with the WHO-5 Well-Being Index) and to professional development across three fast-moving fields: Information Technology, Healthcare and Education. The researcher used a survey with 74 working professionals (average age 33.12 years, SD = 9.24; 60.8% female, 39.2% male).

Participants were IT workers (n = 29), teachers (n = 28) and healthcare workers (n = 17). Likert-scale items showed internal consistency for Workplace Counseling (α = .922), Emotional Well-Being (α = .747) and Professional Development (α = .848). Pearson correlations found a statistically significant positive link between Workplace Counseling and overall Professional Development ($r = .510$, $p < .001$) and a moderate positive link between Emotional Well-Being and Professional Development ($r = .242$, $p = .038$). Multiple regression showed that Workplace Counseling effectiveness is a positive driver of Professional Development ($\beta = .389$, $p < .001$) explaining 29.3% of the total variance ($R^2 = .293$, $F(2, 71) = 14.73$, $p < .001$). One-way ANOVA revealed sector differences in Professional Development scores ($F(2, 71) = 3.784$, $p = .027$) with teachers (M = 3.62) and healthcare workers (M = 3.60) scoring higher than IT professionals (M=3.31). These results highlight how structured psychological support can boost performance, employee longevity and strategic human-capital growth.

Keywords: Workplace Counseling, Emotional Well-Being, WHO-5 Well-Being Index, Professional Development, Occupational Stress, Organizational Psychology, Human Resource Management.

INTRODUCTION

In today's talent arena employee well-being has shifted from a secondary concern to a foundational factor for sustainable success. Modern workplaces are marked by tech change, higher productivity demands, ongoing work-life tension and greater risk of burnout. In high-stakes, people-focused and tech-driven sectors such as Education, Healthcare and Information Technology professionals routinely face labor continuous learning pressure, shifting goals and chronic stress.

If untreated lasting psychological distress leads to thinking, lower commitment, physical fatigue, more absenteeism and stalled careers. Consequently many organizations now offer Workplace Counseling Services (WCS) and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to reduce stress, teach coping skills and restore balance.

While previous research has shown the benefits of workplace counseling and the general idea of well-being, the specific ways in which counseling and emotional states directly boost multi-dimensional professional development have not been fully explored. Professional development is more than skill building; it includes career goal alignment, clear paths, faster promotions and fair pay. Understanding how counseling and emotional well-being interact to help employees reach these career milestones is essential for evidence-based policy.

The study reveals that workplace counseling can be made more accessible and reliable to professionals. Some of the measures included, the provision of incentives to motivate the employees to participate in the counseling program and the demonstration of optimum sense of professionalism in counseling by the Conseling team. The counseling process involve workshops, counseling sessions and referral services to successfully address mental health challenges, by following the couseling ethics and codes, mainly confidentiality.

This paper presents an analysis of 74 professionals across IT, Education and Healthcare. Using an inventory the researcher examines how counseling access, empathy, stress reduction and emotional well-being influence career growth, skill acquisition and retention.

In sum, the study discoveries highlights the need to place a high priority on the mental health of Professionals and customised interventions to enhance their overall success in the job field.

Need and Significance

The study is needed because the psychological contract between employers and employees is changing. Formerly professional development focused solely on technical training, coaching and education subsidies. Now research shows that emotional well-being limits thinking, decision making and growth.

Combatting Systemic Burnout: Modern workers in healthcare, education and tech face cognitive fatigue and compassion burnout. Unresolved burnout stops career progress, skill building and creativity. Studying counseling shows how psychological triage can restore progress.

Linking Well-Being and Career Metrics: While it is known that happy workers are more productive there is a gap in data showing how emotional well-being (measured by WHO-5) correlates with professional development aspects like promotion speed, salary growth and skill learning.

Sector-Specific Insights: Different industries have stress patterns. Healthcare workers handle emotional demands; educators face ongoing interpersonal and regulatory pressure and IT workers deal with tight deadlines and rapid skill changes. Cross-sector data are vital for tailoring EAPs to each environment.

Policy Relevance: For leaders HR strategists and educators proving a link between counseling and career growth gives a business case for investing in mental health infrastructure.

Objectives

The study aims to explore how counseling, emotional well-being and career paths interact. The researcher set the following goals:

1. Evaluate how accessible, empathetic and effective Workplace Counseling services are for surveyed professionals.

2. Measure baseline Well-Being using the WHO-5 Well-Being Index across IT, Education and Healthcare.

3. Assess Professional Development across four dimensions: Career Goals Alignment, Skill/Knowledge Growth, Promotion Speed, and Pay and Financial Progress.

4. Quantify relationships between Workplace Counseling, Emotional Well-Being and overall Professional Development.

5. Build a regression model predicting Professional Development from Workplace Counseling quality and Emotional Well-Being.

6. Examine gender and sector differences in counseling use, well-being and career progress.

Reaserch Hypothesis

1. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between Workplace Counseling quality/effectiveness and overall Professional Development (as well as its dimensions: Skill Acquisition, Vertical Promotion, Career Goals, and Remuneration Growth).
2. Higher levels of Emotional Well-Being (measured by WHO-5) are positively correlated with Professional Development and its sub-dimensions.
3. Workplace Counseling quality and Emotional Well-Being together serve as significant positive predictors of Professional Development.
4. There are significant differences in Workplace Counseling perceptions, Emotional Well-Being, and Professional Development across genders and professional sectors (IT, Education, and Healthcare).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A non-experimental cross-sectional survey method was adopted for the study. A correlational framework tested how Workplace Counseling (WC) and Emotional Well-Being (EWB) predict Professional Development (PD).

Sampling Technique & Data Collection: Data came from a web-based questionnaire sent to professional networks in Healthcare, IT and Education. The researcher purposely selected workers from the field of IT[software Engineers],Healthcare[Nurses],Education[Teachers],their average age is 33.12years ,among them 60.85 percentage are female and 39.2 percentage are male,they have between 5 to 10 years of work experience, who had experience with organizational support and counseling. Participation was anonymous and followed institutional ethics.

Operationalization of Variables & Scoring Mechanics:

The survey had 32 items: Workplace Counseling Services (WC): 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Items covered service availability, confidentiality, counselor empathy, useful coping strategies, burnout reduction, work-life balance, communication improvement, performance enhancement and overall value (e.g. WC12: M = 3.96, SD = 0.78).

Emotional Well-Being (EWB): WHO-5 Well-Being Index. Respondents rated feelings over the two weeks on 5 items, 6-point raw scale (0 = At no time to 5 = All of the time). Raw scores (0–25) were multiplied by 4 to get a 0–100 percentage. Scores below 50 suggest low well-being or possible depression.

Professional Development (PD): 15 items on a 5-point Likert scale grouped into four subscales: Career Goals Alignment (PD1–PD4), Skill Acquisition & Learning (PD5–PD8), Promotion Speed & Opportunity (PD9–PD12), and Pay & Income Progress (PD13–PD15).

Sample: The final sample had N = 74 professionals. Demographics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 74)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean / SD
Gender	Female	45	60.81%	—
	Male	29	39.19%	—
Profession	Information Technology (IT)	29	39.19%	—
	Education / Teachers	28	37.84%	—
	Healthcare	17	22.97%	—
Age (Years)	Overall Sample	74	100.0%	M = 33.12, SD =9.24 (Range: 21–60)

Tools Used & Statistical Analysis Framework

Tools used

1. A workplace Counseling Effectiveness Scale[WCES]adapted for organizational research,evaluates how employee counseling programs impact[likert scale]

2. The WHO-5 Well Being Index to measure subjective emotional well-being over the past two months.

3. The Organizational Career Growth Scale [OCGS],developed by Qingxiong Weng and McElory[2012],to assess an employee's perceived career progression within an organization across 4 district.

Analyses used Python's data stack (pandas, numpy, scipy.stats, statsmodels). The workflow included:

1. Psychometric Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha (α) for all subscales.

2. Descriptive Statistics: Calculated mean (M), standard deviation (SD), median and range for each item and overall scales.

3. Inferential Statistics:

- Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r): Examined relationships among Workplace Counseling, Emotional Well-Being and Professional Development sub-dimensions.

- Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Multiple Regression: Modeled how Workplace Counseling and Emotional Well-Being together predict Professional Development.

- Independent Samples t-tests: Evaluated differences between male and female groups.

- One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Tested differences across IT, Education and Healthcare sectors.

Psychometric Scale Reliability

All constructs exceeded the accepted benchmark for internal consistency reliability ($\alpha \geq .70$):

- Workplace Counseling Scale (12 items): $\alpha = .922$ (Excellent reliability)

- Emotional Well-Being WHO-5 Scale (5 items): $\alpha = .747$ (Good reliability)

- Professional Development Scale (15 items): $\alpha = .848$ (Good reliability)

Scope and Delimitation

Scope: This study looks at the limits of workplace support by measuring how useful employees think counseling is, their emotional states over a two-week period and how they see their career progressing. The research focuses on employed adults in three service sectors: Information Technology, Healthcare and Education.

Delimitations:

- Sample Size: The study is limited to 74 respondents (N = 74). While this is enough for correlations, regression and ANOVA, a larger sample would give more power and generalizability.

- Self-Report Measurement: All data come from self-reported scales, which can bring response biases such as social desirability or recall error.

- Cross-Sectional Design: Because data were collected at one point in time the researcher cannot make causal

claims compared to longitudinal studies.

- Organizational Variance: The researcher did not control for company size, public vs. private status or specific EAP vendors.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses of Core Constructs: The overall scores show baseline patterns across all participants. Employees reported a positive view of Workplace Counseling (M = 3.716, SD = 0.605 on a 5-point scale). The total WHO-5 Emotional Well-Being score averaged M = 57.784 (SD = 18.049) out of 100, indicating psychological well-being above the depression cutoff (<50), though with a large spread. Professional Development overall had a mean of M = 3.491 (SD = 0.482)

Table 2: Descriptive Summary of Constructs and Sub-Dimensions (N = 74)

Construct / Sub-Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Scale Range
Workplace Counseling (Overall)	3.716	0.605	1.00 – 5.00
Emotional Well-Being (WHO-5 Scale)	57.784	18.049	20.00 – 100.00
Professional Development (Overall)	3.491	0.482	2.20 – 4.71
• Subscale 1: Career Goals Alignment	3.645	0.625	1.00 – 5.00
• Subscale 2: Skill Acquisition & Growth	3.730	0.575	1.00 – 5.00
• Subscale 3: Vertical Promotion Speed	3.345	0.669	1.00 – 5.00
• Subscale 4: Remuneration & Pay Progress	3.162	0.759	1.00 – 5.00

As shown in Table 2, employees were most satisfied with Skill Acquisition (M = 3.730) and Career Goals Alignment (M = 3.645) compared to how fast they expect to be promoted (M = 3.345) and how their pay is expected to grow (M = 3.162).

Bivariate Correlation Analysis

The researcher calculated Pearson correlation coefficients (r) to examine the expected links among Workplace Counseling, Emotional Well-Being and Professional Development dimensions.

Table 3: Bivariate Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1. WC	2. EWB (WHO-5)	3. PD Overall	4. PD Goals	5. PD Skills	6. PD Promotion	7. PD Pay
1. WC	1.000	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. EWB (WHO-5)	.121	1.000	—	—	—	—	—
3. PD Overall	.510	.242	1.000	—	—	—	—
4. PD Goals	.384	.243	.789	1.000	—	—	—
5. PD Skills	.404	.162	.751	.705	1.000	—	—
6. PD Promotion	.392	.197	.812	.512	.468	1.000	—
7. PD Pay	.335	.108	.749	.395	.326	.671	1.000

$p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$

Key correlation insights:

- Workplace Counseling and Professional Development: Workplace Counseling shows a strong statistically significant positive link with overall Professional Development ($r = .510$, $p < .001$). Higher Workplace Counseling scores are closely tied to all four Professional Development sub-dimensions: Skill Acquisition ($r = .404$, $p < .001$), Vertical Promotion ($r = .392$, $p < .001$), Career Goals ($r = .384$, $p < .001$) and Remuneration Growth ($r = .335$, $p = .0035$).

- Emotional Well-Being and Professional Development: WHO-5 Emotional Well-Being shows a positive link with overall Professional Development ($r = .242$, $p = .0382$) and with Career Goals Alignment ($r = .243$, $p = .0372$).

- Workplace Counseling & Emotional Well-Being: The correlation between Workplace Counseling and WHO-5 Emotional Well-Being is weak ($r = .121$, $p = .3031$). This suggests that Workplace Counseling strongly relates to skill building and goal alignment, general daily emotional states of employees are shaped by broader life factors.

- There is a strong positive correlation [p<,001, r=.510] between .A Counseling and Professional Development. And there is moderate Positive Correlation [P=.038,r=.243] between Emotional Well-Being and Professional Development.

Multiple Regression Modeling

The researcher ran an OLS regression to see how Workplace Counseling and Emotional Well-Being together explain Professional Development.

Table 4: OLS Multiple Regression Model Predicting Professional Development (N = 74)

Model Predictor	Unstandardized Coeff. (B)	Std. Error (SE)	Standardized Beta (β)	t-statistic	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Intercept (β_0)	1.765	0.322	—	5.481	< .001	[1.123,2.406]
Workplace Counseling (WC)	0.389	0.080	.488	4.857	< .001	[0.229,0.548]
Emotional Well-Being (EWB)	0.097	0.054	.183	1.813	.074	[-0.010,0.204]

Model Summary: $R = .541$, $R^2 = .293$, Adjusted $R^2 = .273$, $F(2, 71) = 14.73$, $p < .001$

The regression explains 29.3 percent of the variation in Professional Development. The model is highly significant ($F = 14.73$, $p < .001$). Workplace Counseling is the primary driver ($\beta = .488$, $B = 0.389$, $p < .001$), meaning each one-unit rise in Workplace Counseling quality raises Professional Development by 0.389 units. Emotional Well-Being shows a positive trend ($\beta = .183$, $B = 0.097$, $p = .074$).

Based on the OLS Multiple regression Model table, Emotional Well-Being does not serve as a statistically significant mediator between Work place Counseling and Professional Development at the standard 5% significance level [p=.074].Workplace Counseling primarily exerts a direct influence on Professional Development.

Comparative Analyses: Demographic and Sectoral Dynamics

Gender Differences: The researcher used independent sample t-tests to compare female and male groups (Female n = 45, Male n = 29).

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test by Gender

Dependent Variable	Female Mean (SD)	Male Mean (SD)	t-statistic	df	p-value
Workplace Counseling	3.80 (0.54)	3.59 (0.69)	-1.495	72	.139
WHO-5 Well-Being Score	58.49 (15.40)	56.69 (21.78)	-0.416	72	.679
Professional Development (Overall)	3.57 (0.46)	3.37 (0.51)	-1.682	72	.097
PD: Career Goals Alignment	3.77 (0.60)	3.45 (0.62)	-2.236	72	.028

Statistically significant at $p < .05$

Female employees reported higher satisfaction overall. Notably, women rated Career Goals Alignment higher ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.60$) than men ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.62$; $t = -2.236$, $p = .028$).

Sectoral Differences (ANOVA): One-way ANOVA examined differences across IT ($n = 29$), Teaching ($n = 28$) and Healthcare ($n = 17$).

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA across Professional Sectors

Workplace Counseling	3.57 (0.53)	3.77 (0.75)	3.87 (0.41)	1.455	.240
WHO-5 Well-Being Score	54.90(19.94)	60.14 (16.95)	58.82 (16.72)	0.632	.535
PD Overall	3.31 (0.50)	3.62 (0.43)	3.60 (0.45)	3.784	.027
PD: Career Goals	3.34 (0.53)	3.87 (0.61)	3.79 (0.63)	6.411	.003
PD: Skill Acquisition	3.47 (0.50)	3.85 (0.65)	3.99 (0.37)	6.089	.004
PD: Promotion Speed	3.19 (0.70)	3.52 (0.60)	3.32 (0.69)	1.759	.180
PD: Remuneration Growth	3.20 (0.89)	3.11 (0.70)	3.20 (0.65)	0.115	.891

$p < .05$, $p < .01$

According to Table 6, overall Professional Development scores differed significantly between sectors ($F = 3.784$, $p = .0275$). Post-hoc tests show that Teachers ($M = 3.62$) and Healthcare workers ($M = 3.60$) reported higher overall Professional Development, career goal alignment, and skill acquisition than IT professionals ($M = 3.31$). IT professionals also had lower baseline well-being ($M = 54.90$) and lower career goal satisfaction. This suggests that the rapid pace and constant change in the technology industry create distinct pressures for IT workers.

Educational Implications

1. Integrating Psychological Counseling into Career Growth Blueprints: The strong link between counseling effectiveness and skill acquisition ($r = .404$) shows that psychological support should not be limited to crisis moments. Organizations must weave counseling into goal setting, executive coaching and career development plans.

2. Customising an EAPs to Industry Profiles: Because IT professionals scored low on Professional Development and well-being ($M = 3.31$), fast-moving sectors need continuous personal support. Technology

companies should create counseling that tackles fear of skill obsolescence, milestone pressure and long-term burnout. In contrast, schools and hospitals should concentrate on traumatic stress and work-life balance.

3. Institutionalizing Preventive Mental Health Checks: Employees had an average WHO-5 score of 57.78, placing them close to vulnerable psychological limits. Offering regular private mental-health screenings and stress-management training workshops can prevent mood decline before it impacts performance.

4. Taking active Strategic Steps in Promotion and Pay: Promotion speed (M = 3.345) and remuneration growth (M = 3.162) were the lowest scoring aspects of Professional Development across all sectors. Even though counseling improves focus and skill building, leadership must ensure promotion routes are clear and pay is fair to complement mental-health efforts.

CONCLUSION

This study shows a link between psychological support, employee mood and key aspects of Professional Development. From this study the researcher understood that retention of employees in their field depends up on the appraisal ratings of participation in EAP"S and absenteeism in training programmes. The results prove that workplace counseling is a key driver for career progress, with strong ties to skill building, career goal alignment and overall Professional Development. The regression analysis indicates that counseling quality explains about 30% of the variance in Professional Development outcomes. Sector comparisons also reveal clear differences, underscoring that tech companies need targeted interventions to reach the resilience levels seen in education and healthcare.

Ultimately, workplace counseling and emotional well-being programs should not be seen as secondary benefits. They are strategic investments in human capital that directly boost performance, career satisfaction and organizational resilience.

The researcher suggested that, to provide confidential and accessible counseling services to Professionals manager training, a supportive culture, and longitudinal multi organization research.

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