



## Employee Mental Absence Diagnosing and Analysis of Digital Mental Health Platforms (Case study: Iran Tobacco Company)

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the diagnosis of employees' mental absence and to provide a suitable model for the Iranian Tobacco Company.

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**Method:** This research was conducted with a qualitative-inductive approach and the method of Strauss-Corbin's grounded theory. The research tool (data collection) is a semi-structured interview that analyzes the data obtained from interviews with 10 qualified elites and experts of the Iranian Tobacco Company in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding in ATLAS TI software using the grounded theory method.

**Findings:** 13 general categories in the form of a paradigm model in which these factors include causal conditions (individual factors; factors of group behavior; organizational factors; environmental factors), axial phenomenon (diagnosis of the mental absence of employees), contextual conditions (environmental and physical context), intervening conditions (individual factors ), and strategies (organizational strategy; job-related strategy; career development strategy), and consequences (individual outcomes; effectiveness; group outcomes) were identified.

**Conclusion:** In a business environment with digital disruption from competitors and customers who have more choices through the availability of digital applications and information, it is important to ensure that organizations can quickly understand and adapt to new information. The need for mindfulness and control of mental absence is a prerequisite for digital transformation.

**Keywords:** Employee Mental Absence, Mindfulness, Digital Transformation, Digital Mental Health Platforms, Iranian Tobacco Company.

## 1. Introduction

One of the factors that affect the survival of organizations is manpower (Gupta & Singh, 2019). The mental health of the employees of the organization is very important in improving human resources. Poor mental health inflicts heavy losses on employees and the organization (Li et al., 2021). Digital mental health services

provided to communities and companies have expanded during the COVID-19 epidemic (Truong, & McLachlan, 2022). New digital solutions can help employers provide personal support and make welfare a strategic focus for their organization (Lattie et al., 2022). Today's human beings, in the process of adapting to their social and professional environment, have to endure restrictions and pressures in such a way that these pressures in the workplace lead to mental stress in employees (Johnson et al., 2020). Mental absence is a multidimensional mental concept that represents the level of resources required to achieve both qualitative and quantitative performance criteria in a task that may be varied by the needs and demands of the task, external support, and past experiences. Full attention and presence of mind and absence of mental absence can predict a reduction in disturbing emotional responses, more positive emotional states, and more flexible and adaptive responses to events (Peschl & Schuth, 2022).

In a dynamic business environment, companies face stiff competition, market turmoil, and changing technological innovations. Overcoming this challenge requires companies to change their agility in the market by integrating and utilizing information technology (IT). Diagnosis is the process of using behavioral science concepts and methods to define and describe the current state of human resources in organizations and to find ways to increase their effectiveness (Harrison, 2004). The practical consequence of the diagnosis of mental absence is that employees may not trust any system to support their mental health or welfare needs and have less communication with co-workers and supervisors. In particular, the lack of organizational communication may affect any new technology solution. For example, a digital mental health platform after integration into a workplace may not be sustainable after its implementation, if there is no organizational value to reinforce the concept of mental health needs. Lievens et al. (2018) have provided convincing evidence that personality states predict individual fluctuations in daily tasks. Given that human resources are the most

valuable assets of any organization, there should be continuous monitoring and evaluation to diagnose policies and programs in organizations. One of the factors that may occur in organizations for employees and its diagnosis should be addressed, is mental absence (Zamanian et al., 2015). Mental absence means a lack of mental presence, which causes employees to be ineffective and inefficient despite their physical presence (Goodarzi and Dalavi, 2020). Mental absence is costly for businesses, public sector organizations, and processor taxes. Its costs include absenteeism's basic salary, overtime payments, and costs paid for substitute workers, as well as management costs (Aino et al., 2011). Job construction theory, which focuses on competency development and adaptive job management, is an innovative approach (Keng et al., 2020). The main purpose of job creation theory is for people to have an understanding of how to use their work for personal improvement and achieve satisfaction and happiness from social interactions (Rajabpour, 2021). Job adjustment is also a psychological structure in which a person uses the necessary resources to deal with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, and injuries in their job roles to change social integration to a greater or lesser extent (Yang et al., 2019). It is important to prepare the workforce for change processes that may be the result of the use of new technologies. This can be achieved by familiarizing employees with new technologies and involving them in the process of change in the early stages (Verhoef et al., 2021).

Today's changing conditions that make work environments challenging, competitive, ambiguous, and complex, with high levels of stress, depression, burnout, and reduced productivity for employees, underscore the importance of workplace quality. Has doubled (Ishak, 2015). Therefore, the development of mindfulness-based career plans as a tool to overcome individual and professional challenges and improve the quality of work environments and create a happy and healthy atmosphere in the organization and improve the mental health of employees (Rezaei Manesh et al., 2021). IT solutions have already been proposed and are even more important in the

Covid-19 era when employee absenteeism was controlled. An additional resource for companies is the emergence of digital mental health platforms for employee participation. Ideally, such platforms are two-way and support the employee and leadership to maintain a culture of prevention and mental health support in the organization. The idea of a digital communication component for a context to strengthen leadership to engage employees' mental health is explored in this research. In general, the lack of proper use of technology in various ways hurts mental health in the workplace by increasing demand, reducing resources, and changing the way employees look to the future, all of which have hidden and direct costs for employers and employees. Significant research now shows that occupational factors such as poor job design, high job demand, low job control, and high effort-reward imbalances are associated with an increased risk of common mental health conditions. Therefore, organizational changes and employee job design must be done based on digital changes. Resources such as control, comprehensive IT-based support, high-quality digital feedback and evaluation, and virtual and online learning opportunities are all positively related to work-related well-being. Fortunately, there are many ways in which technology can be used to successfully design work to help maintain employee mental health. Based on digital technology, work environments are directly modified in a way that increases need satisfaction or reduces frustration (Sutcliffe et al., 2016).

Digital developments require mindfulness. High levels of mental absenteeism among employees cause instability of manpower, chaos in the workplace, declining employee morale, and ultimately a sharp decline in the quality of services provided, and this is a challenge and problem that affects the organization and the researcher. Decided to conduct the present study and set an appropriate model for the diagnosis of employees' mental absence at the individual level; Group; Provide organizational and environmental. So this study seeks to answer the question of what is the diagnosis (diagnosis) of employees' mental absence and analysis of digital mental health platforms?

## 2. Literature Review

Companies are increasingly transforming themselves into agile companies by integrating and exploiting digital technologies (Nadkarni, & Prügl, 2020). Increasing awareness and reducing the mental absence of employees is very important in increasing the productivity of organizations in the digital age. Previous research has shown that an organizational mindset helps to actively manage digital technologies and reduce the likelihood of robustness due to digital technologies (Shahbaz and Park, 2021). Although the key role of organizational mindfulness is increasingly recognized, the impact of organizational mindfulness on digital transformation on the development of active information processing capacity in digital technology has not been empirically studied. Due to the importance of identifying the diagnosis of the mental absence of staff, the studies that have been done or in terms of approach are different from the current study. Mirzaei Tusi et al. (2022) stated that mental workload and shift schedule affect the fatigue of intensive care unit nurses. Rezaei Manesh et al. (2022) by examining the role of mindfulness on the work environment (innovative work behaviors, quality of relationships, success at work) showed cognitive flexibility as a mediating variable of relative and significant role between mindfulness and work environment variables (innovative work behaviors, The quality of relationships, success at work). Rajabpour (2021) stated that mindfulness as a multidimensional structure has an extraordinary role in the career path of employees and the future of the organization. Rostami et al. (2020) found that the application of technology-based mindfulness techniques and training is effective in reducing aggression and improving mental health among soldiers. Bakhshi et al. (2020) stated that mental workload and job stress can threaten the health and well-being of employees in any organization and cause work problems and accidents. Also, Nübold & Hülshager (2021) in a controlled experiment based on digital mindfulness

intervention, stated that compared to control groups, mindfulness intervention led to a significant increase in daily senses, emotional stability, and employee satisfaction. Wang et al. (2021) found that mindfulness refers to a state of mental attention in which a person is conscious and has accepted the present. This is increasingly appearing as an estimated quality.

Olafsen et al. (2021) in a study entitled "Mindfulness Ensures the Negative Impact of Negative Frustration on Employee Outcomes: A Perspective on the Theory of Determination" stated that mediation results from basic frustration of psychological needs in individuals who reported higher levels of mindfulness. It was less obvious.

Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt (2020) in their study entitled "Mindfulness and the Challenges of Working at Home in Crisis" stated that in the context of organizational virtualization, increasing the efficiency of digital tools is important to increase mindfulness. Roemer et al. (2019), in examining the role of mindfulness in employee readiness for change during the COVID-19 epidemic, stated that the impact of mindfulness on employee readiness to form virtual workgroups is important. Mason (2018) showed that reducing mindfulness-based stress and reducing mental absence in workplaces in transition in the digital age can be done using technology.

Research shows the research gap in the field of mental absence and digital developments and the emergence of digital mental health platforms. The results show that mindfulness techniques including awareness of the present and mindfulness can control a person's productivity. Differences in organizational change approaches to digital transformation can be identified by whether organizations are in the early stages of developing and maturing digital transformation.

The organizations that make the most progress in digital transformation focus on aligning their business models and fostering the right organizational culture. They reinforce organizational values and attributes such as collaboration, innovation, flexibility, openness, experimentation, and collaborative creation to support organizational agility to achieve digital transformation.

### 3. Methodology

This research with a qualitative-inductive approach and grounded theory (Strauss-Corbin, 1998). Using semi-structured interview tools, he has studied the diagnosis of employees' mental absence and the analysis of digital mental health platforms. Adequacy of the number of samples studied was obtained through the theoretical saturation method (Glasser and Strauss, 1967).

Participants in this study are the actors of the organization related to the research topic and exploratory interview has been used for managers, and elites of the management department of the Tobacco Organization of Iran. Interview with questions such as "What are the factors affecting the mental absence of employees in terms of structure and content? What are the characteristics of the diagnosis of the mental absence of employees? What are the barriers to the diagnosis of the mental absence of employees in organizations?" The sample was 10 people who were selected using the purposive sampling method. The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table (1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

| Row | Field of study             | Degree | work experience | Position       | Gender | Age |
|-----|----------------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|--------|-----|
| 1   | Human resources management | PhD    | 13 years        | Head of Office | M      | 37  |
| 2   | governmental management    | MA     | 18 years        | Head of Office | F      | 43  |
| 3   | Media management           | MA     | 28 years        | Deputy Complex | M      | 52  |
| 4   | Agriculture                | BA     | 22 years        | Head of Office | M      | 48  |
| 5   | Rights                     | PhD    | 15 years        | Deputy         | M      | 40  |
| 6   | Human resources management | MA     | 17 years        | Deputy         | M      | 45  |
| 7   | Accounting                 | MA     | 10 years        | Head of Office | M      | 39  |
| 8   | Computer                   | BA     | 30 years        | Head of Office | M      | 55  |



|   |                       |    |          |                |   |    |
|---|-----------------------|----|----------|----------------|---|----|
| 9 | Industrial Management | MA | 12 years | Head of Office | M | 42 |
|---|-----------------------|----|----------|----------------|---|----|

#### 4. Findings

To answer the research question "What is the conceptual paradigm of the diagnosis of employees' mental absence?", The open and axial coding of each part of the contextual model is given below.

**4.1. Causal conditions:** Causal conditions are categories that affect the central category. Based on the interviews, the central codes "Individual factors; group behavior factors; organizational factors; environmental factors" were identified and related to another wider selection code called causal conditions. Which is described in Table (2).

Table 2: Qualitative data coding (causal conditions)

| Axial coding              | Secondary coding                      | Open coding                                       |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Individual factors        | Distractions                          | Symptoms of distraction                           |                           |
|                           |                                       | External distraction                              |                           |
|                           |                                       | Internal distraction                              |                           |
|                           | Fatigue                               | Mental fatigue                                    |                           |
|                           |                                       | Physical fatigue                                  |                           |
|                           |                                       | Your compassion                                   |                           |
|                           | Burnout                               | Attitudinal burnout                               |                           |
|                           |                                       | Job burnout                                       |                           |
|                           |                                       | Situational mental involvement                    |                           |
| Factors of group behavior | Employee behaviors                    | Psychoanalytic approach                           |                           |
|                           | Lack of commitment and cooperation    | Psychological injuries                            |                           |
|                           |                                       | Commitment to work                                |                           |
|                           | Organizational citizenship behaviors  | Virtual collaboration                             |                           |
|                           |                                       | Organizational citizenship behaviors of employees |                           |
| Organizational factors    | Digital infrastructure                | Organizational citizenship behaviors of managers  |                           |
|                           | Principles governing the organization | Organizational value                              |                           |
|                           |                                       | organization`s performance                        | Organizational evaluation |
|                           |                                       |   | Organizational Justice    |
|                           |                                       | Organizational atmosphere                         |                           |
| Environmental             | Need up-to-date                       | Feedback  |                           |
|                           |                                       | Organizational dysfunction                        |                           |
|                           |                                       | Organizational cost                               |                           |

|                |           |                             |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| <b>factors</b> | resources | Requires digital facilities |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|

**4.2. Contextual conditions:** The set of contextual elements in the diagnosis of employees' mental absence includes "environmental and physical context", which is described in Table (3).

Table 3: Qualitative data coding (contextual conditions)

| <b>Axial coding</b>                         | <b>Secondary coding</b>            | <b>Open coding</b>                             |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Environmental and physical substrate</b> | Workplace facilities and equipment | Social service                                 |
|   |                                    | Public access to equipment                     |
|   | Environmental factors              | Standard work environment                      |
|   |                                    | Environmental support<br>Economic base of work |

**5.2. Intervening conditions:** Participants suggested that individual factors are among the intervening conditions of the diagnosis of the mental absence of employees, which is presented in Table (4).

Table 4: Qualitative data coding (intervening conditions)

| <b>Axial coding</b>       | <b>Secondary coding</b>                         | <b>Open coding</b>      |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Individual factors</b> | Motivation                                      | Physical motivations    |
|                           |   | Mental adaptation style |
|                           |   | Motivational adaptation |
|                           | Social or acquired motivations                  |                         |
| Skill                     | Demographic characteristics<br>work experiences |                         |

**6.2. Strategies:** The strategies of this research include "organizational strategy; job-related strategy; career development strategy" which is stated in Table (5).

Table 5: Qualitative data coding (strategic conditions)

| <b>Axial coding</b>            | <b>Secondary coding</b>             | <b>Open coding</b>   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Organizational strategy</b> | Organizational / managerial factors | Organizational cognition<br>Targeting theory<br>method of leadership |

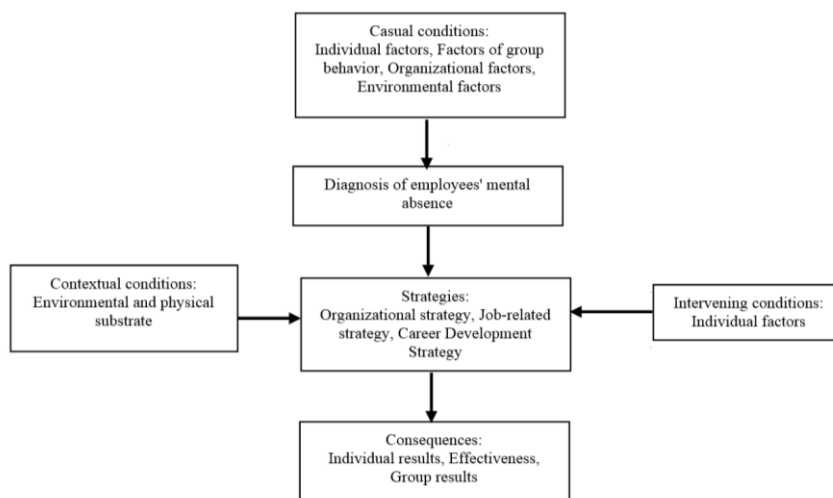
|                                    |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                    |  | Relationships between employees         |
|                                    | connections                            | Management relationships with employees |
| <b>Job-related strategy</b>        | Quality of working life                | Job security                            |
|                                    |  | Having job satisfaction                 |
|                                    | Job quality                            | Job construction theory                 |
|                                    |  | Job focus                               |
| <b>Career Development Strategy</b> | Dimensions of workload and mindfulness | Loading                                 |
|                                    | Knowledge and skills                   | Mindfulness                             |
|                                    | Secondary coding                       | Education                               |
|                                    | Organizational / managerial factors    | Ideation                                |
|                                    |  | Recruitment                             |

**7.2. Consequences:** Based on the interviews, the consequences include individual results; Effectiveness; and The group results are shown in Table (6).

Table 6: Qualitative data coding (consequences)

| <b>Axial coding</b>       | <b>Secondary coding</b>                               | <b>Open coding</b>  |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Individual results</b> | Increase psychological well-being                     | Improve the quality of life<br>Improving the level of mental security based on the digital platform     |
|                           | Occupational and mental health                        | Mental health<br>Physical health<br>Improving the mental health of employees                            |
|                           | Efficiency  | Total digital system efficiency<br>Labor productivity   |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>      | Performance   | Organizational growth<br>Dynamic and digital work environment<br>Career development of the organization |
|                           | Improve the quality of interactions between employees | Improve work-related results  |
| <b>Group results</b>      | Secondary coding                                      | Quality of relations and information technology   |
|                           | Increase psychological well-being                     | creativity and innovation   |

Among the identified factors, the selective coding paradigm was performed and based on that, the linear relationship between the secondary code and the central code of the research including causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences was determined. Figure (1) shows the coding



paradigm, in other words, the model of the qualitative research process.

Figure 1: Conceptual research model (Atlas TI's output)

**5. Conclusion**

Emergency organizational change theory demonstrates a change in a way that is continuously applied and re-applied by moving organizational actors into new systems, new beliefs, and interactive patterns. It is influenced by sensory processes and mental models that determine the narratives that explain what is happening and the appropriate actions to be taken. In a business environment with digital disruption from competitors and customers who have more choices through the availability of digital applications and information, it is important to ensure that organizations can quickly understand and adapt to new information. The need for mindfulness and control of mental absence is a prerequisite for digital transformation. The

purpose of this study is to investigate the diagnosis of employees' mental absence and to provide a suitable model for Iran Tobacco Company. Based on the data analysis of the foundation, 54 codes in 13 categories were identified based on the six components of the foundation data model. Considering the importance of employees' mindfulness and on the other hand, reducing mental absence as well as variables of success and job adjustment that increase employees' readiness to perform their activities and job duties, the need to examine the relationship between these variables among tobacco company employees in Iran. This study seeks to understand how organizational mindfulness processes can contribute to the more successful implementation of digital transformation. Digital transformation involves investing in experimentation and innovation through new product development, digital applications, and collaboration, which also requires the allocation of scarce organizational resources.

The research findings have important implications for the study community and other organizations. This study shows that effectiveness increases the efficiency of the individual and also increases the productivity of organizations. This research is in line with recent research by Abed et al. (2022); Mirzaei Tusi et al. (2022); Rezaei Manesh et al. (2022); Bakhshi et al. (2020); Rajabpour (1399); Rostami et al. (2020); Olafsen et al. (2021) and Roemer et al. (2019); Gupta & Singh (2019) are consistent because they establish strong links between job adjustment and important career outcomes such as greater work effectiveness and job performance, greater job satisfaction, lower burnout and anxiety, greater job success, and better quality of employment.

Other findings of the research include development strategies with an emphasis on the components of workload dimensions and mindfulness, knowledge, and skills, which with the research of Nübold & Hülshager (2021); Wang et al. (2021); Shahbaz & Parker (2021); Rezaei Dizgah et al. (2019); Consistent with the need for

further studies to identify the causes of work stress to determine ways to reduce these parameters and take steps to reduce or eliminate them.

Based on the research results, it is important to ensure that the organization has a sufficient workforce associated with digital skills and competencies while empowering these employees to influence decision-making, so hiring professionals and developing the capacity for digital skills is important. Employ, train, and reward employees to reduce mental absenteeism and increase mindfulness to ensure that the organization's human resources are equipped with digital thinking and skills that can enable digital transformation initiatives. Creating a culture of awareness based on change and information processing in organizational change such as digital transformation is very important, especially to discover patterns and procedures that can bring more clarity to the early stages of the digital transformation process.

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