Volume 2, Number 3, September 2025
e- ISSN: 3046-8213

JA RUM
Journal of Analysis Research and Management Review

WORK CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE COMFORT IN SERVICE COMPANIES IN SEMARANG: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Citra Dhistia Murti
Universitas Cokroaminoto
email: citradhist@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores how work culture influences employee comfort in service companies in Semarang, Indonesia, with particular attention to interpersonal relationships, internal communication, the work environment, organizational values, and employees' everyday work experiences. Employee comfort is important in service organizations because service delivery depends heavily on employees' interactions, coordination, and willingness to communicate with coworkers and supervisors. Previous research suggests that organizational culture, perceived organizational support, communication, psychological safety, and workplace resources are associated with employee well-being and work attitudes. However, the ways these elements are experienced together in service companies in an Indonesian urban context require further qualitative exploration. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with employees and supervisors or managers from selected service companies in Semarang. Thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring patterns concerning interpersonal relationships, communication practices, workplace norms, organizational values, and perceptions of comfort at work. The study aims to provide a contextual understanding of how everyday organizational practices shape employees' perceptions of a comfortable and supportive workplace.

Keywords: *work culture, employee comfort, organizational communication, work environment, service companies*

I. INTRODUCTION

Service organizations depend strongly on human interaction. Employees do not merely perform technical tasks; they communicate with coworkers, respond to customers, coordinate activities, and represent organizational values through everyday behavior. Consequently, the quality of the internal work environment can shape how employees experience their jobs and

how consistently services are delivered. Recent research in hospitality and service settings has increasingly examined employee well-being, organizational support, workplace relationships, and communication as important organizational resources. A systematic review by Saito et al. [1], for example, shows that hospitality employee well-being is influenced by stressors, resources, and management practices operating at individual, group, and organizational levels.

Work culture provides an important context for these experiences. Culture can be understood through shared values, norms, expectations, and patterns of interaction that guide how people behave within an organization. Research on organizational culture in service settings indicates that culture can shape employee engagement and workplace outcomes. Srimulyani and Hermanto [2], for example, found that organizational culture plays a role in the relationship between credible leadership and work engagement in private hospitals in Indonesia. Watanabe et al. [3] likewise found that clan-oriented culture emphasizing interpersonal harmony was positively related to employee well-being in their Japanese longitudinal study.

Communication is another central component of employees' everyday work experiences. Open communication can provide role clarity, enable employees to raise concerns, and support trust among organizational members. Recent work on workplace conversations emphasizes that communication is an important arena for employee voice and silence and connects these processes with psychological safety. [4]. In restaurant organizations, Lozano Gutiérrez and Duran Bravo [5] conceptualize organizational communication and leadership as dimensions that can strengthen teamwork and organizational culture through information, listening, dialogue, and shared vision.

Employee comfort in this study is not limited to physical facilities. It refers to employees' perceived sense of safety, acceptance, respect, ease of communication, manageable work conditions, and positive interpersonal relationships. This broader perspective is consistent with research that treats worker well-being as a multidimensional construct rather than a single psychological state [6]. Research on organizational work-home culture also indicates that organizational norms and practices can influence the interface between work and personal life and employees' subjective well-being [7].

Despite the growing literature on organizational culture and employee well-being, many studies use quantitative designs and predefined constructs. There is therefore value in exploring how employees themselves describe a comfortable or uncomfortable workplace and which cultural practices they consider meaningful. A qualitative approach can reveal everyday

experiences that may be overlooked when culture, communication, and work environment are examined only as separate variables.

Semarang provides an appropriate setting for this exploration because its economy includes diverse service organizations, such as retail, education services, professional services, hospitality, health-related services, and other customer-oriented businesses. The present study focuses on employees' lived experiences rather than comparing service sectors statistically. It asks: (1) How do employees describe the work culture in their organizations? (2) How do interpersonal relationships and communication influence their comfort at work? (3) How are organizational values reflected in everyday work practices? and (4) What workplace conditions make employees feel comfortable or uncomfortable?

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between work culture and employee comfort in service companies in Semarang by examining interpersonal relationships, communication, work environment, organizational values, and everyday employee experiences. The study is expected to contribute qualitative evidence that can help service organizations understand how culture is experienced at the employee level.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Work Culture and Organizational Values

Work culture refers to shared assumptions, values, norms, and behavioral expectations that influence how members of an organization interact and perform their work. In service organizations, culture is particularly visible through daily interactions because employees frequently coordinate with one another and represent the organization to customers. Research in hospitality suggests that organizational culture can influence organizational practices and employee engagement [2].

Culture is also relevant to employee well-being because employees may experience greater comfort when organizational values are consistent with interpersonal harmony, respect, and support. Watanabe et al. [3] found that clan culture emphasizing interpersonal harmony was positively associated with employee well-being in their study of Japanese workers. The implication for the present qualitative study is not that one culture is universally superior, but that employees' perceptions of cultural fit and daily interaction should be explored in context.

2.2 Interpersonal Relationships and Teamwork

Interpersonal relationships are central to service work because employees frequently depend on coworkers and supervisors to coordinate tasks and solve problems. Supportive social relationships can become organizational resources, while conflict, incivility, or weak

coordination can become workplace stressors. Research on hospitality employees has identified group-level resources and stressors as important components of employee well-being [1].

Research in quick-service restaurants also shows that workplace incivility can suppress employee voice, demonstrating that interpersonal experiences may affect whether employees feel able to express concerns and participate in organizational communication [8]. Thus, this study examines not only whether employees have good relationships, but also how those relationships influence communication, trust, and everyday comfort.

2.3 Organizational Communication

Organizational communication includes formal and informal exchanges through which employees receive information, clarify roles, provide feedback, and express concerns. Communication can influence psychological safety when employees perceive that they can speak openly without fear of negative consequences. Edmondson and Besieux [4] emphasize the importance of workplace conversations for understanding voice and silence. In service organizations, communication may also influence coordination and teamwork because employees must respond quickly to operational changes and customer needs.

2.4 Work Environment and Employee Comfort

Employee comfort can be approached through physical, social, and psychological dimensions. Physical conditions include workspace, workload, schedules, and safety. Social conditions include relationships with coworkers and supervisors. Psychological conditions include respect, acceptance, voice, and the perception that the organization cares about employee well-being. Saito et al. [1] demonstrate that hospitality well-being research includes stressors, resources, and practices across individual, group, and organizational levels.

Perceived organizational support is also relevant because employees evaluate whether their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. A 2024 meta-analysis of hospitality and tourism research found that perceived organizational support is associated with a range of employee outcomes, including job attitudes, stress, performance, service perceptions, and intention to leave [9].

2.5 Conceptual Focus

Based on the literature, this study uses five sensitizing concepts: (1) interpersonal relationships, (2) organizational communication, (3) work environment, (4) organizational values, and (5) employee comfort. These concepts guide the interviews but are not treated as fixed variables. The analysis remains open to additional themes emerging from participants' experiences.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how employees experience work culture and comfort in service organizations in Semarang. The design is selected because the study seeks to understand meanings, perceptions, and everyday interactions rather than test statistical relationships.

Research Setting and Participants. The research will be conducted in selected service companies in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Service companies may include customer-oriented organizations such as retail, professional services, education services, hospitality, health-related services, or other service businesses. Purposive sampling will be used to recruit approximately 10–15 participants. Participants will consist of employees and, where possible, supervisors or managers. Employees should have worked in the organization for at least six months to ensure sufficient experience with its work culture.

Data Collection. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30–45 minutes. Interview questions will explore how participants describe the organization's values, relationships among coworkers, communication with supervisors, work environment, experiences of support or conflict, and conditions that make them feel comfortable or uncomfortable at work. With consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Field notes will supplement interview data.

Data Analysis. The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The procedure will include familiarization with transcripts, initial coding, grouping similar codes, developing candidate themes, reviewing themes against the dataset, defining and naming themes, and interpreting relationships among themes. Both deductive codes based on the conceptual focus and inductive codes emerging from participants will be used.

Trustworthiness and Ethics. Credibility will be supported through comparison of employee and managerial perspectives where available, repeated review of transcripts, and careful use of participant quotations. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the research and their voluntary participation. Personal names and company identities will be anonymized. Interview data will be used for academic purposes only.

Table 1. Proposed Semi-Structured Interview Guide

No.	Core Interview Question
1	How would you describe the work culture in your organization?
2	What values or principles are emphasized by management in everyday work?
3	How would you describe relationships among coworkers?

4	How do employees and supervisors usually communicate?
5	Do you feel comfortable expressing opinions, questions, or concerns? Why?
6	What workplace situations make you feel comfortable?
7	What workplace situations make you feel uncomfortable or stressed?
8	How do workload, schedules, workspace, and facilities affect your comfort?
9	How does management show concern for employees' needs and well-being?
10	What changes would make the workplace more comfortable and supportive?

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Note: This section is intentionally prepared as an analytical framework and must be completed using actual interview data. Participant findings, quotations, and thematic frequencies should not be fabricated.

4.1 Interpersonal Relationships among Employees

This theme should describe how employees experience relationships with coworkers and supervisors. Analysis should examine mutual support, teamwork, trust, conflict, informal interaction, and the ways employees help one another during busy or difficult situations. The discussion can be connected to hospitality research that identifies group-level resources and stressors as relevant to employee well-being [1].

4.2 Communication and Psychological Safety

This section should explore whether employees receive clear information, can ask questions, receive feedback, and feel safe expressing concerns. Particular attention should be given to differences between formal and informal communication. The findings can be discussed alongside research emphasizing workplace conversations, employee voice, and psychological safety [4].

4.3 Work Environment and Everyday Comfort

This theme should examine physical and social aspects of the work environment, including workload, working hours, workspace, facilities, safety, and opportunities for rest. The analysis should distinguish between conditions that employees describe as comfortable and those they experience as burdensome. Recent reviews emphasize that employee well-being is shaped by multiple organizational and workplace resources rather than a single condition [1].

4.4 Organizational Values in Everyday Practice

The analysis should examine whether organizational values are visible in daily interactions and management decisions. Participants can be asked whether values such as respect, teamwork, customer orientation, fairness, or professionalism are actually practiced. This can be compared

with research showing that organizational culture can shape employee engagement and organizational practices [2].

4.5 Perceived Organizational Support

This theme should examine whether employees feel that management recognizes their contribution, listens to their concerns, and provides support when needed. The discussion can draw on the hospitality literature showing broad associations between perceived organizational support and employee attitudes, stress, service perceptions, performance, and intention to leave [9].

4.6 Meaning of a Comfortable Workplace

The final theme should synthesize participants' definitions of workplace comfort. Comfort may emerge as physical convenience, interpersonal acceptance, psychological safety, fair treatment, manageable workload, or a sense of belonging. The analysis should prioritize participants' own meanings rather than imposing a predetermined definition.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is designed to examine employee comfort as an organizational experience shaped by work culture, interpersonal relationships, communication, work environment, organizational values, and perceived support. Existing research suggests that employee well-being in service and hospitality organizations is influenced by interacting individual, group, and organizational resources. A qualitative approach allows these dimensions to be explored through employees' own descriptions of everyday work.

The final conclusion should be based entirely on the interview findings. It should identify the cultural practices that employees perceive as supportive, the communication patterns that encourage or restrict openness, and the workplace conditions that contribute to comfort or discomfort. Recommendations should be derived from the empirical themes and may address communication routines, supervisor support, teamwork, recognition, workload management, and the alignment between stated organizational values and everyday practices.

REFERENCES

[1] Saito, H., Brozović, D., & Baum, T., "Well-being of hospitality employees: A systematic literature review.," International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 124, 103955, 2025. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103955.

[2] Srimulyani, V. A., & Hermanto, Y. B., "Organizational culture as a mediator of credible leadership influence on work engagement: Empirical studies in private hospitals in East

Java, Indonesia.," Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, vol. 9, 274, 2022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01289-z.

[3] Watanabe, Y., Takemura, K., Nakayama, M., Gobel, M. S., Domae, H., & Uchida, Y., "Person-organization fit in Japan: A longitudinal study of the effects of clan culture and interdependence on employee well-being.," Current Psychology, vol. 43, pp. 15445–15458, 2024. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05389-0.

[4] Edmondson, A. C., & Besieux, T., "Reflections: Voice and silence in workplace conversations.," Academy of Management Discoveries, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 269–286, 2022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2021.1928910.

[5] Lozano Gutiérrez, M. D., & Duran Bravo, P., "Communication and leadership in the organizational culture of restaurant companies: A conceptual approach.," Organicom, vol. 20, no. 43, 2023. doi: https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2238-2593.organicom.2023.214459.

[6] Wijngaards, I., King, O. C., Burger, M. J., & van Exel, J., "Worker well-being: What it is, and how it should be measured.," Applied Research in Quality of Life, vol. 17, pp. 795–832, 2022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-021-09930-w.

[7] Bobbio, A., Canova, L., & Manganelli, A. M., "Organizational work-home culture and its relations with the work–family interface and employees' subjective well-being.," Applied Research in Quality of Life, vol. 17, pp. 2933–2966, 2022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10048-w.

[8] Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Tang, M., Saeed, A., & Iqbal, J., "Does incivility in quick service restaurants suppress the voice of employee? A moderated mediation model.," International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 103, 103204, 2022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103204.

[9] Yan, Z., Zhang, Z., & Choo, W. C., "What does the past mean for the future? A meta-analysis of perceived organizational support in hospitality and tourism.," Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, vol. 59, pp. 127–138, 2024. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.04.004.

[10] Petitta, L., & Martínez-Córcoles, M., "A conceptual model of mindful organizing for effective safety and crisis management: The role of organizational culture.," Current Psychology, vol. 42, pp. 25773–25792, 2023. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03702-x.

[11] Saito, H., Brozović, D., & Baum, T., "Wellness dimensions of hospitality employees: A systematic review.," International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 124, 103958, 2025. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103958.

[12] Zhou, X., et al., "The effects of recovery experiences on hotel employees' subjective well-being, organizational citizenship behavior, and task performance.," International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 121, 103798, 2024. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103798.

[13] Alotaibi, S. M., et al., "Emotional culture of joy and happiness at work as a facet of wellbeing: A mediation of psychological safety and relational attachment.," Personnel Review, vol. 52, no. 9, pp. 2133–2152, 2024. doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2021-0285.

[14] Jetha, A., Le Pouésard, M., Mustard, C., Backman, C., & Gignac, M. A. M., "Getting the message right: Evidence-based insights to improve organizational return-to-work communication practices.," Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, vol. 31, pp. 652–663, 2021. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-021-09961-y.

.