



**UNIVERSITY
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WORKPLACE HARMONY: HOW AND WHY?

INTRODUCTION

The previous edition, “Sustaining Excellence through Continuous Self-Assessment,” highlighted the value of reflecting on our performance, attitudes, behaviours, and relationships. This edition focuses on **Workplace Harmony - How & Why?** Recognising how respectful communication, appreciation of differences, constructive conflict management and shared goals create an environment defined by higher productivity, stronger collaboration, and sustained excellence.



**MR OLASUNMADE
OLAWALE KAZEEM**

*Principal Assistant Registrar
Human Resource Management Directorate
University of Lagos*

Workplace harmony is a cooperative agreement between employees and management to pursue shared organisational goals through mutual benefit, peace, and unity. By prioritising balance and respectful terms of employment, it fosters a supportive environment where individuals feel valued, understood, and motivated to collaborate.

HOW AND WHY IS WORKPLACE HARMONY REQUIRED?

Maintaining workplace harmony mitigates severe behavioural risks like bullying and discrimination while driving engagement, productivity, and sustainable growth. By resolving conflict and fostering a collaborative culture, organisations simultaneously protect employee well-being and elevate overall business performance.

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING WORKPLACE HARMONY

Creating workplace harmony requires intentional effort. Here are some actionable strategies:

1. *Cooperation of employees and the employers*

Cooperation replaces internal competition with collaborative action, using effective communication, mutual assistance, and respect to build trust, resolve conflict constructively, and drive collective performance.

2. *Open Communication*

Communication aligns workforce efforts with organisational goals to drive growth by ensuring mutual understanding, management-employee interaction, and effective coordination—fostering workplace harmony, teamwork, and organisational advancement.

3. *Collective Agreement (Consensus)*

A collective agreement formalises the alignment between employer goals (productivity and profitability) and worker priorities (welfare, fair compensation, and working conditions). Established through voluntary collective bargaining, these agreements define employment terms, provide a framework for resolving industrial disputes, and maintain operational stability.



4. *Responsibilities Fulfillment*

Responsibility fulfillment is the obligation to satisfactorily complete and deliver assigned tasks, held accountable by consequences for failure. Across all organisational levels, it reflects an individual or collective commitment to reliably meet operational duties and uphold commitments.

5. *Interpersonal relationship*

Interpersonal relationships—spanning peer, superior-subordinate, and formal or informal ties—are essential for workforce retention, team performance, and productivity. Built intentionally through progressive stages from acquaintance to friendship, these daily workplace interactions rely on trust, courtesy, and shared goals to drive individual engagement and collective success.

6. *Relationship with Colleagues*

Fostering positive interpersonal relationships among peers across all organisational levels is essential for institutional unity, collaboration, and productivity. Built on honesty, courtesy, and mutual respect, these formal and informal peer connections enhance group performance, drive mutual support, and determine the overall longevity and strength of workplace cohesion.

7. *Interpersonal relationship in Work Groups*

A work group—or task force—is a cross-functional team brought together to solve specific operational problems, improve quality, and enhance overall organisational performance. Built on formal structures and collective responsibility, these groups rely on courtesy, honesty, and team spirit to leverage diverse expertise, boost productivity, and drive profitability.

8. *Interpersonal relationship between Management and Employees*

The management-employee relationship is a core driver of organizational performance, resilience, and goal achievement. Supportive, impartial leadership builds trust and grants staff direct access to organisational knowledge, enabling data-driven decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, and collective success.

LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PROMOTING WORKPLACE HARMONY

A leadership role bridges strategy and execution by directing people and resources toward shared goals. By defining vision, driving change, making decisions, and removing obstacles, leaders shape organisational culture, elevate morale, and empower teams to achieve sustainable growth and high performance.

Core functions of leadership roles are as follows:

1. *Vision & Strategy* : Creating a clear future direction and aligning people with it.
2. *Motivation & Inspiration* : Encouraging, praising, and understanding team needs to boost engagement.
3. *Guidance & Support*: Defining roles, providing tools, and helping employees grow.
4. *Decision-Making*: Taking responsibility, making choices, and solving problems.
5. *Culture Building*: Communicating core values, fostering collaboration, and managing stress.
6. *Execution & Accountability*: Ensuring plans are implemented and taking ownership of results.
7. *Communication*: Acting as a liaison between management and staff, and providing transparency.
8. *Leading by Example*: Embodying the values and conduct expected of the team.
9. *Building Trust*: Demonstrating honesty and vulnerability to encourage open communication.
10. *Empowerment*: Enabling employees to develop skills and take ownership.
11. *Adaptability*: Guiding the organisation through change and challenges. In essence, leaders influence, direct, and empower individuals and teams, making them crucial for translating organisational strategy into tangible success.

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE HARMONY ON EMPLOYEES AND ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

1. Workplace harmony fosters a positive culture that drives employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention, ultimately powering innovation and overall organisational success.

Impacts on Employees

A harmonious workplace creates a supportive and collaborative environment that directly benefits employees' well-being and professional lives in the following ways:

1. *Increased Job Satisfaction and Morale*: A harmonious workplace lowers stress while boosting morale, job satisfaction, and a sense of belonging through mutual respect and strong interpersonal relationships.
2. *Enhanced Engagement and Commitment*: Feeling heard, valued, and respected directly increases employee engagement and commitment to the organisation's mission.
3. *Improved Well-being*: A physically and psychologically safe work environment reduces stress, anxiety, and burnout, directly supporting overall employee health and well-being.
4. *Better Communication and Collaboration*: Open, transparent communication allows employees to share ideas and feedback without fear, strengthening teamwork and collective problem-solving.
5. *Professional Growth*: Investing in employee development within a harmonious culture makes workers feel valued, driving motivation to continuously expand their skills and knowledge.

Impacts on Organisational Excellence

Workplace harmony is a cornerstone of organizational excellence, translating employee benefits into tangible organisational success:

1. *Higher Productivity and Performance:* Effective communication and teamwork in a harmonious environment directly elevate overall productivity, operational efficiency, and individual employee performance.

2. *Reduced Turnover and Absenteeism:*

High job satisfaction and a positive work environment reduce employee turn-over intentions, lowering turnover rates and associated costs.

3. *Enhanced Innovation and Adaptability:*

A psychologically safe culture encourages risk-taking and diverse perspectives, driving creativity, innovation, and organisational agility in dynamic environments.

4. *Stronger Organizational Culture and Reputation:*

Aligning employee actions with core values strengthens organisational culture, enhancing company reputation and attracting top talent.

5. *Effective Conflict Resolution:* Constructive social dialogue and formal resolution procedures prevent minor workplace disagreements from escalating into major operational disruptions like grievances or strikes.

6. *Increased Loyalty and Trust:* Fair, ethical management fosters trust and loyalty, inspiring employees to go above and beyond for the organisation's success.

In essence, workplace harmony creates a reciprocal bond where positive organisational treatment drives employee effort, loyalty, and performance—ultimately yielding sustained competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

Workplace harmony extends beyond regulatory compliance—such as Singapore's Workplace Fairness Act—by embedding mutual respect, active listening, and comprehensive well-being into core culture through three pillars:

1. *Collaborative Networks:* Cultivates cross-functional teamwork and inclusive communication across all organisational levels.
2. *Holistic Care:* Prioritises overall employee well-being to drive productivity and job satisfaction.
3. *Employee Voice:* Ensures workers are heard, valued, and respected for their diverse perspectives.

