Psychological Well-being in Multicultural Teams

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Abstract

For years researchers have been heavily investigating the topics of well-being and improvement of quality of life. It was speculated that the level of psychological well-being of employees directly affects their engagement in work as well as productivity and overall satisfaction with the job and life in general (Harter et al., 2002). This correlation was crucial for leaders and the way they distribute their resources to pursue business growth. To be prosperous and productive, the dedicated focus had to shift to the management style and employees’ feeling of well-being. The objective of this research paper was to point out the ways managers can improve psychological well-being within a multicultural team.

The results and recommendations were based on an up-to-date literature review and empirical research. The literature review pointed out key factors related to psychological well-being in teams relating to stress, fear, and the influence of positive leadership on psychological safety in a multicultural team. Two interviews were conducted during this research involving the expert in human resource management in multicultural teams and the expert on psychological climate in teams, to help identify features of the psychological well-being and to help identify methods that can contribute to its improvement.

The results achieved: interpersonal trust, psychological safety, and management style have much influence on psychological well-being in multicultural teams. Methods including clear communication channels among all members of a team, conducting different training programs, and creating a supportive and trust-filled environment were developed and proposed as the means that can improve psychological well-being in international teams.

The major goal of the thesis was to provide practical recommendations and solutions for improving psychological well-being in multicultural teams. This research is important since the psychological well-being of employees acts as a crucial factor for team performance and achieving common goals. The paper offers certain specific methods and approaches that can be applied by leaders and managers in order to create a supportive and psychologically healthy environment in multicultural teams.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Psychological Well-Being, Stress Management, Fear Management, Positive Leadership, Multicultural Teams
## Contents

1. **Introduction** ................................................................................................................. 3  
   1.1. Background of the Thesis ......................................................................................... 3  
   1.2. Research Problem, Objective, Questions ................................................................. 4  
   1.3. Thesis Structure ......................................................................................................... 5  
2. **Theoretical Background** .............................................................................................. 6  
   2.1. Concept of Well-being ............................................................................................... 6  
      2.1.1. Hedonic Viewpoint on Well-being ....................................................................... 7  
      2.1.2. Eudemonic Viewpoint on Well-Being ................................................................ 7  
      2.1.3. Social Viewpoint on Well-being ......................................................................... 9  
   2.2. Well-being In a Workplace ...................................................................................... 9  
      2.2.1. Psychological safety within a workplace ........................................................... 10  
      2.2.2. Physiological Well-being ................................................................................ 11  
      2.2.3. Social Well-being ............................................................................................ 12  
      2.2.4. Financial Well-being ....................................................................................... 12  
   2.3. Which Factors Affect Well-being in a Workplace? .................................................. 12  
   2.4. Fear as an Obstacle for Well-being ....................................................................... 13  
   2.5. Stress as an obstacle for well-being ..................................................................... 16  
   2.6. Effect of positive leadership on psychological well-being in a team ....................... 17  
   2.7. Psychological well-being in multicultural teams ................................................... 18  
   2.8. Connection between psychological well-being and performance ......................... 19  
3. **Methodology** .................................................................................................................. 21  
   3.1. Qualitative research approach ............................................................................... 21  
   3.2. Data Collection ....................................................................................................... 22  
   3.3. Data Analysis .......................................................................................................... 25  
   3.4. Verification of Findings ......................................................................................... 26  
4. **Results** ........................................................................................................................... 28  
   4.1. Factors affecting psychological well-being in a multicultural team ....................... 29  
   4.2. Tools and methods that can improve psychological well-being in a multicultural team 30  
   4.3. Connection between leadership style and psychological well-being within a multicultural team 32  
5. **Discussion** ...................................................................................................................... 35  
   5.1. Answers to research questions ............................................................................... 35  
   5.2. Managerial implications ......................................................................................... 37  
   5.3. Assessment of the results in the light of the literature ........................................... 39
1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Thesis

Issues of psychological well-being in the workplace are becoming a lot more relevant in today’s world. Experts from different fields, including psychology, management, and economics, have recognized that workers’ psychological well-being is one of the key factors to business success and the sustainable development and growth processes of companies. However, all efforts being made to reform and improve working conditions still do not seem to eliminate the problems of low psychological well-being and poor mental health of the employees completely.

Several reports and research support this aspect regarding the importance of the topic of psychological well-being at work. In 2022, The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have made a statement and published a call for action, aimed to attract more attention to the mental health of employees. They have stated that governments and leaders of organizations are responsible for employee’s mental health and promoting psychological well-being in the work environment. In the statement it is mentioned that people spend more and more time at work, which calls for the workplace to be healthy and safe (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2022). Another study by Rajgopal (2010) states that psychological well-being and health of the employees is one of the main factors in their overall health and productivity. He mentions that lower levels of mental safety and well-being in organizations lead to higher levels of job-related stress, which in turn causes higher sick leaves, decreased motivation and productivity and high turnover rate (Rajgopal, 2010).

The author’s intention is to find out what are the main factors that can influence psychological well-being and how those factors can be improved at a leadership level of an intercultural organization. Those findings are considered to help the author understand how to improve psychological well-being in multicultural teams. In order to answer research questions and achieve set goals, the author will use qualitative data collection using semi-structured interviews.

The author’s motivation in choosing a topic about psychological well-being in a multicultural team is an important factor that determines the direction of the research. One of the main reasons for choosing this topic is the author’s personal experience with the challenges and complexities associated with a multicultural work environment.
The author has personal experience studying and working in an international environment, where she encountered a variety of cultures, values, and customs. She observed how various cultural factors, including language barriers, differences in communication, and perceptions of time and work, could affect employees’ emotional well-being and motivation. Also, it came to the author’s attention that psychological safety heavily depended on each manager and his/her leadership style.

Another reason for the author’s motivation was the desire to improve the work environment and help managers create workplaces that would promote psychological well-being in multicultural teams. In author’s opinion, workplaces that would value psychological well-being would create a more safe and prosperous business environment in general.

In addition, the author was interested in developing and expanding existing knowledge about multicultural teams and their psychological well-being. Besides the motivation to contribute to the improvement of the business environment by providing leaders with guidelines on how to improve psychological well-being, the motivation was to contribute to the development of the research into the topic of organizational psychology.

1.2. Research Problem, Objective, Questions
The research problem behind this thesis lies in the assumption that a lack of psychological safety and well-being in a workplace affects employees’ productivity and the company’s development. The goal of the thesis is to understand how to improve psychological well-being within a multicultural team in the work environment.

As the end-result of the conducted research, the author plans to create a methodology or a guidebook for managers on tools and practices that can help to promote mental health at work and create a psychologically safe environment for employees. This, in turn, can help improve the overall team performance and the company’s productivity.

In order to achieve the set objective, the author has formulated the following questions:

**Main question:**
How to improve psychological well-being in a multicultural team?
**Sub-question 1:**
What are the determinants of psychological well-being in a multicultural team?

**Sub-question 2:**
What tools help to improve the determinants of psychological well-being in a multicultural team?

The author plans to answer the research questions by studying the available literature on the subjects of well-being, psychological well-being, and factors that can affect it, as well as literature on the topic of managing multicultural teams and organizations. In order to support the findings from the theory, the author of this research paper plans to conduct qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews with two professionals practicing psychology and HR management in multicultural teams.

1.3. **Thesis Structure**
This thesis' structure is outlined in this sub-chapter. The introduction chapter provides the reader with the justification for the choice of the research topic in connection to the importance of the topic for the business community and the author's personal motivation. The research's primary question and two sub-questions are presented. Chapter two features a literature review of the topic, with a focus on psychological well-being, well-being, the significance of stress, and fear, and how they might impact mental health and safety in the workplace. The study's methodology comes next, detailing how the research was carried out. Moving on, the fourth chapter discusses the outcomes reached from scrutinizing the data collected during the study. This section reviews the research queries laid out in the thesis introduction, answering them in accordance with the qualitative research process. Chapter five provides a discussion of the results considering the literature review from chapter two and gives recommendations for the use of the results in the business environment.
2. Theoretical Background

Attitude towards workplace psychological well-being has shifted since the pandemic in 2020, causing employers to change their perspective on the mental health issues of their employees and on how the work environment can cause or help in resolving those issues (Stringer, 2023). According to APA’s Work and Well-being Survey (2022) results, 71% of employees believe that their managers are more concerned about psychological well-being now than in the past and 81% of respondents said that support of mental health in the workplace would be a crucial factor when choosing a new job. All the above-mentioned calls for more research on the topic of what determines psychological well-being in a workplace and how it can be improved. This research aims to dig deeper into the matter of psychological well-being and the importance of mental health in the work environment. Potentially, research findings from this thesis would be beneficial for managers and leaders of various teams and organizations and could be used in order to create a safe place to work, which in turn will affect the company’s growth and prosperity.

2.1. Concept of Well-being

Throughout the entire human civilization history, many philosophers and researchers have attempted to analyze and define concepts of happiness and well-being (Kesebir & Diener, 2009). One of the modern viewpoints by Singh et al. (2016) looks at well-being as the combination of physical, psychological, and social aspects functioning at their most optimal point. In other words, well-being can be characterized by feelings of happiness, good physical health, and a sense of life meaningfulness. In this research, the author will mostly focus on the psychological aspect of well-being, which was mentioned above, nevertheless, it is considered valuable to briefly discuss the overall concept of well-being, its branches, and history.

Historically, well-being was described from two viewpoints: hedonic and eudemonic. Hedonic tradition views well-being subjectively as positive and joyful emotions and lack of pain. The eudemonic perspective sees well-being as a more complex issue, suggesting that happiness can be achieved only by experiencing meaningfulness and self-actualization (Johnson et al. 2018, p. 7; Singh et al. 2016, p. 156).

If applied to the work environment, hedonic (a) and eudaemonic (b) concepts of well-being can be understood as enjoying the work and receiving positive emotions from the work process (a) or as
having a sense of meaningfulness of the job (b). As was mentioned above, both of these aspects are interconnected, therefore one supplements the other. According to studies by Robertson and Cooper (2012), the sense of purpose and meaningfulness becomes drastically more important if the job is either dangerous, challenging, or unpleasant.

2.1.1. Hedonic Viewpoint on Well-being
Hedonic well-being, or as it is also called Subjective well-being, is mainly focused on positive and pleasant experiences in day-to-day life. As mentioned by Diener (1984), subjective well-being consists of three aspects: “the frequent experience of positive affect, the infrequent experience of negative affect, and positive cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction”.

Researchers have come up with a scale in order to measure the levels of hedonic well-being and one of the latest updates is SPANE - the 12-item Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences by Diener et al. (2010). This framework is used to measure the positive and negative effects by evaluating the frequency of occurrence of certain emotions and feelings. (Chen & Cooper 2014, p. 10).

One more additional component to hedonic or subjective well-being that is being mentioned is the judgment of life satisfaction. However, this aspect is not measured within the SPANE framework, it is either being considered on its own or within the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985, cited in Chen & Cooper, 2014, p. 10).

2.1.2. Eudemonic Viewpoint on Well-Being
The second approach is eudemonistic, which means the pursuit of happiness through self-actualization. Whereas hedonic happiness refers to the subjective experience of pleasure that we get when we engage in activities that are pleasurable to us. Eudemonic well-being, on the contrary, refers to the subjective experience of how we feel when we engage in an activity within which we are personally fulfilled, which is an expression of our best potential (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

The eudemonic viewpoint looks at well-being in connection to the satisfaction of the basic human needs for competence, autonomy, relatedness, and self-acceptance. This approach focuses on the meaningfulness of human activity and self-actualization (Chen & Cooper 2014, p. 11). The eude-
monic concept, in comparison with hedonic, does not focus on the feeling of individualistic pleasure, but rather on positive psychological functioning (Keyes, 2002, 2005, cited in Chen & Cooper 2014, pp. 11-12).

Ryff (1989) developed a model of psychological well-being in accordance with the eudemonic viewpoint, consisting of the following elements:

- A positive assessment of oneself and one's past (self-acceptance);
- A sense of continued growth and development as a person (personal growth);
- A sense that your life is full of meaning and purpose (life purpose);
- Quality relationships with others (positive relationships with others);
- Ability to manage your life and the world around you (environmental mastery);
- A sense of self-determination (autonomy).

Such a comprehensive study of psychological well-being makes it possible to connect objectively the external behavioral manifestation with the subjective self-assessment of one's self-perception of life satisfaction. The objectivity of this theory also lies in the fact that there is a certain positive, social norm to which any person's life functioning in psychological well-being depends on. This study uses the approach of Ryff (1989).

Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scales questionnaire (1989) is a theoretically grounded instrument designed to measure the expression of the main components of psychological well-being. Currently, Ryff's multidimensional model is accepted by many researchers, and the methodology developed by her for measuring psychological well-being is actively used in the research practice of many countries. This technique measures actual psychological well-being.
2.1.3. Social Viewpoint on Well-being
Fisher (2014) also mentions social well-being alongside hedonic and eudemonic, which refers to the importance of social relationships. The importance of social relationships is a widely known and accepted idea, that correlates perfectly with feelings of life satisfaction (Chen & Cooper 2014).

The model of overall well-being in life by Gallagher et al., (2009) supports this viewpoint and suggests that even though the three aforementioned approaches have distinctive specifications, they are highly interconnected and indicate overall well-being.

2.2. Well-being In a Workplace
In 2005 Gallup conducted research identifying the five elements of well-being. The study was conducted in 160 countries, giving access to the viewpoints of nearly 98% of the population in regard to how they perceive well-being. Those five factors are universally accepted measurements of well-being for people, which distinguish a happy life from a struggling life (Clifton & Harter, 2021).

According to Clifton and Harter (2021), the five aspects contributing to the overall well-being of an individual are:

1. Social Well-being - attributing to an individual positive perception of meaningful connections in his/her life;

2. Financial Well-being - satisfaction with one’s financial situation;

3. Physical Well-being - satisfaction with one’s energy levels and body capabilities;

4. Community Well-being - positive perception of individual's surroundings and quality of life;

5. Career Well-being - satisfaction with one’s daily tasks and career development.
Out of all the listed aspects, career well-being is stated to be the most important one above all else as it includes all the rest. Hesketh and Cooper (2019) came to the conclusion that the well-being of employees in a workplace is a direct outcome of how the work and the workplace influence overall feelings of happiness and satisfaction of the individual. However, nowadays, people do not only expect their employer to provide them with the opportunity to earn money. They also want to feel a sense of belonging, and meaningfulness, want their employer to provide physical health care opportunities, and for the organizations to have a corporate social responsibility to make a greater impact on the world around them (Clifton & Harter, 2021). One more important factor considering the mental well-being at a workplace, is job insecurity, which can be described as a fear of uncertainty of the future in regards to the job that one has (Russo & Terraneo, 2020). As can be clearly seen, workplace well-being is an incredibly complex subject, which covers a variety of topics.

According to Hesketh and Cooper (2019), workplace well-being can be viewed through 4 dimensions of well-being in general: psychological, physiological, social, and professional well-being.

![Four Dimensions of Well-being](Image)

**Figure 1. Four Dimensions of Well-being (Hesketh and Cooper, 2019).**

### 2.2.1. Psychological safety within a workplace

According to the research on the topic of well-being (Hesketh & Cooper, 2019, p.13; Robertson & Cooper, 2011, p.4), work has a higher rate of effect and influence on the psychological well-being of an individual compared to the other three dimensions. Psychological well-being is one of the most crucial factors for establishing a prosperous and resultative team. Employees tend to perform at their best when their need for self-assurance is fulfilled, they know that they can overcome moderate challenges and acquire desired competencies (Deci et al., 2017). As mentioned by
Cook (2021), feelings of fear and anxiety can make people feel unwell on a physical level, which may result in poor communication with others. This, in turn, can affect the overall dynamics within the work environment. Edmondson (1999), defined psychological safety within a team as “a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.” In other words, a psychologically safe workplace enables employees to speak their minds and not be subjected to unreasonable criticism, bullying, and punishment. Additionally, psychological safety encourages sharing information and learning and increases employee engagement and team members’ commitment (Frazier et al., 2017). If employees feel at risk when voicing their concerns, opinions, and ideas, the likelihood of them doing it repeatedly is low, therefore the would be a high chance of missing out on unique information that could have been shared in a safe environment (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety is also believed to have an impact on such concepts as job commitment (Detert & Burris, 2007; O’Neill & Arendt, 2008) and creativity (Madjar & Ortiz-Walters, 2009).

Edmondson and Lei (2014) have stated that “in sum a psychologically safe environment enables divergent thinking, creativity, and risk-taking and motivates engagement in exploratory and exploitative learning, thereby promoting team performance”. Newman et al. (2017) also have supported this statement by further research on positive outcomes of psychological safety on individuals, teams, and organizations. However, it is important to mention that this statement varies, depending on the nature of the team. According to the study by Sanner and Bunderson (2015), psychological safety has a lot higher importance in teams where social-interaction, collective thinking and problem-solving are taking place, compared to the teams working on routine, predictable and isolated tasks.

2.2.2. Physiological Well-being
Physiological well-being is commonly perceived wrongly as the absence of injury or sickness. Hesketh and Cooper (2019), even state that an employee might be sustaining a physical injury, however, still be present at the workplace and his/her overall well-being will not be negatively influenced.

Physiological well-being in a workplace can be defined by access to health care services, sports services, healthy food and beverages, and balance between work and leisure. However, physiolog-
ical well-being is not limited to that only. Our physiological well-being is directly connected to psychological well-being, as the latter can cause anxiety and depression, which in turn lead to serious consequences on a physical level.

2.2.3. Social Well-being

It is a commonly accepted statement that humans are social animals, and we exist only in social settings. Having a well-established social circle outside of the work setting is crucial for each individual. Engaging in communal activities, staying connected and networking within society, and forming significant relationships are ways to enhance one’s social well-being (Hesketh & Cooper, 2019).

However, creating and promoting good social relations between employees in a team is also important for the well-being of each individual and team in general. Encouraging employees to communicate onsite during work hours during sports events or social gatherings can promote better communication during office hours and improve professional productivity (Hesketh & Cooper, 2019).

2.2.4. Financial Well-being

Financial stability and a positive perception of one’s financial situation are crucial for employees’ career well-being. This does not only apply to the employee’s ability to earn enough money at the given position but also to the company’s ability to pay wages during times of uncertainty and crisis. Additionally, financial well-being is tightly connected to the psychological feeling of being appreciated, trusted, and valued (Dewe et al., 2012).

2.3. Which Factors Affect Well-being in a Workplace?

In 2004, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) agency, there is a set of ‘Management Standards’ according to which there are minimal reasonable requirements for one’s job:

1. Demands: Employees can effectively handle the demands of their job, which include workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

2. Control: Employees have the authority to participate in decisions regarding their work.
3. Support: Employees receive adequate information, encouragement, sponsorship, and resources from the organization, line management, and colleagues.

4. Relationships: The emphasis is on cultivating positive working relationships to prevent conflict and deal with unacceptable behavior such as workplace bullying.

5. Role: Employees comprehend their responsibilities and roles, and the organization guarantees that there are no conflicting roles.

6. Change: Employees feel that they are actively involved during organizational changes and that the organization values their contributions (Hasson & Butler, 2020).

In case employees feel like those requirements are not being met, psychological safety issues might arise. Especially if employees feel unable to perform due to task overload, tight deadlines, or inability to communicate with their managers. Based on the aforementioned theory it can be concluded that if an individual feels insecure or does not see the meaning in his/her job, this will eventually lead to stress and other psychological issues that may arise.

2.4. Fear as an Obstacle for Well-being

Fear is a powerful psychological issue that in some companies becomes part of the work process. And it is not just the fear of punishment or dismissal. People are silent so as not to get into an awkward position, not to lose face, or not to be a messenger with bad news. Not wanting to upset or offend the manager is also a common reason why employees prefer to keep their opinions to themselves. Of course, not every idea is good and not every question is appropriate, but it is much worse when employees are afraid to express any ideas, ask questions or report problems. Today, it is vital to create an environment in organizations where the interpersonal climate does not lead to suppression, silence, ridicule, or intimidation. In order for a company to always have a place for innovation, an atmosphere conducive to the mutual exchange of knowledge between people is required. And the process of obtaining knowledge and development includes doubts, questions, mistakes, and failures.
Why is fear dangerous for business? In her research, Amy Edmondson (1999), uses many examples from various industries to prove that psychological safety affects not only the financial performance of an organization but also in some cases helps to avoid collapse and real tragedies.

Nowadays organizations tend to rely on employees for those to contribute not only their time and energy to the workload but also to contribute their ideas, thoughts, and observations. However, there has been a lot of research proving that employees tend to remain silent when they are asked for opinions and thoughts regarding work tasks or matters that require creativity and thinking out of the box. According to the aforementioned research, the main reason for employees’ silence is fear. Research by Ryan and Oestreich (1998), states that “at least 70% of the 260 people we interviewed said that they had hesitated to speak up because they feared some type of repercussion”. Another research by Milliken et al. (2003) says that 85% of the interview subjects in the research confirmed that they were unable to speak up or raise a concern to their managers despite the importance of the issue, at least once in their working life. It was proven by the aforementioned researchers and many others that fear causes employees to shut down and not feel safe enough to speak up.

In the research by Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) on silence caused by fear in organizations, the authors try to define silence. They conclude that silence is not the opposite of voice, which is defined as proactive behavior through which employees speak up and offer creative and constructive ideas (Hirschman, 1970). While voice is considered to be deliberative and prosocial, silence is not that highly deliberative. The difference is that silence often has its roots in unintentional, subconscious processes (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009).

The aforementioned research paper by Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) describes different types of silence that might appear in the organization. Defensive silence, for example, is described as “intentional behavior followed by a conscious decision to withhold ideas” (Van Dyne et al., 2003). However, there are many factors that affect the degree of silence, for example, based on the intensity of the fear and the time to consider the response. Authors believe that silence that is triggered by intense fear and has a short response time should be considered an automatic, unconscious response. Furthermore, the authors present the concept of “habituated silence,” which might appear as a result of repetitive episodes of fear-driven silence (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009).
The higher the psychological safety within the team the higher the possibility of employees voicing their ideas and thoughts, whilst low psychological safety levels are directly associated with silence out of fear (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009).

Talking about reasons behind fear in terms of speaking up in the workplace, researchers mention a broad variety: from managers' openness for dialogue and perceived safety within the team to insecurity about one’s employment. Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) propose that there are two basic sources of fear:

1. Humans’ historical and biological need to be self-protective around people with higher status in society;

2. Childhood traumas, especially with authority figures extend to every area of life, intensifying the aforementioned historical and biological need to be vigilant.

To sum up, humans intuitively sense an authority figure and based on previous experiences and general human history tend to sense fear when required to “challenge” those authority figures due to their ability to accumulate and distribute essential resources (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). In other words, having previous bad experiences with the manager or knowing that confrontation might end up in losing a promotion, employees would choose not to speak up.

Figure 2. Origin and intensity of fear (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009)
As mentioned earlier, researchers have identified that there are two variables of the threat: “threat immediacy” and “threat severity” (Blanchard & Blanchard, 2008). Threat immediacy stands for the amount of time a person must come up with a response. Threat severity, on the other hand, is an individual perception of the possible threat based on previous personal experience. Depending on those variables, fear intensity can either go higher or lower.

How to manage fear in organization

According to the research by Kish-Gephart et al. (2009), there are two ways to deal with the silence that arises as a response to the fear of an authority figure in a workplace: anger and voice efficacy. Researchers argue that anger, as a very strong emotion, can help overcome fear in one’s brain making him or her react in a proactive way instead of keeping silent. Despite its potential to help overcome fear in the workplace, anger has its downsides such as aggression and general perception of anger as something dysfunctional, unnecessary, and irrational. On the other hand, self-efficacy, and in particular voice efficacy, has mostly positive characteristics. If an employee believes that he/she possesses a particular set of skills and is qualified enough to use the aforementioned skills in order to perform a task or give a comment on a particular matter, he/she has more confidence to speak up (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009).

2.5. Stress as an obstacle for well-being

Based on the research by Selye (1975), stress can be defined as "the psychological and physiological nonspecific response of the body to any demand, whether positive or negative". Stress is a widely spread workplace issue that concerns employees of all levels and can have drastic effects on all areas of life starting from job satisfaction and overall performance drop down to severe mental health problems. Bhui et al. (2016) defines work-related stress as an employee’s reaction to certain work-related demands that do not match the level of the employees’ knowledge, which in turn builds up the tension and creates challenges that might affect overall employment.

According to the same research by Selye (1975), stress can be caused either by positive or negative factors. Stress can activate the adaptive mechanisms of the human body to all types of stimuli, and it can induce both positive reactions in the body and have a negative effect, leading to disease. Positive stress is thought to be motivational and encouraging employees to perform to the
top of their abilities, however, the general effect of stress is still negative, and it is the root of such problems as anxiety, burnout, and depression.

So, it is concluded that stress influences employees on an individual level. The same in turn applies to group settings and the psychological well-being of a team. Eisenberger et al. (2002) found that highly demanding work tasks and limited time frames for performing those, which in turn cause stress, can be significant predictors of emotional exhaustion and job burnout in team members.

Additionally, stress influences a team’s ability to cooperate and work productively together. Research by Dietz et al. (2017) has shown that stress leads to negative emotions, anxiety, a significant decrease in the quality of communication and collaboration as well as conflict and loss of team orientation.

A study by Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) states as one of the initial causes behind the burn-out causes that employees act counterproductively in work-related activities, opposite to the ultimate teamwork goal of being productive. It also causes employees to take absence leaves and disengage from team activities and productive communication.

2.6. Effect of positive leadership on psychological well-being in a team

According to the research by Kelloway and Barling (2010) on the effects of leadership on occupational health psychology, leaders can substantially affect the well-being of an individual, team, and organization. Leaders can either promote psychological well-being and organizational safety climate or they can be the reason for employees’ stress, diseases, workplace injuries, and other health-related problems (Kelloway & Barling, 2010). The following chapter will attempt to evaluate the effect of positive leadership on the psychological well-being of a team as well as the lack of positive leadership in an organization, starting with the definition of positive leadership and its characteristics.

The idea of positive leadership was presented by Cameron et al. (2003) and is best described as an attempt to foster positive deviations in employees in their work process. This goal according to Cameron et al. (2003) can be achieved by applying positivistic principles to the management process: positive psychology and positive change.
Positive leadership is a leadership style characterized by positive emotions, behaviors, and attitudes that promote employee well-being (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). According to Cameron (2012), one of the qualifications of positive leadership is enabling a positive climate in a team. He believes that a positive climate has a tremendous impact on a team’s performance as it allows creativity and productivity to prosper through such practices as forgiveness, compassion, and gratitude that leaders must promote.

Another aspect of positive leadership that promotes psychological and overall well-being in a team is communication. Cameron (2012) states that enriching communication and satisfying interpersonal relationships impact the mental health of employees and have a positive impact on productivity and performance. Alongside promoting healthy interpersonal communication, researchers point out that positive leaders provide employees with feedback and recognition of their achievements, which then enhances the feeling of meaningfulness of their work and a sense of accomplishment (Cameron, 2012). One of the aspects of positive leadership feedback and communication, in general, is its descriptiveness instead of evaluation. Positively delivering the information allows to strengthen the relationships between the leader and employees, as well as positively affects employee’s self-perception (Cameron, 2012). Additionally, such healthy communication promotes trust by expressing trustworthy behaviors and creating a climate of fairness and justice, without the fear of unreasonable punishment (Mayer et al., 1995).

Positive leaders create a work environment that promotes support, empowerment, and meaningfulness, which all contribute to the improvement of psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In light of Cameron’s perception of positive leadership, the statement of Edmondson (1999) that positive leaders encourage a climate of psychological safety where team members feel comfortable expressing their ideas, opinions, and concerns without fear of negative consequences does not raise any concerns.

2.7. Psychological well-being in multicultural teams
Research conducted by Hofstede et al. (2010) identified six cultural dimensions that may affect psychological well-being in multicultural teams. These dimensions include individualism-collectivism, degree of hierarchy, uncertainty avoidance, male and female orientation, and short- and long-term goal orientation. Understanding and addressing these differences can help to create a psychologically safe environment where each team member can feel accepted and respected.
The quality of interaction and communication is another key aspect of psychological well-being in multicultural teams. Open and effective communication builds trust, reduces conflict, and increases cooperation within a team. Research conducted by Kotzé and Massyn (2019) found that communication-based on mutual understanding and respect for cultural differences is a key contributor to psychological well-being in multicultural teams. They recommend active listening, asking questions, and openly discussing differences so that team members can better understand each other and collaborate more effectively.

Leadership also plays an important role in shaping psychological well-being in multicultural teams. Team leaders must obtain intercultural competence, the ability to adapt to different cultural contexts, and effective skills of managing diversity. Chen and Young (2012) suggest that intercultural training and leadership coaching can improve intercultural competence and leadership effectiveness in multicultural teams. Such pieces of training can include the development of cross-cultural communication, conflict management, and decision-making skills in a diverse environment.

2.8. **Connection between psychological well-being and performance**

A study by Robertson and Cooper (2012) shows eight specific factors that affect the performance climate of the organization: effort, innovation and flexibility, quality, performance feedback, skill development, and concern for employees' well-being. The relevance of employees' psychological safety to an organization's performance is of utmost importance. With the higher regard of managing personnel concerning the matter by the management, the outcome and success of the respective organization are bound to improve notably.

For a variety of reasons, psychological security and safety have a deep impact on a business's success. If the employer offers workers a safe and encouraging atmosphere which further elevates both motivation and contentment it would result in advanced productivity as well as top-notch work quality. Additionally, a psychologically secure environment aids to alleviate stress and conflict in the workplace promoting successful teamwork alongside more fruitful problem-solving techniques. Simultaneously, psychological safety leads to decreased rates of employee turnover tending to lesser costs affiliated with hiring and training new staff.

Research also supports a link between psychological safety and company success. Rajgopal (2010) states that psychological well-being does not only improve the mental health of the employees,
but it has more profound and significant results on their productivity and performance, which has a direct correlation to business prosperity.

Also, it has been mentioned that improved workplace well-being has a positive impact on the work-life balance of employees, which is crucial for employees’ performance. Employees who feel supported and valued within the organization and have low-stress levels tend to have a better life outside of work (Guest et al., 2010).
3. Methodology

Psychological well-being in the team is an important aspect of organizational culture and the effective functioning of the workgroup. A team in which psychological safety reigns is capable of more effective communication, more productive work, and improved overall levels of employee satisfaction. This chapter justifies the use of a qualitative research method for scientific work on psychological safety in multicultural teams.

The purpose of this study is to identify the influence of various factors on psychological safety in the multicultural team and to assess the level of psychological safety and its relationship to other aspects of team performance.

Research objectives:

- To study the concept of "psychological safety in multicultural teams" and to identify its interrelation with other aspects of teamwork.
- To analyze the factors influencing psychological safety in multicultural teams.
- To develop recommendations for improving psychological safety in multicultural teams based on the results of the study.

3.1. Qualitative research approach

In contrast to quantitative methodologies, the results of qualitative research are mostly non-quantitative and are gathered through textual resources including interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. General main qualification of the qualitative research is that it operates only with non-numerical data (Crossman, 2020). Results from qualitative research frequently offer significant insights and evidence of discoveries through the analytical synthesis of data. Qualitative methods are commonly used to work with cases that contain numerous complex characteristics or cases to require the researcher to attain a deep understanding concerning any issue or to provide key insights (Saldana, 2011).
One of the salient features associated with qualitative research, especially when analyzing social matters, is a flexible approach since it enables the researcher to collect data quite spontaneously without showing severe restrictions on the respondents to provide thorough answers.

Another vital characteristic of qualitative research is its empirical nature, which enables the researcher to immerse into the environment under study and directly examine it. Thus, qualitative research is an ideal tool for the study of social phenomena in the natural environment and for gaining a superior detailed understanding of various aspects related to the subject. Psychological safety is a complicated matter possessing multifarious facets of perception by different people owing substantially to their encounters, cultural and social factors, education, and another affinity.

Qualitative research methods are commonly used to concentrate on complex phenomena such as psychological safety in teams and tend to investigate meanings, connections, processes and reactions (Crossman, 2020). Qualitative method allows to analyze the problem deeper and gain more detailed information concerning participants’ opinions and experiences and gains a detailed notion of the context as well as sociocultural factors that influence the problem (Patton, 2014).

3.2. Data Collection

Achieving psychological well-being in the workplace often faces several adverse issues, which can include inadequate social backing, oppressive direction from managers, and poor intercommunication among coworkers. To gain a more accurate familiarity with this issue, two semi-structured interviews were carried out with a professional human resources consultant and business psychologist both of whom specialize in working with multicultural teams. The interviews were conducted at the beginning of May 2023 via Zoom as both respondents are located in different geographical areas than the author.

Participants were selected based on the goal of the study, namely, to investigate psychological well-being in multicultural work teams. The key criteria to select participants were their experience in psychology and human resource management, as well as their experience working with international teams.

Two qualified professionals were chosen to conduct the interviews: a psychologist with 15 years of experience as a consultant on psychological climate in teams and team management, and an HR manager experienced in working with international teams.
A semi-structured interview was chosen as the data collection method because it allows for clarification of questions and detailed information from the experts. During the interviews, open-ended questions were asked that allowed the experts to talk about their experiences, and share examples, success stories, and failures.

As both experts were located in Russia and one of them was in a different time zone than the author, it was necessary to take into account the time difference and organize the interview according to the interviewees’ schedules. For this purpose, a preliminary discussion was held about the time when both of the respondents could be available for interviews. In the preliminary discussion the author also explained her background and the objective of the research. It was decided to conduct both interviews in an online video conference using Zoom software to save the audio and video recording of the interview for further analysis.

The interview began with an introduction of the parties and an explanation of the goals of this study. The interviews were conducted in several thematic blocks: questions about factors influencing psychological well-being in a team, effects of stress and fear on psychological well-being, positive leadership, and figuring out how to manage teams effectively and well, the relationship between psychological well-being and productivity. The experts talked about how they define the concept of psychological well-being in the multicultural team, what affects it, what tools and methods can be used to achieve such goal together, and what challenges and obstacles may arise when working with multicultural teams and finally how these things could be overcome.

During these interviews, both experts talked along with their experience in the field, share examples of different successful cases, describe some of the failing strategies in terms of establishing psychologically safe environment, have described what psychological techniques and methods can be used to work with multicultural teams, including coaching, stress and fear management trainings, cross-cultural communication skills trainings, psychological tests, language development trainings. Clarifying questions were also asked during the interview process to learn more about how the respondents applied their experience in given situations.

An important part of both interviews was a discussion of difficulties which might arise when working with different types of personalities, especially from different cultural backgrounds and how these problems can be solved. The importance of considering the context and characteristics of
each organization when doing these kinds of work with culturally diverse teams was mentioned by each respondent making it clear that it is important to access each team and organization individually.

Each interview was done ethically and confidentially. Participants were given quite detailed information regarding the purpose of the study, what rights they have, and the following use of data. During the interview, the author used a prepared list of questions however participants tend to answer the forthcoming questions without the need to ask those as they were giving a detailed response to the question that was initially asked. Active listening and clarifying inquiries were actively used to increase understanding of given answers. The interviews were recorded with consent from the participants and transcription for detailed analysis. It is important to mention that the interviews were conducted in Russian language as it is the common language among the participants. The respondents requested that the interviews would be conducted in Russian as both of them would feel more secure and confident speaking in their native language. The interviews were then translated into English by the author who is a bilingual user of Russian and English.

**Semi-structured interview**

This thesis used semi-structured interviews to assemble data. This interview method is among the most widespread approaches utilized for gathering qualitative information in sociological research (Patton, 2014). Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to gain an in-depth grasp of respondents’ experiences, besides uncovering discrepancies and likenesses in opinions and reports (Patton, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews are located between structured and unstructured interviews as they enable the respondent to communicate their thoughts and viewpoints on the topic more freely while having a list of topics pre-determined by the researcher, which allows them to stay on topic (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Using semi-structured interviews offered multiple advantages to this study. Primarily, it enabled more detailed responses when compared with structured interviewing techniques, which improved the understanding of participants' perspectives on the topic of psychological safety in the
international workplace. Secondly, respondents were able to express their thoughts and impressions regarding the matter unrestrictedly, permitting the discovery of new ideas and interconnections within the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

3.3. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a considerable tool for exploring qualitative information that is typically used in research related to social matters, such as psychological well-being in the work environment. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this systematized technique enables researchers to find, assess, and decipher conspicuous subjects and significative elements from the textual matter obtained during the investigation. This thesis presented the utilization of thematic analysis.

Firstly, it allowed the author to recognize and stress fundamental themes associated with psychological well-being inside the workplace. This approach offers a comprehensive insight into the components which influence employees' mental well-being. For example, the analysis of the data from the interviews allowed the author to divide the results into sub-themes and to single out issues such as cooperation within teams, the importance of guidance and leadership, the significance of job related stress and cross-cultural differences in organizations.

Additionally, the thematic analysis also brings up the unclear and not obvious factors that can effortlessly affect workers' mental stability. This approach allows researchers to identify semantic units which may not be obvious at the beginning of the research. For instance, studies may further reveal variables consistent with the effects of organizational cultures which exert great influence on their psychological health (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Third, thematic analysis directly contributes to the validity and reliability of a study by introducing organized and systematic ways to analyze data. Thematically structured analytic studies can organize and categorize the researcher. Thus, thematic analysis has become an established and recognized manner of conducting qualitative research that contributes to the credibility and accuracy of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
Besides, thematic analysis is also flexible since it allows tailoring of the method based on specifics of the interview about psychological well-being in the workplace. In conducting the analysis process, the researcher uses diverse approaches to identify themes as well as iterating cycles of analysis to include diversity and comprehensiveness of factors related to psychological well-being at work.

Finally, thematic analysis soothes the way from description to interpretation of data and development of practicable recommendations. Once the themes were identified and their variations described extensively, the author gains deeper and broad insights into the information affecting psychological well-being at work. Moreover, thematic analysis enables to develop and specify some feasible measures and effective methods to contribute to the objective of the research.

3.4. Verification of Findings

This section aims to explore the validity, credibility, and objectivity of the empirical study. Addressing the credibility, dependability, and objectivity of the research ensures that the research findings are relevant and valuable to other researchers and that the results are reasonable and trustworthy (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). Researchers bear the responsibility of assessing and discussing the accuracy and dependability of their research in one way or another. Therefore, this chapter will address the validity, reliability, and objectivity of the qualitative research conducted, considering its unique characteristics and context.

Validity and reliability of the research

Significant importance was placed on ensuring the validity and reliability of the results obtained in this study. According to Noble and Smith (2015) there are several ways to ensure validity and reliability of the qualitative research, such as ensuring transparency of the research, considering personal bias, supporting the findings with the past research and comparing the answers from the respondents.

In this study, several key approaches were used to achieve the set goal of reliability and validity. It was made sure that data from the interviews supported the findings from previous research, that
was covered in the literature review chapter. The author ensured the content validity of the literature review by using evidence-based information from reputable academic databases, as mentioned earlier. The author selected articles relevant to the topic of the study and screened them for relevance and authenticity.

The respondents for this research were chosen due to their extensive experience and knowledge on the matter of psychological teams, ensuring that the data they provide is reliable. None of the respondents have any connection to the author which eliminates the possibility of bias. The author also checked the validity of the results by reaching out to the study participants and providing them with initial results to compare to their own experiences. The author also maintained the validity and reliability of the findings by presenting the interview participants’ responses without modification, including grammatical errors or quotation content.

The study has the potential for generalization because the participants were from different fields and their practical experiences did not overlap. Thus, having similar responses from the study participants and corroborating the results with the literature allows the findings to be generalized for application to different situations.
4. Results

Investigating how to increase psychological well-being in a multicultural work team was the objective of this study. Prior chapters examined theoretical fundamentals of psychological well-being, the forces influencing it, and the difficulties that arise in multicultural teams. This chapter exhibits the results acquired through semi-structured interviews with a psychologist and human resource manager. It is important to mention that these findings express the perspectives and experiences of those experts and later can be supplemented or broadcasted using further research.

The thematic analysis of the two interviews revealed several critical factors impacting psychological well-being and productivity in a multicultural team, as well as allowed the author to come up with a list of tools and methods that might be of help in creating a psychologically safe environment. The first interview covered the definition of psychological well-being at the workplace, factors that affect mental health in intercultural teams, successful interventions and tools intended for maintaining psychological well-being, the consequences that stress and fear might have on psychological well-being, the importance of the correct leadership style as well as the connection between psychological wellbeing and productivity. Primary discoveries from the review of the first interview reaffirm the importance of psychological well-being in working teams. Open and transparent communication, strong positive leadership as well as stress and fear management were identified as elements that might positively influence psychological wellbeing.

The second interview confirmed the findings from the literature review and the first interview that was conducted a few days beforehand. The respondent specified transparency and trust in communication, positive leadership, and the importance of empathy as issues that contribute to the psychologically safe space at work in multicultural teams. Moreover, as the second respondent was mostly qualified in human resource management specifically in multicultural teams, the importance of the profound knowledge of cross-cultural differences in work settings, as well as personal life was highlighted.

To summarize, the findings from both interviews can be divided into three central themes: the importance and effect of certain factors, such as fear and stress on the psychological well-being of employees; tools, which can positively affect the psychological well-being in a team; effect of the certain leadership styles on psychological well-being in a team and company’s development.
4.1. Factors affecting psychological well-being in a multicultural team

This sub-chapter presents the main findings arising from interviews with a psychologist and a multicultural HR manager. The goal of the research was to understand what factors can affect psychological well-being in an international work setting, how those factors can be influenced and improved by the leader of the team and how to improve the psychological well-being of the multicultural team in general. The author has combined the results into categories which were mentioned the most by both respondents for clearer understanding by the reader.

1. Stress and fear: Both respondents confirmed that stress and fear were significant factors affecting psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The psychologist highlighted that high levels of stress can lead to emotional and physical exhaustion for team members, as well as negatively affect their motivation and performance. HR manager emphasized that fear of miscommunication and conflict in a culturally diverse team can lead to decreased communication and cooperation among team members.

One of the respondents mentioned that:

"Psychosocial risks and stress in the workplace have an adverse impact on the health, safety and well-being of workers, and ultimately on organizational performance."

2. Cultural differences: Both respondents said that cultural differences can be a source of tension and misunderstanding on a multicultural team. The psychologist noted that differences in values, beliefs, and customs can create conflict and a sense of isolation among team members. The HR manager expressed that understanding and respecting the cultural sensitivities of each team member is key to creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

"People from different cultural backgrounds are sometimes terrified to address certain issues and communicate properly with their fellow team-mates. This in turn results in stress because they have to deal with their feeling, emotions and concern on their own. Such behaviors are direct pathways to conflicts and other arising issues, therefore poor psychological well-being and performance of the team"
3. **Language barrier:** One respondent suggested that the language barrier could create significant difficulties in a multicultural team. The psychologist emphasized that limited language skills can impede effective communication and increase the insecurity and isolation of team members. The HR manager recommended actively supporting language development skills and providing additional opportunities for the team members to perfect the language to avoid miscommunication.

   “*In my experience, there were cases when the same information was perceived differently by team members with different mother languages, which resulted in a misunderstanding.*”

4. **Leadership and support:** Both respondents noted that leadership and support from supervisors and peers were important factors in ensuring psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The manager’s role in creating an open and inclusive environment where team members feel comfortable expressing their opinions and discussing the complexities of cultural differences was emphasized. One respondent emphasized the need to provide support in resolving language difficulties and conflicts, as well as in establishing communication between team members.

   “*the most important one in my opinion is correct and flexible team management. If the leader is capable to establish a healthy and supportive environment - psychological well-being would be prosperous.*”

4.2. **Tools and methods that can improve psychological well-being in a multicultural team**

This sub-chapter mainly highlights the outtakes from the two interviews that were conducted in relation to the tools and methods that can be used in order to improve psychological well-being in multicultural teams.

1. **Intercultural interaction and communication training:** Both respondents confirmed that training focused on the development of intercultural competence and communication skills can significantly improve psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The psy-
chologist highlighted that such training would help team members to develop an understanding of cultural differences, improve effective communication skills, and reduce possible conflicts. The manager emphasized that training courses will help create a common team culture, where each employee feels important and respected.

“One of the effective tools from the management perspective, if we talk about teams with member from different backgrounds, is organizing intercultural skills training and promoting the development of cross-cultural competences. It is crazy to imagine, how many problems can be avoided if managers and employees would consider the basic differences in communication, time perception and decision making.”

2. Creating a safe environment for expression: Both respondents expressed that creating a safe environment where employees are not afraid to speak up and express their opinions and ideas contributes significantly to psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The first respondent said that an environment like this allows team members to feel more confident, increases the level of trust, and stimulates collective thinking and innovation. The importance of creating an open and supportive climate where everyone has the opportunity to express their opinions without fear of judgment or negative consequences was emphasized by the second interviewee.

“Most workplace stress management initiatives include individual counseling, step-by-step induction procedures, and the creation of a mentoring institute within the company. Workers’ psycho-emotional well-being should be systematically evaluated. Employees should be able to express their concerns about any situation that might cause stress at work.”

3. Stress and anger management training: It was suggested that training skills for stress and anger management can have a positive impact on the psychological well-being of a multicultural team. Such training would help team members cope effectively with stress, improve self-regulation of emotions, and develop skills for constructive conflict resolution according to one of the respondents.
4. Justification and explanation of global work goals: Both respondents confirmed that justifying and explaining global work goals were important factors in improving psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The psychologist highlighted that a clear understanding of goals and their importance helps team members to feel their importance and value in the work process, which contributes to motivation and psychological comfort. The manager emphasized that regular communication about work goals helps maintain a high level of motivation and unity in the team.

“Clear, tangible employee goals help keep employees motivated at work and reduce anxiety: getting an education, putting knowledge into practice, getting a decent salary or a promotion all help employees stay focused and move forward. If an employee has a visible next goal to latch on to after a goal is achieved, interest in the company will be maintained.”

5. Creating a comfortable work environment: Both respondents agreed that creating a comfortable work environment with sufficient autonomy and teamwork support promotes psychological well-being in a multicultural team. The psychologist highlighted the importance of giving a sufficient degree of freedom and self-organization to team members, which promotes self-actualization and a sense of control. The manager emphasized the role of teamwork support and the ability to share knowledge and experiences among team members.

“The best tools to combat occupational stress are corporate strategies aimed at eliminating the psychosocial hazards that arise in the course of work, as well as personnel development programs that provide vertical and horizontal career development for employees, professional training and staff development, measures of incentives, including bonuses for high performance and the introduction of professional psychologists into the organization.”

4.3. Connection between leadership style and psychological well-being within a multicultural team

This chapter presents findings from interviews with a psychologist and an international HR manager regarding the impact of management style, flexible leadership, and trusting relationships on psychological well-being in a multicultural team and team development.
One respondent, an experienced psychologist, shared her observations and agreed that management style plays a key role in psychological well-being and team development in a multicultural environment. She noted that a flexible and adaptive management approach, consideration of cultural differences, and the individual needs of team members are all important aspects to consider when working with multicultural teams. Successful managers in such teams must have effective communication, extensive knowledge on the matter and the ability to motivate and support employees.

Both the respondents – the psychologist and HR manager - think that empathy and listening skills contribute to shaping psychological well-being. They mentioned that the most successful managers in their experiences were open to change and flexible in the matters of decision making and management style. According to both respondents, these characteristics are extremely valuable for a leader in order to be able to create a safe and trusting environment, which would allow the employees and the company to develop and grow.

One respondent also emphasized the beneficial impact of positive leadership on psychological well-being in a multicultural team. A strong leader is believed to create an atmosphere of interaction, support, and inspiration. He actively encourages achievement, shows optimism, and maintains a positive attitude toward work and colleagues. This improves employees' motivation and satisfaction, which is good for the psychological well-being of the team.

One respondent mentioned how important it is to have a trusting relationship between managers and employees. A trusting environment allows committed employees like those in this case to be more open and talk about anything they want, without being judged. This promotes better collaboration and problem-solving and strengthens team bonding.

“When a manager demonstrates confidence in employees and an interest in their well-being, employees are calm, and thus productivity will remain at a high level.”

Both respondents also emphasized the importance of fair distribution of resources and rewards in a multicultural team. A leader who is fair and equitable creates an atmosphere of trust and fairness. Each team member feels respected and valued, which promotes psychological well-being.
Mentorship and development also have a positive effect on the psychological well-being of the team. Both respondents explained that the mentor helps develop each person’s special skills to maximize their potential and thus boosts the self-esteem, motivation, and sense of worth of people who are part of this teamwork effort. This contributes to the personal growth and development of everybody on the team.

Open and effective communication is another important aspect of improving the psychological well-being of the Team. Reliability in regular channels of communicating makes it possible not to clash with others through discovering common issues for resolution. Openness in discussions about problems and solutions means no misunderstandings between members since they all have access to information that could establish matters easily. Being able to effectively express oneself and listen to other team members builds trust and strengthens bonds within the team.

All of these aspects of leadership relationships and psychological well-being in a multicultural team are important. A combined approach of positive leadership, trust-filled communication and interpersonal relationships, equitable resource allocation, mentoring, development, and effective communication promotes a healthy and supportive work environment where each team member can express their potential, develop professionally, and achieve personal and collective success. This approach fosters a strong multicultural team that can effectively cope with challenges and achieve its goals.
5. Discussion

5.1. Answers to research questions

This work explored the elements that influence psychological health in multifaceted teams and looked into methods that may aid in improving psychological well-being. The research examined the following questions: Which aspects impact mental well-being in diverse groups? What methods can be used to improve psychological well-being in multicultural teams? How can psychological well-being in an international team be improved?

The first positive factor identified in the study is the feeling of trust. Feeling trusted by supervisors and colleagues has a positive impact on psychological safety and openness of communication in multicultural teams. Trust creates an environment conducive to free expression, initiative, and the exchange of ideas, which promotes increased innovation and better team performance.

The second factor is the logical continuation of the first one and is psychological safety. In order to cultivate an atmosphere that encourages employee collaboration and innovation, psychological safety and security must be maintained. It is essential to create an environment that eliminates the fear of sharing thoughts and ideas, raising questions, and exchanging information in order to optimize creative and decision-making processes within a team.

The third factor the author found out is the level of inclusion and sense of belonging to the team. If employees feel like having a social space in which they are valued and are highly important for the team, it increases their motivation, engagement, and willingness to work and contribute to the growth and development of the company through advancing their common goals. In multicultural teams, including this factor creates a sense of belonging; differences in culture, language, and work style may create barriers between individuals that restrict optimal collaboration.

As for the negative factors affecting psychological well-being in multicultural teams that were covered during the interviews and through literature review, it is important to mention the obvious, such as intercultural differences that lie beyond language barriers, but also have influence on the way of thinking of the employees, their perception of time and approach to communication. One more extremely important negative factor is fear in the work setting. Fear is considered to be the
biggest obstacle for mental safety and well-being, as it comes from individual insecurities and lack of trust in the organization.

The first method to have an impact on those factors that affect well-being is to establish clear communication channels, where employees would not be afraid to speak up. It is essential that teams can share information, ask questions, even the uncomfortable ones, and voice the concerns that arise without any hindrance stemming from diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

Another way to improve the atmosphere of inclusion, safety and well-being of international teams is to implement training programs that would improve employee’s understanding of cultural differences and respect for the representatives of other cultural backgrounds. Conducting cross-cultural skills and cultural awareness training for employees would help to lay the foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation among multicultural team members. In addition, since anxiety and stress are recognized as major contributors to mental health, executives are advised to organize seminars and training sessions on anxiety and stress management.

Another approach is to create a climate that promotes acceptance and inclusion. Supervisors and managers must create a supportive environment that allows each employee to demonstrate their potential regardless of cultural differences. This can be accomplished by recognizing and appreciating each member’s contributions, as well as promoting team spirit. This also involves developing an incentive program, this will help employees to feel more valued and appreciated.

The study has revealed that certain factors are pivotal components for the mental well-being of multicultural teams. These include interpersonal trust, psychological safety, leadership that is positive and adaptable, as well as an inclusive environment. Applying methods such as establishing clear communication channels, organizing training programs in stress and fear management as well as in cross-cultural communication, and creating a supportive environment, where employees feel needed, respected, heard and valued can improve psychological well-being in international teams.
5.2. Managerial implications

Implementing a culture of psychological well-being of employees is a matter of efficiency and viability of companies because the success of a modern business largely depends on a strong team, and the ability of employees to quickly adapt to changing market conditions and generate ideas. Unfortunately, burnout, anxiety, and depression significantly reduce the potential of employees, increase staff turnover, and ruin ties within the team.

A close-knit team of psychologically well-functioning, loyal, and motivated employees is the basis for building an effective company. Seemingly unrelated matters but working with the psychological health of the team - is a direct path to success in the market. Working with leadership, time management, employee communication skills, and conflict management are tasks that are solved by a corporate psychologist or a psychologically trained manager.

The psychological atmosphere affects motivation: when an employee works with interest, excitement, and pleasure, and does not waste time chewing over conflicts or personal problems, efficiency, and productivity increase. Psychological well-being is important both for relationships within the team and for communication with the client: conflicts and tension within the company can lead to a decrease in sales and revenues, and a competent manager can correct this situation.

Burnout is the cause of the decline in the quality of work of previously attentive and effective employees. Reducing the level of anxiety among subordinates helps not only to improve relations in the team, but also to increase the inclusiveness and attentiveness of workers, to avoid small and large working mistakes.

In today’s world, multicultural teams are becoming increasingly common, and it is becoming a key task for managers to establish a prosperous psychological climate that promotes effective work and team development. Research in the field of psychological well-being and leadership confirms the importance of certain factors that can be applied to establish such a climate. Based on her interviews with a psychologist and a human resource manager, the author has identified several recommendations for managers of multicultural organizations:
1. Develop empathy and listening skills. Effective leaders on a multicultural team must be empathic and willing to listen to the opinions and needs of their employees. This builds trusting relationships and enhances psychological well-being.

2. Show flexibility and adaptability. Considering cultural differences and the individual needs of team members is an important aspect of a multicultural environment. Flexibility in decision-making and an adaptive management approach contribute to a positive and inclusive work environment.

3. Practice positive leadership. A positive leader builds an atmosphere of collaboration and support. Showing optimism, encouraging accomplishments, and supporting positive attitudes toward work and co-workers help increase employee motivation and satisfaction.

4. Establish trust-filled relationships and atmosphere. Regular communication channels and openness in discussing problems and solutions strengthen relationships and prevent conflicts, which is beneficial for the psychological well-being of the team. Leaders should be able to create an environment, where employees would feel confident and safe.

5. Ensure fair distribution of resources and rewards between employees. Fair and equitable leadership creates an atmosphere of trust and feeling of meaningfulness. Each team member should feel respected and valued. This promotes psychological well-being and strengthens the team.

6. Practice mentoring and development. The mentor helps to develop each employee’s unique skills and potential, which increases the self-esteem, motivation, and sense of worth of team members. Mentoring promotes the personal and professional development of employees and strengthens team spirit.

7. Organizing trainings and support seminars on the matters of cross-cultural differences, stress management and fear.
Applying these recommendations will help managers to establish a positive psychological climate in a multicultural organization. Cultural sensitivity, positive leadership, trust development, equitable distribution of resources, mentoring, development, and effective communication create a healthy and supportive work environment where each team member can express his or her potential, develop professionally, and achieve personal success.

A favorable psychological climate in a multicultural organization is a key factor for team effectiveness and success. Drawing on research in the field of psychological well-being and leadership, as well as interviews, the author has provided recommendations that are supported by authoritative sources. These recommendations will help managers create a supportive psychological climate that is conducive to effective work and multicultural team development.

5.3. Assessment of the results in the light of the literature

The results of this research indicate the importance of psychological well-being in work teams and its direct effect on efficiency and performance. Employees’ level of psychological well-being influences their productivity, motivation, job satisfaction, and overall team performance (Kundi et al., 2021).

There is strong evidence that indicates improving this indicator contributes to a supportive and successful work environment. One of the factors associated with psychological well-being in teams is mutual trust (Detert & Burris, 2007). Research confirms that trust in supervisors and co-workers contributes to the creation of psychological safety and openness in team communication (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Such an atmosphere encourages free expression, initiative, and the exchange of ideas, which promotes innovation and improves team performance (Madjar & Ortiz-Walters, 2009).

Psychological safety also plays a significant role in the well-being of teams (Edmondson, 1999). Teams where employees feel psychologically secure and safe exhibit a higher degree of cooperation, openness, and willingness to experiment (Edmondson, 1999). When team members freely express their ideas, ask questions, and make information exchanges, it contributes to better communication and better decision-making.
When employees feel appreciated and valued it creates an atmosphere that promotes high motivation, enthusiasm, and a committed striving towards shared objectives (Hakanen et al., 2008).

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of many other research studies that also develop the focus on psychological well-being in teams and multicultural team management. As it can be followed throughout this thesis, the most commonly mentioned factors contributing to the psychological well-being of teams include interpersonal trust, psychological safety, strong leadership, and knowledge of cross-cultural differences (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Grant, 2012).

### 5.4. Limitations

In this chapter, the limitations of this research on psychological well-being in multicultural teams are mentioned. Understanding and acknowledging these limitations will help to assess the results and apply them in practice more accurately. In this qualitative research, the author must factor in any limitation posed to the generalization and practicality of the outcomes to a broader community.

One significant limitation to the analysis is the set of respondents being interviewed; though chosen due to their knowledge and skill, both respondents are residents of Russia. This could pin them to certain cultural, social, and historic norms which may differ from European, and Finnish in particular perception, thus influencing how they define the context and results of this study. One more limitation that is directly connected to the previous one is the language if the interview and the need for translation from Russian into English. Another limitation is also connected to the set of respondents and the size of the sample in particular. The results obtained from just two interviews cannot be fully representative.

One more limitation to this study is the use of semi-structured interviews. Despite the various advantages behind the detailed information and deep insight into the researched topic, it must be considered that question-wording and answer interpretation remain subjective. This, in turn, provides room for distortion in the perception of the responses (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001).
To conclude, this qualitative study has several limitations due to the research method and particular characteristics of the research sample. In order to broaden the scope of applicability and generalize the results of this specific study future research on the topic of psychological well-being in a multicultural team is recommended. It might be beneficial for further research to use more versatile research samples, at least in terms of the origin and the areas of expertise of the respondents.

5.5. Recommendations for future research
For future research, it is recommended to invest more resources into the process of qualitative research, and data collection and analysis. It is recommended to use a bigger and more diverse research sample, which will allow for more accurate and sufficient results.

The author believes that even though the developed guidelines for the leaders can be generalized and applied to most of the teams, it is important to conduct an analysis of each team’s dynamics and to adjust those guidelines to those specifications. Therefore, similar research on the basis of a particular company could be conducted in order to gather specific information about the team and its internal dynamics, as well as issues and problematic areas. The end result of such research could be more practically usable and would allow the researcher to get a grasp of the practical implications of psychological well-being.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of psychological well-being in the workplace?

2. What factors influence psychological well-being in multicultural teams?

3. In your experience, what tools or interventions have been effective in establishing psychological well-being within a team?

4. How do stressful situations and experiences affect psychological well-being in international teams?

5. How can fear affect psychological well-being in international teams?

6. How can a leader promote psychological well-being within their team?

7. How can employees contribute to creating a psychologically safe and healthy work environment?

8. How can team conflicts affect psychological well-being, and what strategies can be used to manage conflict?

9. In your opinion, what role does communication play in promoting psychological well-being within a multicultural team?

10. How do differences in cultural values and norms affect psychological well-being in international teams and how can they be managed?

11. What are some common challenges that organizations face when trying to establish psychological well-being within a team?
12. How can an organization measure the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being within a team?

13. What advice would you give to multicultural team leaders who want to create a psychologically safe and healthy work environment?