

City University of New York (CUNY)

## CUNY Academic Works

---

Student Theses

Baruch College

---

Spring 6-8-2020

### Hustle Culture and the Implications for Our Workforce

Arianna Balkeran

*CUNY Bernard M Baruch College*

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb\\_etds/101](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb_etds/101)

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

---

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu)

# **HUSTLE CULTURE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORKFORCE**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

Baruch College, The City University of New York

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

## **MASTER OF ARTS In CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

By

Arianna Balkeran

May 26, 2020

### **ABSTRACT**

This study defines hustle culture as an unspoken agreement between supervisors and employees concerning a designated workplace commitment compliance, which determines the minimum expectation of an employee's productivity capability. As such, this research paper aims to explore hustle culture within the workforce and how employee engagement, or lack of, affects the quality of professional relationships within the workplace. By doing so, we can begin a broader discourse on employee and managerial accountability in the relational aspect of supervisor-employee relationships and work dyads. With current changes to employment opportunities, such as the sudden influx of remote corporate workers resulting from COVID-19, it is essential to revisit aspects that constitute healthy and sustainable work expectations in the digital age in fear of missing out on career opportunities given increasing global connectivity.

# HUSTLE CULTURE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORKFORCE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

Baruch College, The City University of New York

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**In**

**CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

**By**

Arianna Balkeran

May 26, 2020

Under the guidance and approval of the committee,  
and approved by all its members, this thesis has been  
accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Corporate Communication.

A Virtual Colloquium for the above-named Graduate Student will be held

On

May 18, 2020

**Approved:**



---

Professor Michael Bayer, Advisor, 5/7/2020



---

Dr. Michael Goodman, Reader 5/20/2020

*Caryn E. Medved, PhD*

---

Dr. Caryn Medved, Program Director 6/11/2020

# **HUSTLE CULTURE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORKFORCE**

Copyright By

Arianna Balkeran

May 26, 2020

## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PURPOSE

Although not explicitly stated within an organization, employees are aware and expect differential treatment to be present within their workgroups. Such differences can then result in affected social exchanges and relationships within the organization. The idea of hustle plays a crucial role in both defining and enabling employee expectations. There is a constant need to appear as professionally engaged where one's work obligations consume a majority, if not all, of one's physical and mental being. One possible explanation for the formation of differentiated expectations can be the discursive nature of the relationships, such as communication patterns and perceived assumptions.

The higher the quality of communication, the increased quality of supervisor-employee communication. However, while frequent open communication positively correlates to high relational quality, such relationships are more susceptible to blurred professional boundaries due to the more robust professional and personal relationship building that is present. Employees who belong to a low-quality professional relationship are more prone to experiencing employee burnout. One reason for this may form from a lack of communication on individual employee expectations, coupled with an emphasis on the overall workgroup expectation that may stem from a single employee or managerial expectation. The optimal position to be in, for an employee who is balancing priorities outside of work, is in an intermediate-quality relationship. Within this dyad, the employee receives enough information to perform exceptionally with minimal professional obligations attached to pursue a healthy work-life balance. As a result, there is a variety of exchanges present as each workgroup is slightly different from one another, which can affect communication among workgroups.

Varying employee expectations may adapt to an unsaid obligatory work ethic. One such suggestion has evolved into the concept of "hustle culture" in the modern workforce. There is an unspoken agreement between supervisors and employees where an employee's or supervisor's dedication towards a role communicates the degree of anticipated productivity from the entire workgroup. Further, the productivity expectation established is either the implicit or explicit minimum expectation for all employees to achieve, irrespective of role variation across the organization. The premise of such expectations, however, normalizes skewed commitment compliance for all subordinates. The implication is employees who comply will receive greater rewards in the form of compensation, recognition, or tenure. The variation of expectations across

multiple dyads and workgroups, established by leaders' demands of employees, or the employees' needs for themselves, affects one's employee experience.

Such expectations arising from a hustle mindset are problematic as they fail to account for the varied forms of work styles necessary to achieve similar, if not higher productivity levels, based on how each subordinate works best. Co-working spaces influenced by local culture, for example, foster productivity and competitive advantage through different layouts. Firms in countries such as China, India, Russia, and Morocco can be extremely hierarchical, in which indirect communication and unspoken signals are essential in building mutual understanding. Firms in countries such as Germany, however, utilize a direct and explicit approach to cooperation. (Gall and Congdon, 2013).

However, the variation in the level of willingness to indulge in hustle culture is a crucial factor and often overlooked in peer-reviewed journal articles. A perceived in-role expectation or an overall organizational expectation can very well dictate how both supervisors and subordinates approach their daily responsibilities. If such expectations derive from unspoken productivity compliance, then employee organizational commitment and satisfaction are at risk of contributing to workplace optics without taking into consideration the authenticity of such engagement and satisfaction. Notably, the design of corporate workspaces and the addition of lifestyle benefits on-site, such as WeWork offices, arguably enable a constant work-life by eliminating the boundaries between work and home and encouraging employees to spend more time in their physical workspaces.

The purpose of this study is to understand the range of employee perceptions of hustle culture in developing professional relationships. Moreover, this study serves to determine if there are significant incentives or consequences to hustle culture. Further, this research paper aims to explore hustle culture within the workforce and how employee engagement, or lack of, affects the quality of professional relationships within the workplace. By doing so, we can begin a broader discourse on employee and managerial accountability in the relational aspect of supervisor-employee relationships and work dyads. With current changes to employment opportunities, such as the sudden influx of remote corporate workers resulting from COVID-19, it is crucial to revisit aspects that constitute healthy and sustainable work expectations in the digital age in fear of missing out on career opportunities given increasing global connectivity.

## TOPIC JUSTIFICATION

Arguably, hustle culture has been present since before workplace safety laws that the Industrial Revolution brought about to curb the exploitation of workers and child laborers subject to inhumane working conditions including hazardous work environments, low wages, and long hours. The difference in today's generation, which enables hustle culture to be remotely acceptable as a lifestyle, is the perception of hustle culture, particularly concerning branding oneself as indispensable. Approximately 45 percent of the workforce post about their "toil glamour" on social media as signals of being a dedicated and committed employee (Robinson, 2019). However, some employees may not be equipped with the physical or emotional bandwidth to sustain the pressures resulting from a hustle culture, which then leads to employee burnout. For example, The World Health Organization (WHO) now classifies burnout as an "occupational phenomenon" as a result of not being able to appreciate the input and achievements of one's work (Wilkie, 2019). Employee burnout then psychologically positions the employee to continuously seek to do more and create an "always-on" lifestyle (Morgan, 2016).

At its core, the incentive to hustle is a defense mechanism to make ends meet and exceed high expectations. Hustle culture is prevalent because of many factors. One factor is the destruction of work-life boundaries due to digital distractions. Coleman and Coleman (2016) found: "The average person now checks their phones 46 times per day, spending nearly five hours per day on mobile devices, leading 30% of users to consider their smartphones a leash." Heightened competition is then established and contributes to a false perception of favorability for the employee who is also accessible after work hours. As a result, inauthentic high-quality supervisor-employee relationships form. Arguably, the need for constant connectivity is, in part, fueled by globalization, particularly in multinational corporations and industries, to accommodate differences in time zones. Such connectivity comes at a price, however, which is employee burnout. Data on burnout reveal that 50 percent of medical residents and 85 percent of financial professionals suffer some form of exhaustion during their careers (Valcour, 2016).

The efficiency of hustle becomes problematic concerning the rate of burnout and the impact on productivity and retention rates. The resulting exhaustion can be detrimental to the judgment of an employee's capabilities and organizational commitment. If one chooses to place equal attention on non-work obligations, such as utilizing paid time off opportunities, one may

risk appearing less committed than the employee who wants to work beyond standard work hours. Given the current state of our economy, drivers for the hustle ambition may be the increase in student loan debt, stagnant wages, professional satisfaction, and personal financial gains. Further, the uncertainties arising from a recession or a pandemic, like the ones our world economy is currently facing due to COVID-19, might prompt more individuals to adopt multiple employment options to prevent unemployment.

It is essential to reflect on hustle culture and devise a better understanding of how it impacts employee expectations in the practicalities of the modern workforce. Moreover, the implications of burnout negatively impact employee satisfaction and employee performance and the quality of life for the employee. Such consequences contrast with workplace attitudes and behaviors, given the increased emphasis on work-life balance, particularly within the corporate setting. The evolution of hustle culture may intensify over the next couple of years as we are experiencing a steady rise in gig employment, in which organizations contract independent workers for short-term projects. The premise of gig employment, then, positions employees to enable a constant workstream to ensure financial stability.

Professional relationships curated by a hustle environment can then affect team productivity if there is an unwillingness to communicate or assist colleagues with the established work ethic standards. Such qualities can have a "spill-over effect" that poses a threat to organizational culture, which may then skew employee morale and be further documented on company review websites to deter prospective employees from joining the company. Moreover, a high-level of employee discomfort can result in the involvement of Human Resources and legal counsel in extreme cases. The distress and imminent lack of transparency can jeopardize either the supervisor or employee's advancement in the company but can also lead to restructuring within a department. Further analysis of such variation can provide the framework as to how in-role perceptions, or in other words, expectations of the employee, manifest within the workplace. It is also essential to explore employees' role in indulging in hustle culture as an expectation established on their own rather than by the organization.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*We will first begin to understand supervisor-employee communication behaviors and how they form in-role perceptions within the organization. Next, we will analyze a multitude of varying employee role expectations. We will then move on to discuss leadership normalization of unspoken sacrifices in the workplace. Then, we will discuss the impacts on organizational commitment resulting from performative workaholism. We will then describe unsaid obligatory work ethics and explain how hustle behaviors affect employee experiences. Finally, we will discuss the future of hustle culture.*

### **Understanding Communication Behaviors in the Formation of In-Role Perceptions**

Understanding the implications of several communication behaviors can allow for a thorough understanding of how in-role perceptions affect communication within and among dyads. Graen and Scandura (1987) described the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX), which addressed various forms of differential treatment across multiple dyads and workgroups. High-quality leader-member exchanges are considered as "open" communication exchanges, which typify leadership. In contrast, low-quality leader-member exchanges are "closed" communication exchanges that embody supervision. Moreover, Lee (1997) claimed subordinates in high-quality professional relationships perceive more exceptional cooperative communication among workgroup members than their peers involved in low-quality professional dyads. Specifically, communication satisfaction and job satisfaction can be positively correlated. Jablin and Krone (1994) argued that the communication derived from leader-member exchanges is embedded within a social system, such as workgroups and external networks, outside of the direct supervisor-employee relationship. Therefore, in-role perceptions resulting from such communication can both shape perceptions within organizational contexts, as well as have the power to shape employee self-representation to non-organization personnel such as personal relationships and external professional ties.

Mueller and Lee (1973) proposed that communication climate is a dimension of communication satisfaction in which factors such as attitudes, organizational standing, and understanding act as moderators. They also found that high-quality supervisor-employee communication was a significant factor in determining employees' communication experiences and perceptions of communication satisfaction. Moreover, they stressed that subordinates could actively enact high-quality connections by showing greater interest and utilizing resources in task performance, which will lead to an enhancement of trust and appreciation from leaders. As a

result, employees can consciously decide to initiate high-quality supervisor-employee relationship traits to improve their agendas. FitzPatrick et al. (2014, p. 12) revealed: "The difference between people only doing exactly what is asked of them and those who go the extra mile is their discretionary effort." Therefore, managers are encouraged to decipher the appropriate channels they should implement by understanding individual employee needs when communicating with their employees. Writers such as Bill Quirke highlighted that different channels are more effective depending on the purpose of the communicated message (FitzPatrick et al., 2014, p. 8). Perhaps in-person communication might be a more practical approach to engage with some employees, whereas email might be more useful for other employees. However, it is essential to note that any channel can be used and still be effective if the employee is included in the conversation, depending on the urgency of the conveyed manner.

Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argued there are higher levels of affect towards leaders and other workgroup members when high agreeableness is present within a work unit. One possible explanation for this correlation is that high agreeableness provides a way for a sense of connection and understanding. These factors contribute to high-quality supervisor-employee relationships. Arguably, the quality of communication has a more significant effect than the quantity of communication. Abu Bakar et al. (2007) verified that professional relationships consist of characteristics from both the leader and member in which their interactions further develop via situational contexts. This suggestion might not always hold, however, given the tenure of the supervisors, and employees' comfort to approach supervisors as opposed to another well-informed employee. Sias (1996) found that social perceptions regarding differential treatment within work units embody through member conversations about the opinion of differential treatment. Additionally, Ewing and Lee (2009) found that managerial communication style towards high relational-quality employees appears to be like those of transformational leaders.

If supervisors monitor their organization's corporate culture and challenge employees professionally with optimum support, burnout resulting from glamorized work toil could be reduced. For example, the World Economic Forum revealed: "Oversized workloads, unreasonable time pressures, lack of role clarity, lack of communication and support from management and unfair treatment at work correlated most with incidents of burnout. When employees often or always have enough time to do all their work, they are 70% less likely to

experience high burnout. Similarly, when employees strongly agree that they are often poorly treated at work, they are 2.3 times more likely to experience burnout." According to The World Health Organization (WHO) in its International Classification of Diseases, burnout "refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context...a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." Further, WHO reported three dimensions of burnout: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job, or opinions of negativism or cynicism related to one's position that reduces professional efficacy. Employee burnout is a direct result of what can occur within a hustle culture with a lack of managerial support and communication to guide employees on how to successfully achieve optimal productivity with minimal impact on mental health.

### **An Analysis of Role Expectation Variation**

One possible explanation for the formation of differentiated relationships is the existence of resource constraints from leaders to develop trusted relationships within the work unit. Additionally, being a part of an intermediate-quality supervisor-employee dyad seems best for employees who value acquiring the resources necessary to advance in their careers as opposed to staying committed to the current leadership. It is questionable if such modification is a result of leaders' differential treatment solely, employee perceptions that may form from professional insecurities, or a combination of both. Interestingly, Sias and Jablin (1995) found that subordinates view differential treatment as fair when subordinates perceive the employee treatment to be rightfully given based on competence. However, when subordinates observe the differential treatment to be unfair towards them, they decrease communication with the desirable member(s). Such findings represent a biased view of organizational justice in that professional differentiation can be a subjective means of employee perception out of convenience. For example, an employee might continuously not meet responsibility targets set by the supervisor hence the unfavorable differentiated treatment. As a result, the longevity of perceptions resulting from circumstances can dangerously impact work relationships in the long-term.

Henderson et al. (2009) concluded interpersonal relationships with members of similar relational qualities were more impactful when fairness perceptions were lower. However, Naidoo et al. (2009) argued that followers might prefer differential treatment from leaders based on the followers' performance ability. It is only when professional treatment is perceived to occur on

factors other than talent when feelings of resentment and injustice arise, further affecting team performance (Uhl-Bien et al. 2000). While organizational and relational contexts affect relational quality, employees might justify and hold on to perceptions without understanding the entire meaning of specific situations. However, "differentiation" must be clarified in terms of relational qualities and exchanged resources, and how such differentiation is measured. Per theory, Graen (1976) initially proposed competence, interpersonal skill, and trust influence leader-member exchanges. In contrast, Cashman et al. (1976) argued that attention and sensitivity were the basis of the exchanges. Perceptions can be self-cultivated notions in which leaders cannot always be held accountable for employees' thought process.

Naidoo et al. (2009) criticized prior studies for not accounting for the length of time workgroups have been in existence. Adding on to this critique is the importance of team size on leadership impact and member perceptions. The effects of variation might be more substantial in forming judgments within a smaller team compared to a larger group, given the difference might seem to be more present among fewer members. Furthermore, Sin et al. (2009) reported the likelihood of leaders differentiating among followers at the early stages of the relationship due to an undeveloped understanding of the followers' capabilities. The establishment and maintenance of workplace relationships reveal a significant aspect of perceived trust between leaders and members. Additionally, employees in low-quality professional links might withhold potentially innovative ideas or helpful information as a result of a lack of confidence in the working relationship.

### **Leadership's Normalization of Unspoken Sacrifices in the Workplace**

Consider the case of after-work emails: Managers may unconsciously enable the "always-on" culture by communicating via email after work hours due to their sense of urgency. Additionally, platforms such as Slack allow conversations among employees and teams, albeit not always about work-related topics but still connected outside of work. Although not mandated, employees might want to appear as being always available to their work colleagues even after work hours. This perception then provides a false sense of access to each other's time simply because they remain connected through platforms outside of work. Thomas (2016) argued such a sense of urgency does not account for the higher risks of errors that arise from constant task switching. As a result, this creates a misconception of favorability for the employee

if he or she chooses to respond immediately. The continuous and constant distractions that arrive through our digital devices impede employees' ability to prioritize efficiently and retain information in a working capacity (Thomas, 2016).

Unknowingly, CEO's can establish a hustle culture within the organization from their insecurities as a leader. CEO's as well are subject to forms of covering, or in other terms, imposter syndrome, as a result of continuously proving their ability to lead despite prior accomplishments. Jones (2015) discussed the five top fears resulting in dysfunctional behaviors that result from fear of appearing incompetent to other executives: "A lack of honest conversations, too much political game-playing, silo thinking, lack of ownership and follow-through, and tolerating bad behaviors." As a result, hustle culture behaviors can be formed from the top of the workplace hierarchy and embodied by the remainder of the organization. This indication is problematic as such behaviors might not be authentic to the company's mission or values if they were derived based on insecurities or lack of vision. Such a misrepresentation of the leader's genuine abilities can stimulate mistrust among employees who delve into stress, divisiveness, and low productivity ambitions (Hurley, 2006). It also implies high-quality communication occurs when certain levels of trust are a part of the working relationship between direct supervisors and employees. For example, FitzPatrick et al. (2014, p. 9) implied: "Staff may be more receptive to a new idea if they believe that someone cares about what they think and that their reasonable and constructive criticisms are being taken into account."

Conforming to a continuous work cycle is best explained by O'Neill and Barsade (2016) who discussed the concept of emotional culture as "the shared affective values, norms, artifacts, and assumptions that govern which emotions people have and express at work and which ones they are better off suppressing." O'Neill and Barsade also revealed that an organization's emotional culture influences employee satisfaction, burnout, collaboration, financial performance, and absenteeism. Each organization has an emotional culture, even if the organization suppresses emotion. The psychological perception of an organization is reinforced by leaders who often are unaware of their level of influence on daily behaviors and expectations. For example, Plummer (2018) argued against the stereotype that overachievers say yes to more work. Instead, leaders unknowingly engaged in practices that trap their high performers in a cycle that makes them more prone to burnout. By putting the same group of employees on the

hardest projects, leaders risk enabling their A-players to feel resentful of other employees whose performance is perceived to be subpar.

Despite the benefits of taking a vacation, Friedman (2015) revealed that time-off has become counter-cultural within our workplaces. A prevalent perception is that employees fear their managers will think less of them for utilizing their paid time off. However, Friedman also discussed the risks to business operations if employees do not utilize paid time off days. Such risks include an increase in employee impulsiveness, poor concentration, and negativity. A study conducted by Achor (2014) revealed that scheduled time off is optimal restorative when planned for more than a month. In contrast, vacations are prone to be stressful when booked at the last minute, negating the positive impacts of the time off. Research conducted by P: TO revealed employees who take fewer vacation days were less likely to receive a pay raise during their tenure (Carmichael, 2016).

### **Performative Workaholism Impact on Organizational Commitment**

Luce and Hewlett (2014) furthered the notion that the 40-hour workweek is nonexistent, and employees are now subject to extreme jobs where they work 60+ hours per week while managing 24/7 professional demands. Particularly concerning globalization, Luce and Hewlett noted the need to oversee work in several time zones, inconsequently increases one's workday stressors and expectations. Further, 80 percent of accidents on the job are related to workplace stress, and more than 80 percent of medical visits are due to pressure (Cameron et al., 2015). Contrary to many reports, several research pieces found that work is less stressful than our home lives and provides employees with a haven to feel in control (Carmichael, 2015). The implication then is there is no guarantee in the difference in work quality due to long hours. Regardless, workplace stress results in 50 percent of voluntary turnover and costs organizations, approximately 20 percent of that employee's salary to replace the employee (Cameron et al., 2015).

Wittenberg-Cox (2018) noted the stark contrast in the way work is perceived: "The highest-paid work more hours than anyone else, reversing centuries where it was the poor who worked while the rich rested. Now the poor are unemployed, and the rich work their days away." Acute workaholics put work above everything and lack the perspective and personality to inspire their team (Griffin, 2003). Brummelhuis and Rothbard (2018) found that both engaged and

disengaged workaholics report more psychosomatic and mental health complaints than non-workaholics. Additionally, they commented: "Workaholism often goes hand in hand with working long hours. It's possible to be obsessed with work but only work 35 hours a week or less."

Cooper et al. (2018) explained the notion of hyper-competitiveness as "norms for both men and women revolve around the need to constantly prove one's prowess, a drive to win, and pressure to put work above all else in life." They further argue that women and minorities are exposed to a "double-bind" that makes them less likely to succeed in expressing dominant behaviors such as anger and self-promotion. However, Reid (2015) previously suggested that many men were dissatisfied with their firm's expectations of working long hours and constant traveling. The differences exist in the strategies men tend to utilize to cope with these demands. For example, Reid (2015) disclosed that women were more likely to take formal accommodations, such as adjusting their work hours at the risk of not being perceived as a true ideal worker. Men tend to find unobtrusive ways to alter their schedules, such as cultivating most of the work locally and still be perceived as being compliant. However, men who requested assistance for adjusting their plans for similar reasons as women were subject to identical marginalization women face concerning work-family conflicts.

Cooper et al. (2018) theorized that such hyper-competitiveness, also referred to as "masculinity contests" are enabled for two reasons: "(1) The association between toxic masculinity and success is so strong that people feel compelled to keep playing the game, despite the dysfunctional behavior it produces, and (2) questioning the masculinity contest marks one as a loser, which disincentives people from pushing back." Such behaviors also hold direct costs in the form of turnover and potential lawsuits as well as indirect damages related to employee wellbeing and psychological safety. The High Cost of a Toxic Workplace Culture 2019 SHRM report revealed: "Lack of communication [between managers and workers] is a leading contributor to the cultural issues facing many organizations. Managers are in a prime position to build strong and positive workplaces by listening to employees, holding workers and leaders accountable for their actions, setting expectations, and clarifying information." Failure to do so resulted in \$223 billion in turnover costs in the past five years (Mirza, 2019).

Stine et al. (1995) suggested a link between supervisor listening and perceived relational quality with employees, which alters perceptions of organizational climate. However, this

implication assumes employees are openly communicating with their supervisors, which is not always accurate, given the level of trust and comfort present in the relationship employees share with their supervisors. Mainly, a higher level of empathic listening should be provided to employees. Lloyd et al. (2015) focused on the listening quality given to employees and how it cultivates employee perceptions on organizational outcomes.

Once employee perceptions have already developed, it is questionable how much of an impact leader listening will have on the employee, and if the employee perceives listening to be genuine. The Johari Window model, which consists of four quadrants, better explains this concept. The model consists of an Open Area, a Blind Area, a Hidden Area, and an Unknown Area (Luft, 1969). From a managerial perspective, there are two objectives of the Johari Window model. The first is to facilitate feedback among employees regarding their blind areas to create a culture and promote expectations surrounding "open, honest, positive, helpful, constructive, sensitive communications, and the sharing of knowledge throughout their organization" (Luft, 1969). The second is to encourage employee self-discovery through constructive feedback, which will allow employees to achieve higher potential and contribute more to organizational performance.

Research conducted by Johns and Gratton (2013) examined that highly skilled virtual workers believe promotions are more likely given due to social bonding as opposed to the quality of work completed. As a result, virtual workers might feel obligated to eliminate professional and personal boundaries, counteracting the benefits of work flexibility that remote work is said to bring. Cameron et al. (2015) stressed the deception of thriving in a cutthroat culture is exciting and exhilarating for the employee but will most likely lead to disengagement in the long-term. Such withdrawal proves to be costly to organizations. According to the 2017 Gallup State of the American Workplace report: "Disengaged workers had 37 percent higher absenteeism, 49 percent more accidents, and 60 percent more errors and defects. In organizations with low employee engagement, they experience 18 percent lower productivity, 16 percent lower profitability, 37 percent lower job growth, and 65 percent lower share price over time."

### **The Unsaid Obligatory Work Ethic**

Griffin (2014) stated: "In the Darwinian process that follows, those with the ability to survive and thrive are rewarded; those without it are disciplined or reassigned." Morandin and

Russo (2019) further explained several reasons as to the culmination of our overworked culture. One explanation is the perception of how individuals spend their free time and the notion that free time is a waste of energy. The other account suggests that organizations include insecure workers who require objective data such as hours worked per week to justify their value, contribution, and performance. Petrilieri (2015) previously argued: "We overwork not when we work too hard, but when working becomes less of a means and more of an end." O'Neill and Barsade (2016) suggested the irony of promoting healthy competition, as it is likely to create a culture of envy, which then decreases collaboration.

The pressure to overwork begins as a logical means to contribute valuable energy towards tasks (McKee, 2019). The danger arises when such contribution becomes the expectation of work, which traps the employee in a cycle of constant urgency. McKee suggested that employees would benefit from resonant micro-cultures, where they are accountable for their actions in the immediate culture as opposed to the overall corporate culture. DeLong and Vijayaraghavan (2003) implied that long-term performance and overall company survival depend heavily on B-players. Specifically, they argue: "Companies are routinely blinded to the important role B-players serve in saving organizations from themselves. They counterbalance the ambitions of the company's high-performing visionaries, whose esteemed strengths, when carried to an extreme, can lead to reckless or volatile behavior." According to Plummer (2018), 10 percent of A-players account for 400 percent of productivity growth than average performers.

### **The Effect of Hustle Behaviors on Employee Experiences**

Interestingly, Carmichael (2015) suggested that culture does not dictate norms. Instead, employees react to macro forces such as inner drivers, machismo, enjoyment, a desire to prove importance, or an overdeveloped sense of responsibility. The deception of co-working spaces, however, is the illusion that they enable a culture of joy. A study conducted by Liu (2019) revealed that employees committed to achieving the company's vision and strategy experience a high-level of pleasure at work. However, the study also found the presence of a joy gap. Even though 90 percent of the respondents expected to see a significant degree of joy at work, only 37 percent reported that to be their professional experience. The indication is while an organization breeds a certain cultural quality, there could be discrepancies in an employee's day-to-day that dictate the opposite of the organization's cultural norms. While an organization may announce

that it embodies a culture joy, low-quality supervisor-employee communication can force the employee to feel frustrated despite working for a company that has a positive corporate culture.

Liu (2019) implied that the belief, which stems from a culture of joy, positively impacts high retention rates and, by contrast, decreases turnover expenses. Liu also mentioned while technology provides the means for connectivity, joy occurs through team harmony, impactful employee performance, and acknowledgment of employee contributions. Positive emotions that arise from a culture of joy may also affect employees' ability to conduct authentic and difficult conversations regarding work performance and expectations, which counters the entire concept of creating a culture of joy. Contrary to this notion, however, are Charest et al. (2010) findings that individuals who strive to purpose-driven work are at higher risk of burnout because they are more susceptible to obsessive passion as opposed to harmonious passion.

A mentionable implication is employees' fear of offending colleagues they consider to be like family (O'Neill and Barsade, 2016). B-Players are more susceptible to resolve such conflicts comfortably. B-players highly value work-life balance and tend to assume a limited number of organizational types (DeLong and Vijayaraghavan 2003). Meaning, while A-players focus on "what's good for me" as opposed to what is suitable for the company, B-players do not require advancement at all costs to their identities. DeLong and Vijayaraghavan (2003) further imply the most efficient B-players are A-players who have rejected the pressures of an "A-life" and can scale tasks with minimal supervision.

Wilkie (2017) suggested, "The rise of websites that publish wage and salary information – as well as reports about high executive pay – have made workers keenly aware of any discrepancies between their earning and others." As a result, perception and reality validate feelings of being overworked and underpaid. Chamorro-Premuzic (2013) argued for the need to embrace work-life imbalance. Specifically, he claimed that individuals, who have jobs as opposed to careers, worry about work-life balance because they do not have fun at work. Rather, he called for work-life fusion instead of work-life balance to highlight that if one has fun on the job, one will acquire a sense of purpose. Lieberman (2014) was in substantial disagreement with the notion that doing what one loves is a simple choice: "The Do What You Love framework ignores those who work low-skill, low-wage jobs – housekeepers, migrant workers, janitors. These individuals are not simply failing to acquire gratifying work that they love."

Brummelhuis and Rothbard (2018) claimed that while loving your work can mitigate some risk of obsessing over work, engaged workaholics receive more social support from their supervisors. Further, they score higher on communication and time management skills and general work skills than non-engaged workaholics. Engaged workaholics report higher intrinsic motivation for work than non-engaged workaholics who were more likely to hold extrinsic motivators such as money or status. A study conducted by the University of Toronto found "50 percent of people bring their work home, and that incidence of work-life interference is higher among those who hold professional jobs with more authority, decision-making latitude, pressure, and longer hours. In today's ever-connected world, many of us are expected to be on 24/7 and work full-time or part-time from home." (Coleman and Coleman, 2016).

The inefficiency of measuring employee satisfaction and productivity through standard KPIs and engagement surveys stems from not accounting for the new methods teams connect in their work environments. Johns and Gratton (2013) urged for the need to recognize that standard HR practices and efficiency metrics are a one size fits all assumption that is unable to understand the variance of employee motivations and individual bandwidths for their productivity input. For example, Breidenthal et al. (2018) revealed that while perfectionists are more motivated on the job, such as working longer hours and being more engaged, perfectionism correlates to detrimental work and non-work outcomes. This then results in higher levels of burnout, stress, anxiety, and depression.

### **The Future of Hustle Culture**

Scudder et al. (2008) expressed the importance of studying the integration of new employees into existing work to analyze variations in professional relationships further. Prior research on temporary employee communication indicated such employees use a passive approach to communicate compared to newly hire permanent employees due to the nature of their tenure (Sias, Krammer & Jenkins, 1997). This finding means that temporary employees are more likely to communicate to complete their assignments as opposed to form professional relationships since their employment is only a short-term role. However, Lamude et al. (2004) interestingly found that recently hired employees categorize themselves to have high-quality relationships with their supervisors. The classification is possibly a result of the short nature of interactions and underdeveloped perceptions of one another. While the explanation of this

categorization is contradictory to what defines high-quality exchanges, it makes sense in this specific context.

Vivek Murthy, the former Surgeon General of the United States, stated: "Increasing numbers of remote and independent gig economy workers is one of the key reasons for the growing loneliness epidemic, associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day and even greater than that associated with obesity" (King 2017). Lieberman (2018) noted that our focus on self-care is not on the actual self but the data about ourselves. Moreover, we are approaching work-life balance with similar obsessive energy as we do professionally. Bellezza et al. (2016) revealed in their study: "A busy person possessed desired human capital characteristics (e.g., competence and ambition) and is scarce in demand in the job market." Therefore, we view optimizing ourselves as another thing to work on using metrics-driven ways to measure our self-care satisfyingly (Lieberman, 2018).

Further, Morandin and Russo (2019) pointed out the unintended consequences of flexible work hours: "Flexibility does not always translate into better work-life balance. Remote workers often experience high work intensity and reduced autonomy due to their ability to communicate with colleagues throughout their devices. Paid family leave or childcare support can raise perceptions of unfairness in the workforce. Such policies are typically for workers with caregiving responsibilities. The majority of employees who do have access to flexible work arrangements are reluctant to use them. Many fear that doing so shows low work commitment and will harm their career."

## RESEARCH QUESTION

To contribute to relevant literature, we will examine the impacts hustle culture has on our workforce. While this study will stem from an employee viewpoint, findings will assist management in better understanding employee work behaviors and expectations, allowing for strategizing to minimize employee burnout and increase retention. Data collected can help improve the quality and quantity of information available on these topics. As such, we are testing the following research question in this study:

**RQ : What is the effect of hustle culture on employee performance, employee satisfaction, and the quality of professional relationships in the workplace?**

We hypothesize that hustle culture will increase employee performance but decrease both employee satisfaction and the quality of professional relationships in the workplace.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Population**

Participants of this study are full-time employees, aged 18 and older, and employed in professional settings in the United States. We want to determine if the consequences of hustle culture vary according to the level of an employee's job position. Participants who have a VP-level or higher role in their company were exempt from this study. We anticipate hustle culture to be more impactful on entry-level and associate-level employees as they are more likely to succumb to hustle culture work behaviors given the lack of exposure in their career. Further, the literature on hustle culture cited for our study primarily concerns this sample population. Independent freelancers were also excluded from this study as we focused on employees who work in a permanent team environment.

### **Sampling Method**

We implemented a criterion sampling approach to ensure that participants met the criteria of being 18 years and older, currently works full-time in the United States, and are not classified as an independent freelancer or are in a VP-level or higher role. To execute our sampling approach, we used a convenience sampling method, followed by a snowball sampling approach, to recruit participants. We initiated the recruitment process through social media correspondence. Prospective participants were informed of the purpose of this study and were provided with informed consent to verify whether they are interested in participating. It is essential to note the sample tested in this study does not serve to represent the entire employee population. Instead, the responses helped gain better insight as to how employee perceptions of an unspoken agreed-upon organizational commitment can affect overall employee experiences in the organization.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected through our online Qualtrics survey. If participants consented to participate in this research, they answered 21 scenario questions and four demographic questions. The study consists of 25 closed-ended questions, except for one that asked for the industry in which the participants currently belong. The first two questions were filter questions in which respondents were directed to the end of the survey if they did not meet eligibility. Data was collected by the distribution of an anonymous survey link via the Principal Investigator's

Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Reddit social media accounts. There are similarities in lifestyle with acquaintances on the social media platforms used, so a certain level of inherent bias may be present among responses. It was also voluntary for participants to share the anonymous survey link to recruit other participants for this research.

A draft of the questionnaire was compiled and subjected to a pretest. The survey, as well as distribution messages, was only offered in English. Data was collected during a 17-day time frame and was cross-tabulated on Qualtrics. Respondents had the option to pause the survey and complete it at a later time. The survey questions asked were personal, and participants may have experienced some emotional discomfort while answering the questions. Therefore, participants had the option to skip questions they did not wish to complete. Since the data collection occurred online, research personnel took the most considerable effort to ensure participant confidentiality. The questions were self-administered, and there was no intervention from the research team. There was, however, the possibility for both respondent identity fraud and multiple surveys completed by a single user.

### **Ethical Considerations**

It was imperative to establish rapport with participants from the beginning of the research process. The beginning of the online survey consisted of a consent request for participants to be a part of the study. Participants also had the option to opt-out throughout the completion of this research. Further, personally identifiable information such as name, email address, and organization were not collected. We also provided contact information to provide survey question explanations to those who experienced difficulties in comprehending specific questions.

## DATA ANALYSIS

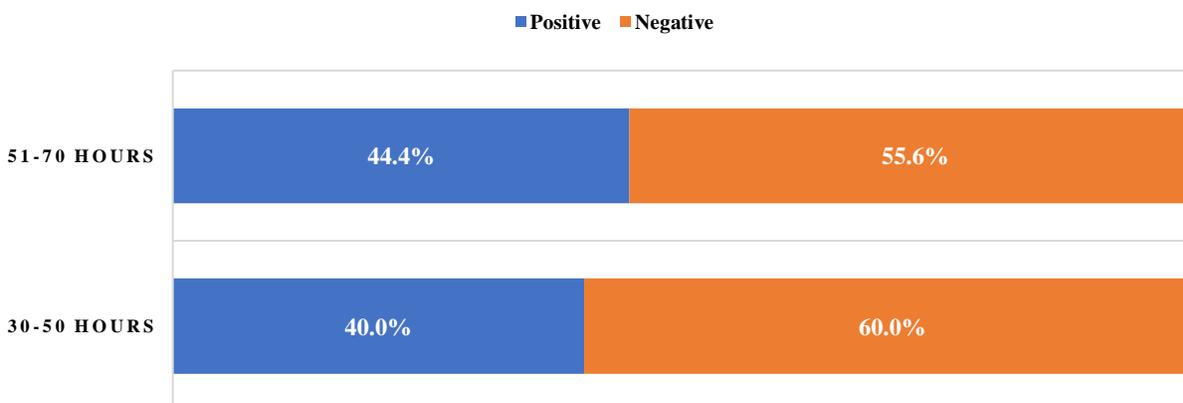
Data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to categorize reoccurring participant answers. For this study, we summarized data through descriptive statistics. 109 respondents (n = 109) completed the survey with a 100% final completion rate. No participation incentives, such as monetary rewards for completion, were used. The 109 (n = 109) respondents who completed the survey are representative of 0.00000083% (f = 0.00000083%) of the total full-time employee population aged 18 years and older in the United States. Based on the annual averages provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, our population size is approximately 130,597,000 employed full-time workers. Therefore, the actual 2020 U.S. full-time employed adult population might differ from the figure we used. The margin of sampling error for this study is +/- 9 percentage points with a 95% confidence level. The collected data was not weighted due to the size of our population sample. The data collected from the sample is descriptive but not projective of the adults employed full-time in the United States because the sample size is not adequate in size to be representative of the population in study.

**Key Takeaway #1:** Most respondents believe there is a negative connotation associated with hustle.

- **As respondent work hours increased, respondents' associations of the term "hustle" were less negative and more positive.**
- **As workload intensity increased, negative connotations of hustle decreased, and positive implications of hustle occurred.**
- **Positive connotations of hustle were more prominent when the likelihood of respondents voluntarily completing work outside of standard work hours increased.**
- **When analyzed with hours spent on sleep, negative hustle perceptions were dominant.**

Approximately 60 percent of respondents consider the word hustle to have a negative connotation, and respondents' work behaviors support this finding. For example, 74 percent of respondents spend 30-50 hours on work-related responsibilities per week. Further, only 20 percent of respondents said they are very likely to complete work-related duties outside of their physical work environment. We wanted to determine if hours worked per week and the likelihood of completing work outside of the workplace would impact hustle associations. We found an interesting correlation between hours worked per week and respondent associations of hustle. Our data show that as work hours increased, perceptions of hustle were less negative and more positive.

**HUSTLE PERCEPTIONS MEASURED AGAINST WORK INPUT HOURS PER WEEK**  
 Q5: ON A DAILY BASIS, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE WORK YOU COMPLETED AT YOUR WORKPLACE?  
 Q14: ACCORDING TO YOU, DOES THE WORD "HUSTLE" HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE CONNOTATION?



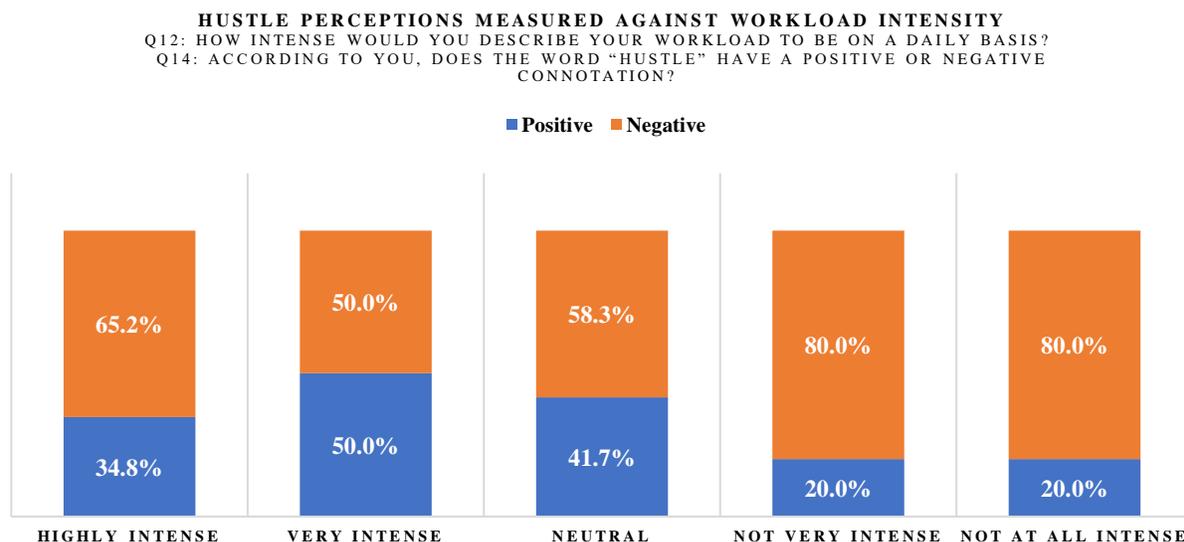
**Figure 1:** Our data demonstrates an inverse correlation between hustle perceptions and the number of hours respondents spend on work activities.

Additionally, our data revealed of the respondents who are very likely to complete work-related tasks outside of their work setting, approximately 55 percent also view hustle with a positive connotation. However, of respondents who said they are not at all likely to complete work assignments outside of their work environment, approximately 74 percent also view hustle with a negative connotation. These findings imply that respondents are more willing to stay late in their work environment to complete extra tasks than to bring additional responsibilities to another facet of their lives, such as at home or on vacation. There is also a correlation between increased work hours and an increased likelihood of completing work-related responsibilities outside of a physical work environment. Of the respondents who spend 51-70 hours on work-related duties, approximately 33 percent are very likely to complete work-related tasks outside of their work setting. However, of the respondents who spend 30-50 hours on work-related responsibilities, 26 percent are not very likely to complete work-related duties outside of their physical work environments.

Workload intensity resulting from professional industry might also play a factor in determining if respondents view the term hustle as having a positive or negative connotation. For example, our data shows that respondents belonging to the Automotive, Education, Human Resources, and Technology industries were more prone to consider hustle with a negative connotation. Surprisingly, respondents in the Healthcare industry were more likely to associate hustle with a positive connotation, except for respondents in the Nursing and Medical Software

sectors. While workload intensity across industries might contribute to respondents' perception of the word hustle, it might not be the determining factor. Most notable in the Education industry, 67 percent of respondents described their workload to be very intense. However, having a very intense workload across the Healthcare industry was found in only 46 percent of respondents.

Our findings demonstrate a new correlation between perceptions of hustle and workload intensity. Of the respondents who described their workloads to be very intense, approximately 50 percent believe hustle has a positive connotation, whereas the other 50 percent associate hustle with negative implications. Surprisingly, negative associations of hustle increased as workload intensity decreased. Of the respondents who described their workloads to be not at all intense or not very intense, 20 percent also said they consider hustle to have a positive connotation. In contrast, the other 80 percent believed hustle has a negative connotation. These findings imply there may be additional factors associated with workload intensity that could alter respondent perceptions of hustle.

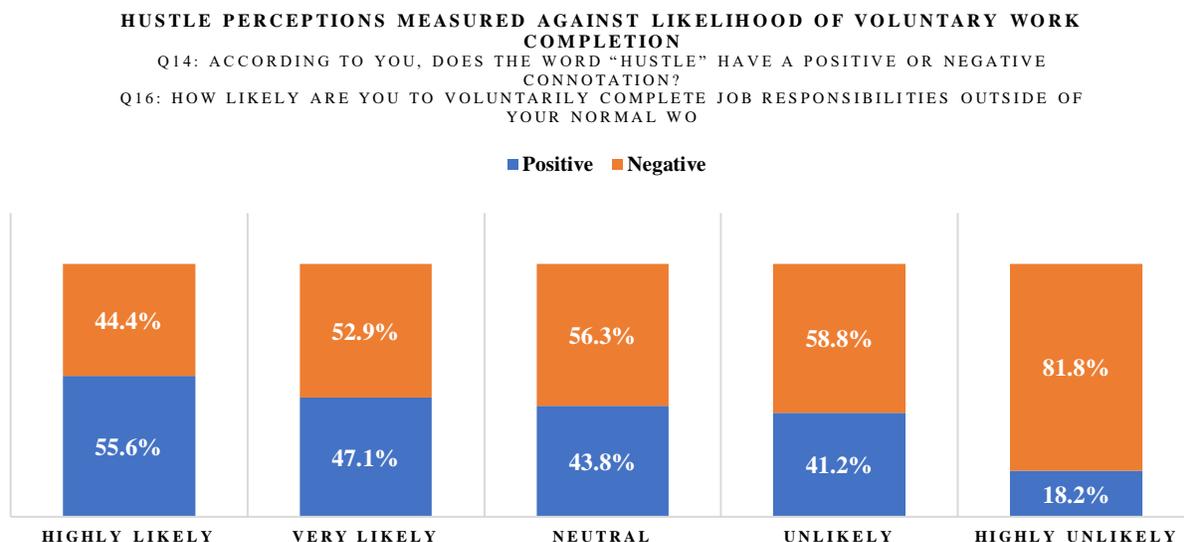


**Figure 2:** The term “hustle” appears to have more of a negative connotation attached as respondents’ workload intensity decreases.

Concerning additional work from third parties that would require respondents to work beyond standard work hours, negative hustle perceptions were dominant across the spectrum of communicating these concerns to supervisors. Approximately 60 percent of respondents who said they are either very likely or highly unlikely to describe additional responsibilities being a problem also view hustle with a negative connotation. Additionally, only 38 percent of

respondents who are highly susceptible to communicate additional responsibility concerns also associate hustle with a positive perception.

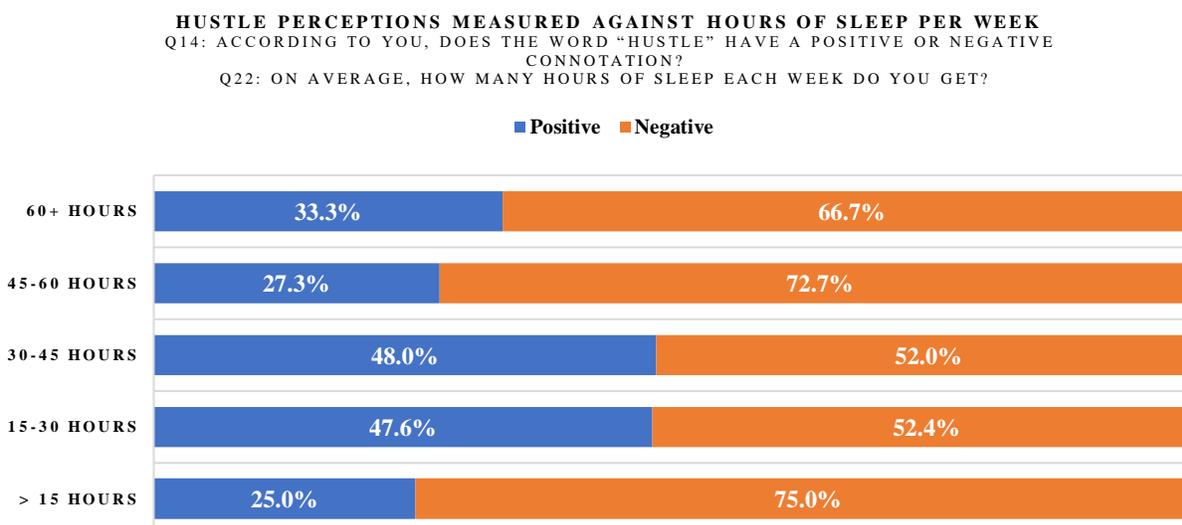
However, 32 percent of respondents said they are very likely to volunteer working outside of work hours. In contrast, roughly 21 percent of respondents said it is not very likely for them to do so. There appears to be a correlation between voluntarily completing work outside of standard practice and having positive hustle associations. Of the respondents who are highly likely to work outside of standard hours willingly, approximately 56 percent also view hustle with positive associations. Contrasting, of the respondents who are highly unlikely to work out of regular work hours voluntarily, roughly 82 percent also view hustle with negative connotations. Additionally, approximately 41 percent of respondents who are likely to complete job responsibilities outside of their physical work environment also believe it is very likely they would work beyond their standard work hours. These findings are an exciting contrast that implies having a choice in the matter influences the respondents' decision.



**Figure 3:** As the likelihood of respondents' voluntarily completing work responsibilities outside of standard work hours increases, positive hustle perceptions also increases.

In comparison to the input of work hours, roughly 47 percent of respondents said they get between 30-45 hours of sleep per week, which is less than the daily national recommended average. Of the respondents who receive between 30-50 hours of sleep each week, 52 percent also have negative views of hustle, whereas 48 percent share positive associations of hustle. When analyzed with hours spent on sleep, negative hustle perceptions were dominant

across all timeframes. Even when the amount of sleep increased, negative hustle connotations were prevalent.



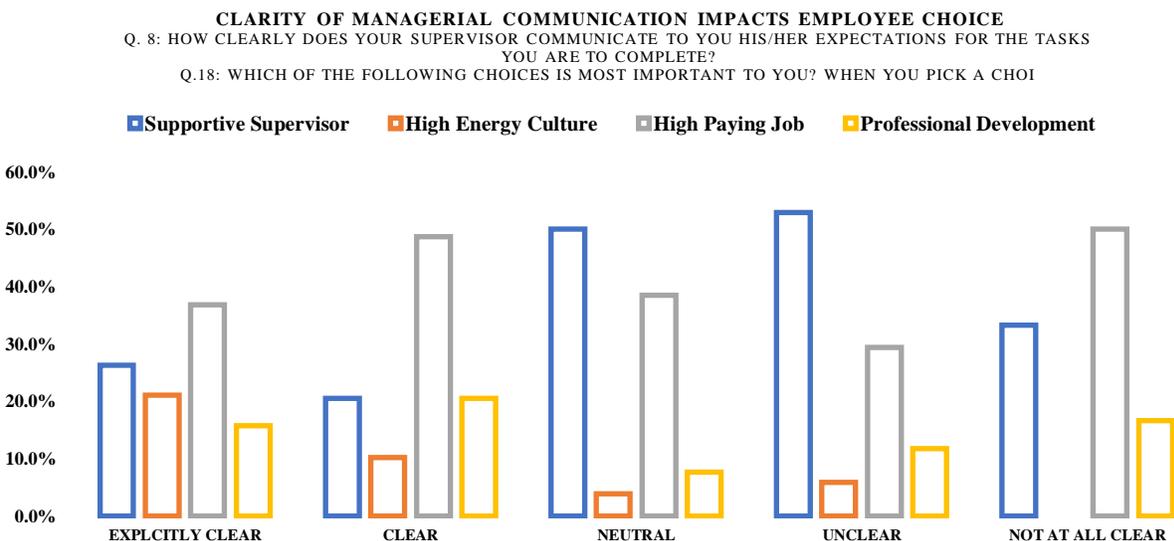
**Figure 4:** While negative perceptions of hustle were dominant across all sleep timeframes, they were also prominent as the number of sleep hours increased.

**Key Takeaway #2:** Managerial clarity of communication regarding respondents' role expectations impacts what respondents view as the most important factor as an employee.

- Respondents are more willing to forgo a supportive supervisor than a higher paying job, which appears to be strongly influenced by role clarity.
- Respondents who strongly believe a new employee cannot replace them are less likely to communicate concerns to their supervisors than respondents who firmly believe they are replaceable.
- The more likely respondents feel they are easily replaceable, the more likely they are to work outside of their workplace.
- Replaceability perceptions and work-level output influence respondents' confidence in managerial encouragement of mental health time off.

Approximately 44 percent of respondents recorded work-life balance as more important than receiving monetary compensation and benefits. However, if told only to choose one option, 41 percent of respondents would choose a high paying job over a supportive supervisor, who would be crucial in gaining work-life balance. Of the respondents who view work-life balance as the most important factor as an employee, 45 percent would not give up a supportive supervisor. However, of the respondents who view monetary compensation and benefits as the most important factor as an employee, 70 percent would not forgo a high paying job. Even of the respondents who chose flexible work hours as the most crucial aspect as an employee, 50 percent would not forgo a high paying job, whereas 25 percent would not forgo a supportive supervisor.

The single exception we found was 50 percent of the respondents who described managerial communication regarding role expectations to be not at all clear would also not forgo a high paying job. It can be implied, then, that respondents who fall into this category might not anticipate having a supportive supervisor to be feasible given the lack of clear communication provided.

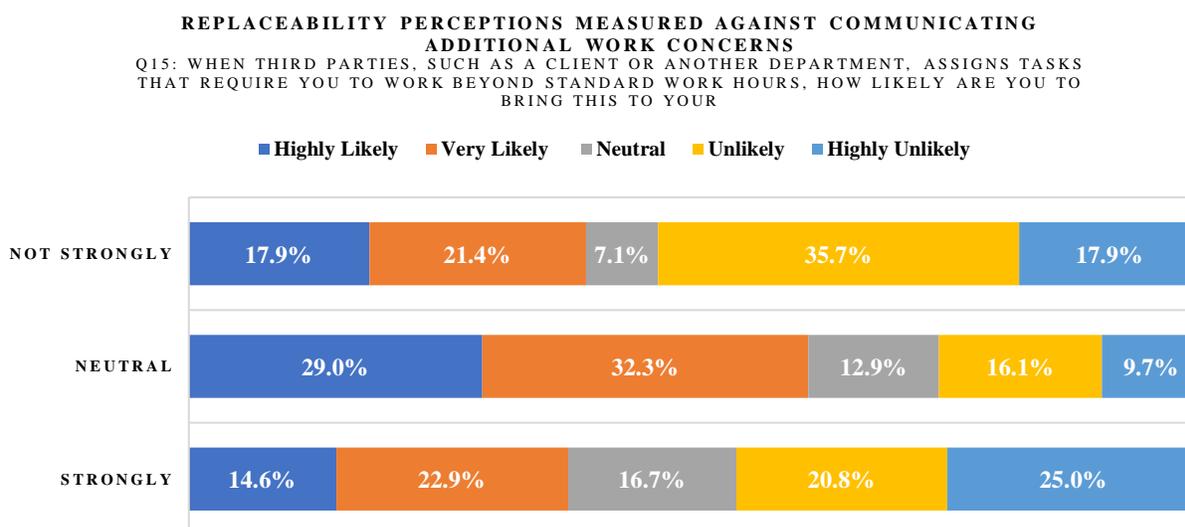


**Figure 5:** It appears respondents gravitate towards choosing a supportive supervisor when role expectations are unclear. However, a high paying job is the essential employee choice across all other clarity levels of role expectations.

Different employees might likely require different types of support from supervisors, with supervisor communication appearing to be the primary support sought after. Of the respondents who stated their supervisors clearly communicate role expectations, 48 percent said they would not give up a high paying job, whereas 20 percent said they would not give up a supportive supervisor. However, of the respondents who stated their supervisors unclearly communicate role expectations, approximately 29 percent said they would not give up a high paying job. In contrast, roughly 53 percent said they would not give up having a supportive supervisor. Additionally, of the respondents who felt their supervisor neither clearly nor unclearly communicates role expectations, 50 percent leaned towards not forgoing a supportive supervisor. These findings imply that clarity of communication has the potential to impact not just the supervisor-employee relationship but also the overall employee experience.

An issue regarding the quality of supervisor-employee relationships can be further implied, particularly in communicating concerns regarding additional work responsibilities. Our data show that respondents leaned towards not expressing these concerns. Only 19 percent

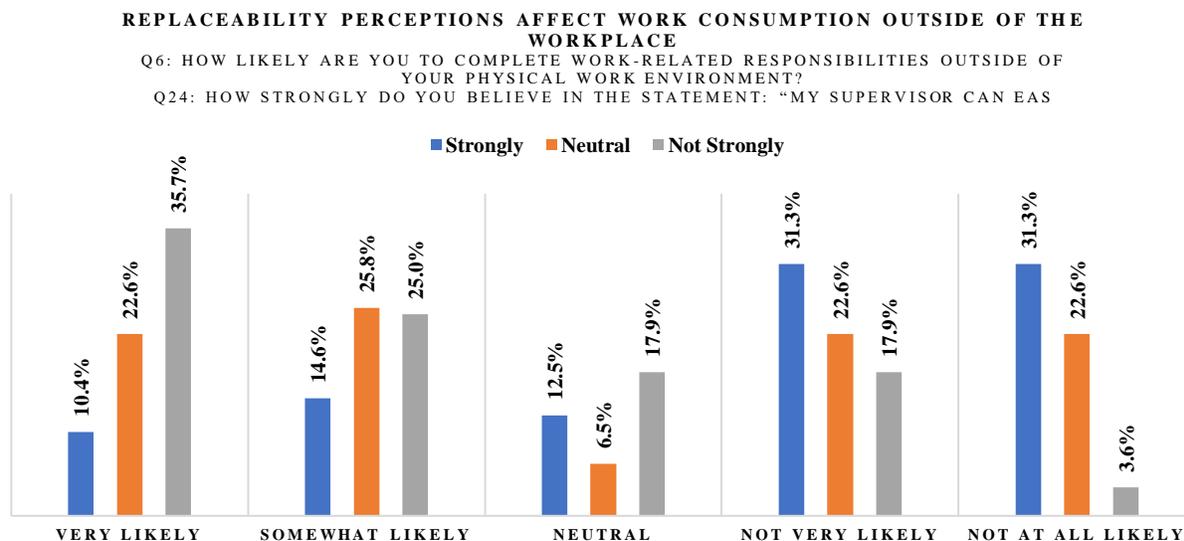
of respondents said it is highly likely they would communicate to their supervisor should an issue arise, such as working beyond standard work hours. One explanation could result from respondent's fear of being replaced by another employee, irrespective of how efficiently respondents consider themselves compared to other team members. Of the respondents who believe strongly that their supervisors could easily replace them with another employee, 25 percent said it is highly unlikely that they would communicate additional responsibilities as a concern. However, 36 percent of the respondents who do not feel strongly that they are easily replaceable also said it was unlikely for them to bring up additional responsibilities as a concern. These findings imply that although respondents may not perceive it likely that they could be replaced, they might not be willing to jeopardize that perception by communicating work-related concerns.



**Figure 6:** Respondents who do not feel strongly that a new employee can easily replace them are more unlikely to communicate to their supervisors when additional responsibilities pose a problem compared to respondents who firmly believe they are easily replaceable.

Additionally, there may be a correlation between work consumption outside of the workplace and respondents' confidence in being replaced. Of the respondents who strongly believe another employee can easily replace them, only 10 percent are very likely to complete work responsibilities outside of their physical work environment. In contrast, 36 percent of respondents who strongly believe another employee cannot replace them are also very likely to work outside of their physical work environment. Likewise, 50 percent of respondents who strongly believe another employee cannot replace them are also very likely to work beyond standard work hours voluntarily. These findings imply that respondents who firmly believe their

supervisors can replace them have a decreased motivation to complete additional responsibilities and choose to devote their energy to other aspects of their life that are not work-related during off-hours.

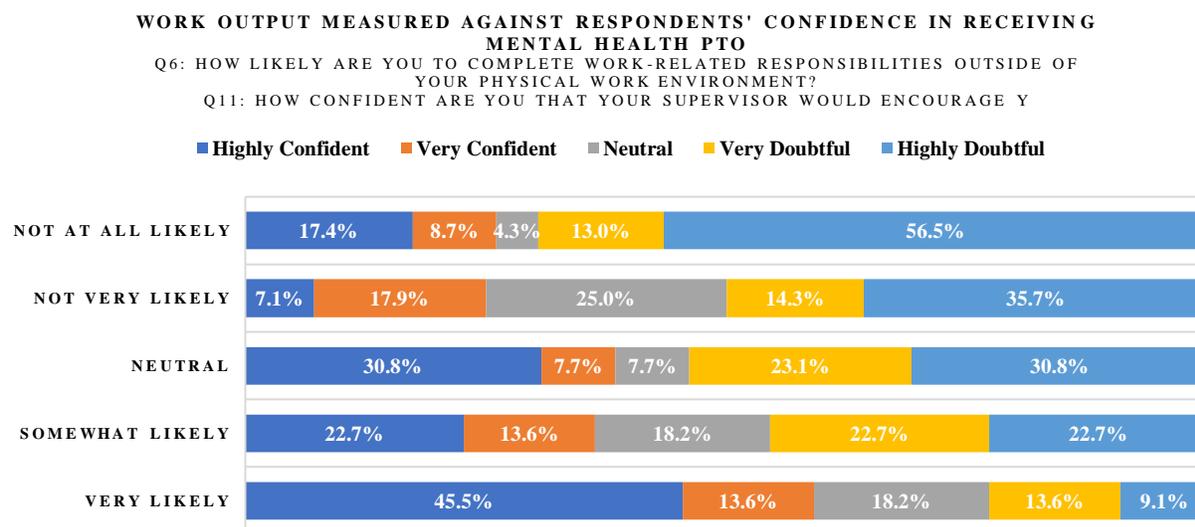


**Figure 7:** It appears the more likely respondents are to work outside of their physical work environment, the less likely they believe their supervisor can easily hire a new employee as a replacement.

The perception of supervisor willingness to encourage paid time off for mental health is essential here as it directly relates to communication quality regarding respondent role expectations and hustle perceptions. For example, of the respondents who said they are highly doubtful that their supervisors would encourage taking mental health time off, roughly 71 percent felt strongly that they are easily replaceable. Should supervisors support or offer mental health time off, respondents may be wary of taking that opportunity to further showcase their commitment to the organization despite their other career achievements.

It appears respondents' perceptions of being given mental health paid time off strengthened when the likelihood of them working beyond standard expectations increases. Of the respondents who are very likely to work outside of their work environment, roughly 46 percent are highly confident their supervisors would encourage mental health time off. However, of the respondents who are not at all likely to work outside of their workplace, approximately 57 percent are highly doubtful their supervisors would encourage utilizing paid time off for mental health purposes. These findings imply that respondents may hold an underlying assumption that

they might be considered expendable if opting to use mental health benefits at the expense of time taken away from work.



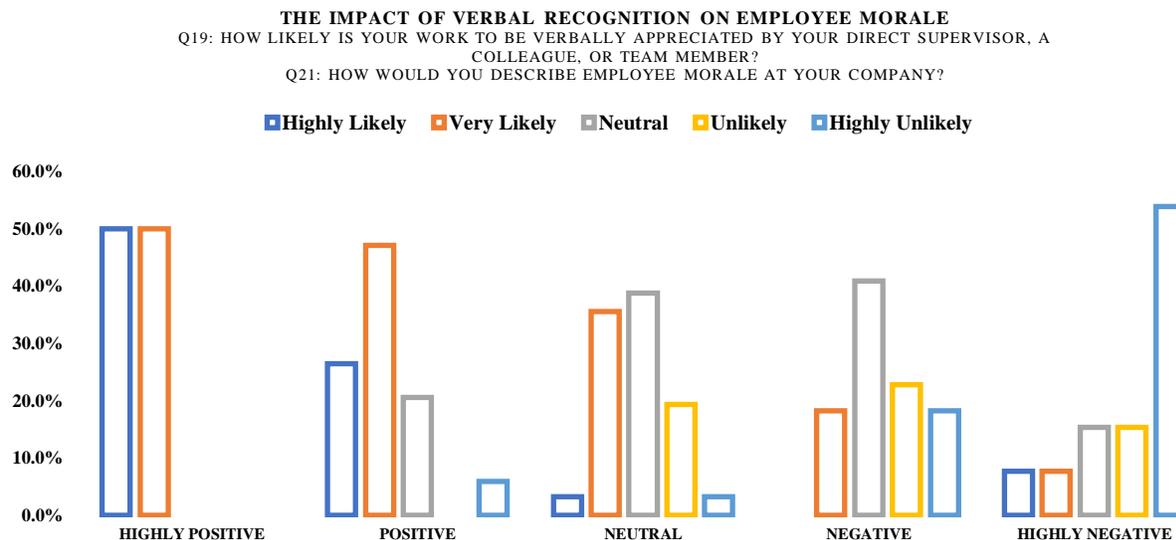
**Figure 8:** As the likelihood of respondents working outside of their workplace increases, confidence in managerial encouragement of mental health paid time off also increases.

**Key Takeaway #3:** Most respondents described their workplace to have high employee morale, but still appear to demonstrate insecurities when their performance is not recognized, or their responsibilities are altered.

- **The higher the likelihood of respondents receiving verbal appreciation for their work, the more positive the perception of employee morale at the organization.**
- **There is a positive correlation between employee morale and recommending the company as a place to work.**
- **Verbal recognition appears to impact respondent satisfaction with their completed work per day.**
- **When measures against motivational sayings, the authenticity of respondents' satisfaction as employees become questionable.**

Approximately 32 percent of respondents said employee morale was positive at their place of work. A direct result of this finding might come from another discovery in which 33 percent of respondents revealed it is very likely for their work to be verbally appreciated by their immediate supervisor, colleagues, or team member. Of the respondents who described their workplace as highly positive, 50 percent also said it is highly likely for their work to be verbally appreciated by a direct supervisor, colleague, or team member. In contrast, the remaining 50 percent said it was very likely for their work to be appreciated. Not one of the respondents who described their company to have positive employee morale said it was highly unlikely or even unlikely that their work would be verbally appreciated. However, of respondents who described

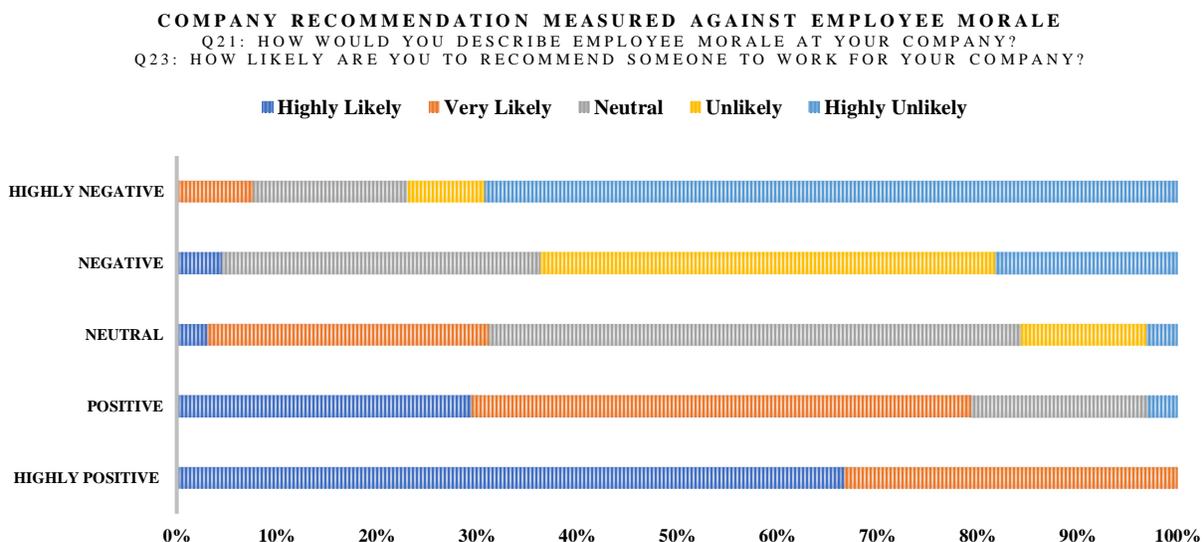
their place of work to be highly negative, approximately 54 percent also responded that it is highly unlikely for their work to gain verbally appreciated.



**Figure 9:** Employee morale grows more positive as the likelihood of verbal appreciation for respondent work increases.

Employee satisfaction may also impact how respondents describe employee morale at their company. Of the respondents who are very satisfied at their current place of work, 62 percent also believe it is very likely for their work to be verbally recognized at their organization. Further, of the respondents who said they are highly satisfied as employees working at their current company, roughly 56 percent also said they would describe employee morale at their company as positive. Additionally, of the respondents who said they are highly unsatisfied as employees, 37 percent described employee morale as negative at their company.

We received a similar positive correlation when we measured both employee satisfaction and employee morale with respondents' likelihood of recommending their place of work. Most notably, of the highly satisfied respondents at their company, not one respondent said it was highly unlikely or even unlikely that they would not recommend someone to work for their company. Similarly, of the respondents who described employee morale at their company as highly positive, roughly 67 percent also said it was highly likely they would recommend someone to work for their company. These findings suggest that not only are these correlations positive, but they are also strong.

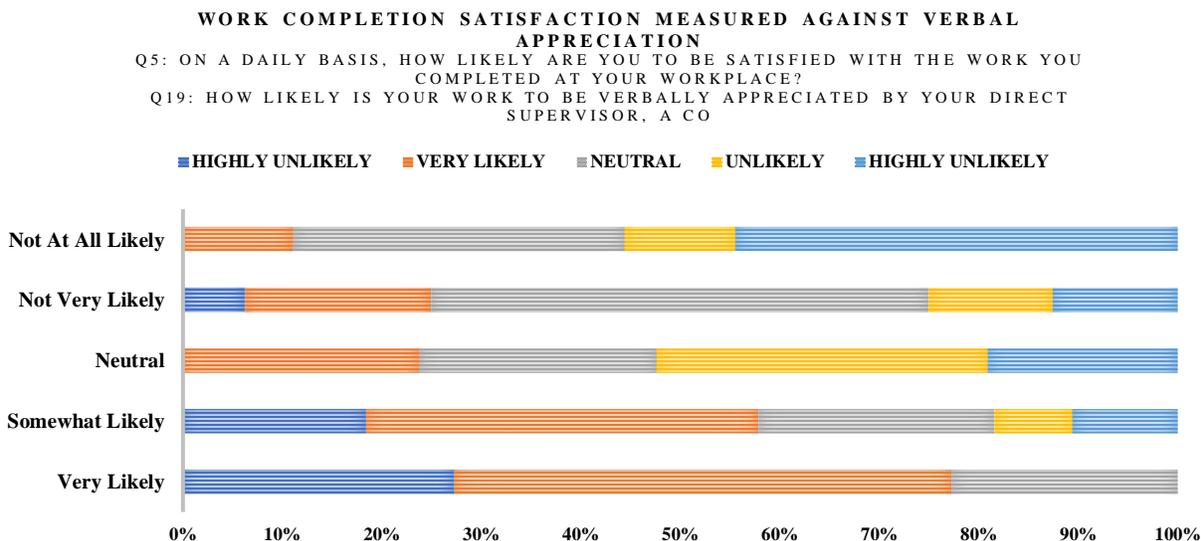


**Figure 10:** There are strong correlations present between the likelihood of respondents recommending someone to work for their company based on how positive or negative they believe employee morale is at their company.

In contrast, approximately 21 percent of the respondents who believe it is highly unlikely for their work to be verbally appreciated would also be highly displeased if a part of their work responsibilities to another team member. Of the respondents who said it is highly unlikely that another team member can complete tasks as efficiently, roughly 33 percent also said they would highly displeased if their supervisor redistributed work to another employee. Further, of the respondents who appear to be displeased with part of their work responsibilities allocated to another team member, 43 percent feel neutral that their work is verbally appreciated.

Concerning workload intensity, of the respondents who described their workload to be highly intense, only 4 percent would be highly pleased if their work responsibilities were redistributed. Our data also demonstrates respondent satisfaction with completed work dependent on the intensity of their workloads. Specifically, we found that 60 percent of the respondents who described their workloads to be not at all intense also said they were not very likely to be satisfied with the work they complete daily. Further, of the respondent who described their workloads to be very intense, only 46 percent said it is somewhat likely they would be satisfied with their completed work. Respondent satisfaction with completed work appears to be influenced by the verbal recognition of said work. Notably, of the respondents who are very likely to be satisfied with the work they complete daily, 50 percent said it is very likely that their work receives verbal appreciation. In contrast, of the respondents who are not at all likely to be

satisfied with the work they complete daily, 44 percent said it is highly unlikely for their work to be verbally recognized.

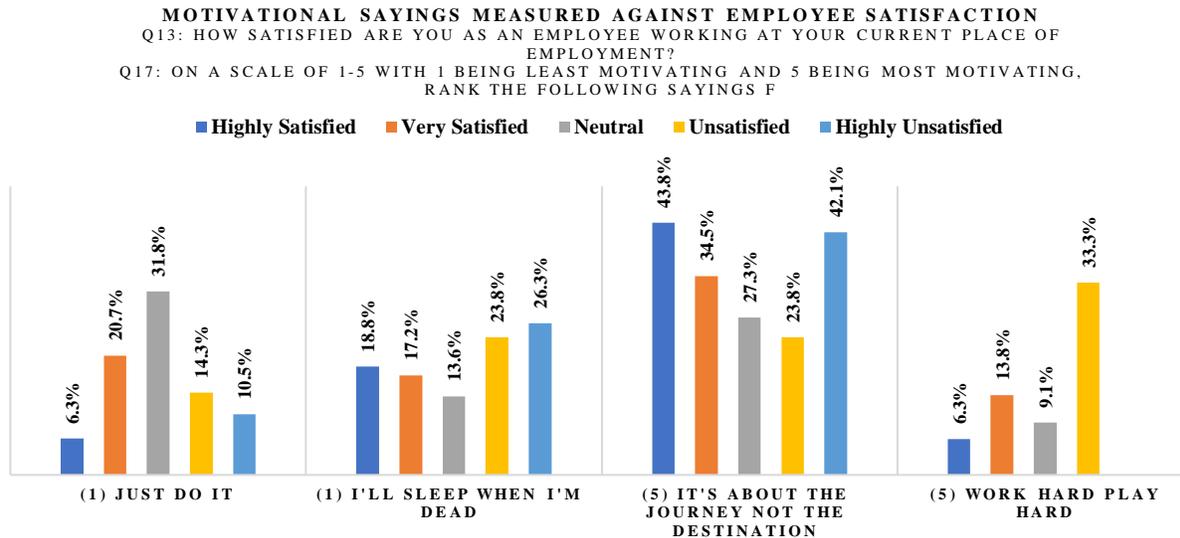


**Figure 11:** Work completion satisfaction appears to increase as the likelihood of respondents receiving verbal recognition for their work also increases.

Perhaps a critical indicator of organizational commitment is employee motivation. Approximately 34 percent of respondents were most motivated by the saying: "It's about the Journey not the Destination" and roughly 26 percent were least motivated by the saying "Rise and Grind." One explanation for why most respondents found the first saying to be the most motivating could be because they consider their work to be a financial means to fund their real journey, which is not work-related. Our data found that of the respondents who are not willing to give up a high paying job, approximately 43 percent also found "It's about the journey not the destination" to be the most motivating statement.

When measured against motivational sayings, the authenticity of employee satisfaction becomes questionable. Of the respondents who are highly satisfied as employees, roughly 44 percent chose "It's About the Journey not the Destination" as the most motivational saying. Even of the respondents who are highly unsatisfied as employees, approximately 42 percent also said, "It's About the Journey not the Destination" is the most motivational saying. These findings may strengthen the reasoning that employees are aware that issues about workload intensity and possibly managerial support are a part of an employee's journey and that employees are ultimately in control of their journey. Of the respondents who felt neither satisfied nor unsatisfied as employees, roughly 32 percent chose "Just Do It" as the least motivational saying.

Moreover, of the respondents who are dissatisfied as employees, approximately 33 percent chose "Work Hard Play Hard" as the most motivational saying. In contrast, roughly 24 percent chose "I'll Sleep When I'm dead" as the least motivational saying. Interestingly, these last three sayings align with the hustle culture behaviors dictated throughout this study, which brings to light the authenticity of employee satisfaction within hustle culture.



**Figure 12:** While "It's About the Journey not the Destination" appears to be the most motivational saying for both highly satisfied and highly unsatisfied employees, the perception of motivational sayings across satisfaction levels vary.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research study was to examine the impacts hustle culture has on employee performance, employee satisfaction, and the quality of professional relationships in the workplace. Specifically, we examined the effects hustle culture has on employee productivity, wellness, and work-life balance. We hypothesized that hustle culture would increase employee performance but decrease employee satisfaction as well as decrease the quality of professional relationships in the workplace. Based on our findings, it appears that employee performance, employee satisfaction levels, and professional relationship quality all varied when measured against facets of hustle culture. These findings are an essential observation for leaders, specifically transformational leaders, to adopt individualized consideration under their leadership styles. The variation of responses we collected in this study indicates that employees would benefit from open communication regarding role expectations, professional performance, and mental health. These factors would then contribute to increasing not only employee performance but also the level of employee satisfaction and professional relationships within the organization. It is equally vital for supervisors to understand the type of support each of their employees requires, in addition to understanding the kind of support the workgroup requires, for employees to engage in their roles adequately.

While most respondents view hustle with a negative connotation, employees can experience different facets of hustle culture based on the availability of resources and support provided at their place of employment. Further, it is likely that employees who are recently starting their careers, such as those in our sample size, might require more resources and support due to lack of professional exposure. As a result, the need for leaders to segment their communication to employees is necessary based on the outcomes that the individual employee is seeking. Further, our data points demonstrate an underlying sense of respondents seeking validation regarding work responsibilities. Respondents appear to be territorial about their duties even if they believe another team member can execute those tasks efficiently. However, while employee productivity did seem to be apparent throughout our findings, we are unable to determine the value that such productivity has on overall employee performance if such productivity is motivated by personal insecurities as opposed to managerial encouragement.

We gathered evidence to support the notion that each employee's perception of hustle in comparison to the actualities of their day-to-day will vary. Tailored communication targeting

specific employee concerns will prevent information overload, improve employee role clarity, and positively impact work performance and overall engagement. For these exchanges to be completely authentic and transparent, leaders must encourage a culture of open communication to strengthen the quality of professional relationships in the workplace. Employees might then be more likely to trust that their voices will be heard to improve their growth in their role.

Employee support will vary across industries. Some professions, such as Healthcare and Technology professions, consist of intense workloads and extended hours by nature. Therefore, employees in such occupations might not view themselves as part of a hustle culture but rather as merely doing their jobs because of the explicit communicated role expectations and limitations from the beginning of employment. Employees who have a better understanding of their work conditions might be better able to manage factors that may negatively affect employee satisfaction than employees who cannot cope as efficiently without some type of managerial intervention. Moreover, employees who receive explicit expectations are better able to build effective professional relationships as they clearly understand how each party can achieve organizational objectives together. Hustle culture might provide these employees with an opportunity to be more proactive in determining how leaders can improve their impact on the team. Employee morale can increase as well as overall employee performance due to the newly created access employees have to their leaders.

We measured employee satisfaction from both a productivity level and an employee morale and corporate culture standpoint. Most notably, respondents' satisfaction for both work completed daily, and being an employee at their current place of employment were positively correlated to clear supervisory communication regarding role expectations, as well as verbal recognition from a direct supervisor, team member, or colleague. Most respondents described their place of work to have high employee morale. Still, managerial support, including the availability of mental health time off, appeared to be provided based on employee commitment towards the company in the form of longer work commitments. This finding does not imply that the longevity or intensity of employee commitment increases employee productivity. Further, while negative hustle culture perceptions were dominant regardless of respondents' average sleep hours per week, there are likely different facets aside from average work input or workload intensity that may impact the hours of sleep respondents recorded to receive. Employee

productivity may indirectly be affected, and to a more considerable extent, satisfaction, and wellbeing in the workplace.

However, even though respondents were more likely to consider work-life balance to be more important than monetary compensation and benefits, they were more willing to sacrifice having a supportive supervisor for a high-paying job. One implication is that the respondents who value having a supportive supervisor over a high paying job might not share a close professional relationship with their current supervisor, arguing why a supportive supervisor was deemed as most valuable. Further, such respondents might not currently have a relationship with their supervisor that fosters trust or open communication. In contrast, the respondents who do receive clear communication regarding role expectations may not value a supportive supervisor as much since respondents already have a clear understanding of their role expectations and rely less on their supervisor to focus more on their advancement as an employee. These findings collectively support why it appears hustle culture impacts employee performance, employee satisfaction, and professional relationship quality, but further research is necessary to determine the extent of the impact.

## **Discussion**

FitzPatrick et al. (2014, p.10) argued that material rewards are not as powerful as positive motivators and that employees tend to desire an increase in salary when they feel they are not rewarded fairly. We can anticipate that respondents have a clear understanding of what is expected of them professionally and that respondents are instead seeking support in different areas such as work-life balance or recognition for higher monetary compensation such as a raise or bonus. Likely, respondents do not have what they perceive to be a supportive supervisor that would encourage work-life balance. This implication would further explain why respondents chose work-life balance as most important because it might be something they do not currently have. Although, it is also likely that their supervisors are not responsible for the lack of work-life balance, somewhat the respondents themselves are. We believe a broader indication that hustle culture holds a different meaning for different employees from our data. Since employees might have a different idea of what hustle culture perceptions mean to them, they might indulge in behaviors that either support or restrain them from pursuing such actions. These perceptions may stem from a culmination of communication provided to employees throughout their careers, not

just at their current workplace. What this indicates to leaders is the importance of not only establishing clear role expectations but also acknowledging the intent behind employee behaviors.

It appears that employees make themselves more flexible in completing more work responsibilities when they choose to volunteer their time as opposed to satisfying a managerial expectation. It is likely that these additional responsibilities were not communicated to be mandatory, which may explain why employees find them appealing to fulfill as a proactive means to be driven. A primary example within the United States is retired healthcare workers who decided to go back to the frontline and continue their practice to assist in treating COVID-19 patients. Notably, this demonstrates that even though countless uncertainties are deriving from our current global pandemic, employee commitment within the Healthcare industry has never been more apparent.

Also, it does not seem as though leaders prevent their employees from voluntarily completing extra work responsibilities, even if the completion of additional responsibilities was not expected. It demonstrates trust and a healthy professional relationship where neither leader nor member is being taken advantage of. For example, our data found that the likelihood of answering emails on a day off increases when respondents voluntarily do it. However, our data also demonstrates that support such as mental health paid time off is likely given when the employee executes tasks that are expected of them and does more work outside of regular work hours voluntarily, which is also an expectation of the supervisor. Supervisors may likely hold an unconscious bias providing support to employees who work beyond standard expectations so that they continue to maintain that level of productivity. In contrast, employees who fulfill minimal expectations might be considered as low performers and risk being more susceptible to being laid off quicker than employees who are accessible outside of standard hours.

Another implication could be respondents seek more than pay but rather for employee experience. Perhaps respondents consider having both work-life balance and compensation as part of their experience working for their corporation and therefore believe both to be vital to their employment. It is important to note that the discrepancies between stated corporate culture and the actuality of one's day-to-day plays a significant role here. Employees may consider both work-life balance and compensation vital components to their employment because they are a part of the organization's stated corporate culture. The preference for a high paying job might

result from a transactional perspective in completing a task and being compensated for it. However, it may also stem from a need or desire for respondents to secure financial security through monetary gains for what they believe they deserved regardless of compensation market value.

While respondents might believe in their ability to execute tasks efficiently, they do not consider themselves a uniquely qualified member of their respective teams. This observation leads back to our finding that found that most respondents believed their supervisors felt the respondents were easily replaceable. Additionally, employee satisfaction is not only applicable to productivity levels. It appears verbal performance recognition skewed respondent perceptions of employee morale in the sense of differing employee validation that might be present on the respondents' immediate teams. The authenticity of the motivation to acquire verbal recognition is also questionable. From our data, it appears this motivation stems from insecurities such as being replaced or hesitation to communicate concerns, as opposed to genuinely thriving off a hustle lifestyle. Perhaps, this reasoning skews the value of verbal recognition as employees might use such validation as a personal metric to measure performance. Such perceptions are problematic as it fails to consider employees have a different diminishing rate of return regarding performance. As a result, when the bandwidth of a single employee, or a supervisor, is established as the minimum expectation for the workgroup to achieve, it removes the incentive of building a professional relationship of open communication and trust.

There also appears to be less willingness for respondents to be okay with having part of their work responsibilities distributed to another team member when there is a lack of verbal appreciation, implying that they are perhaps unworthy for the job. Also, there is a link between verbal appreciation for work and confidence in supervisors encouraging respondents to use paid time off for mental health purposes. The perceptions surrounding the verbal recognition of work might influence the employees' trust in bringing up issues in conversation with their supervisor. The employee might believe he or she is not working up to expectations, which might impact mental health further coupled with the insecurity of asking for help. Therefore, supervisors need to take note of how role expectations are influencing workgroup dynamics, which then also impact productivity and satisfaction.

Lastly, the direct results from a negative hustle culture are much more than employee burnout. Arguably, the immediate effects of the negatives of hustle culture stem after employees

face burnout as they are then faced with the decision of what their next steps are in their career path. Such a decision will have a direct impact on employees because it will ultimately be a choice that employees make on their own. That will then set the tone for the remainder of their employee experience in their current role. It will also force them to alter their expectations for their next role should they pursue a different professional path. However, some individuals thrive on this type of culture and would not face burnout due to their priorities or role constraints as an employee. A hustle culture might drive some employees due to genuinely thriving on that kind of lifestyle as opposed to being driven by fear of seeming incapable or less valuable to the organization. Additionally, it may not be likely for individual employees to pursue a different role or to communicate their burnout in fear of being deemed as replaceable, and therefore compromising their job security, if access to an equal or better opportunity is unavailable.

### **Limitations**

Findings would have been more significant if we implemented a mix-methods study in which we distributed our survey, conducted in-person interviews with our sample, and then compared the overarching themes and language from the data points with one another. Our findings might have been better correlated to our research question if we were able to cross-tabulate our quantitative data points with qualitative data on respondents' first-hand work experiences more in-depth. As a result of our limited sample to mainly entry-level and associate-level employees, our findings with each classification might not appear to be as impactful compared to research in which each was individually studied. Additionally, even though we actively attempted to do this study objectively with the use of structured questions, there might be some degree of bias similarities among respondents as participants were selected through a convenience sampling method, followed by a snowball sampling method.

The use of the survey did not provide room for us to analyze nonverbal cues or tone of voice that could have further validated or discredited the phrasing of participants' responses. Moreover, we believe we should have eliminated the 'Neutral' answer choice in the survey questions as most respondents chose this response, and it did not contribute as much insight as we wanted to collect. While we gave the respondents the option to contact us should they have questions none of the respondents utilized that option. As a result, we cannot say with complete guarantee that all the participants fully understood the question-wording. Further, upon

reviewing our data, we realized that we should have re-worded the question which asked respondents to state the industry they work. Some respondents typed in a State, and we were unable to utilize those responses in our analysis of hustle culture across industries.

### **Points for Future Research**

The perceptions of hustle culture vary across industries, as well as the intensity of the workload. However, further research should examine this in more depth – particularly in terms of sectors within Education, Healthcare, and Technology. From our data points, there seems to be an inclination that the more employees value other facets of their life than work, the less likely it is for either their work to be verbally appreciated or for supervisors to encourage mental health days. Further research on varying types of supervisorial support and its impact on employee satisfaction and mental health can provide insight into the authenticity of an employee's hustle to remain committed to the company. It could be of great value to explore hustle culture among employees who work multiple jobs across different industries. It may also be valuable to research sectors in which employees bill services by the hour, such as consulting or legal services, to determine if pressures to charge maximum hours to clients has any effect on hustle culture perceptions.

Additionally, hustle culture might vary globally with the presence of different work expectations and work behaviors, such as those presented in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. An individualistic culture, for example, is dominant within the workforce in the United States. Employees tend to gravitate towards behaviors and actions that are best for them first as opposed to what is best for the collective workgroup. Moreover, while there is respect for authority figures, such as managerial personnel, employees tend not to fear those above them within the organizational hierarchy. While our data does not support an employee's fear of their direct supervisor, our data correlates to an employee's fear of not meeting or exceeding the expectations curated by management and the implications that could occur to the employee.

Our sample was heavily skewed with female respondents, making it difficult to determine if gender impacted hustle perceptions. More research on gender within hustle culture can provide insight into how impactful gender inequalities in the workplace concern how employees hustle at work. Specifically, more research should be conducted on hustle culture from a corporate level, as most of our respondents did not fall under the corporate classification. Further, as we begin to

enter the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, we must examine hustle culture concerning gig workers/independent contractors as their primary source of income only occurs post task completion. Further, since gig workers complete contract work, it is vital to understand the need for employee benefits for such workers to remain a sustainable contractor.

Hustle culture should also be examined from a socioeconomic perspective, particularly from a low-income perspective. It appears from our research that the decision to commit to hustle behaviors is an employee choice. Notably, it is a choice to either hustle or to demonstrate a high-level of organizational commitment, albeit inauthentic. Or, it may be a choice to hustle because those behaviors might be role expectations from a high-level managerial viewpoint. It also appears that employees are aware of these choices and can decide if they want to stay in their current place of employment or venture out to a different opportunity that better meets their needs and lifestyle. However, some employees do not have those choices because of their socioeconomic backgrounds. For those employees, hustle can be viewed as a means for survival because it is likely they do not have the resources necessary to allow them to transition into opportunities that would provide the type of support and flexibility mentioned in this study.

Finally, as our society grapples with the economic and mental health effects resulting from COVID-19, it is evident that the way we view and commit to work will change. For corporations, this will be reflective particularly of work from home policies and reconsidering the layout, and quite frankly, the value of co-working spaces and on-site workspaces overall. Perceptions of a standardized way of working can very well be a norm of the past almost instantaneously. It would be interesting to research employee motivations to establish high-quality relationships with their supervisors and team members both at the workplace and outside of work. This suggestion compliments Liden et al. (1997), who stressed that high-quality relationships entail affective bonding, voice, and support, both within the organization and outside of work. Perhaps by studying motive, we can delve deeper into the aspects that constitute employee involvement, and overall relational quality, within hustle culture in the workforce.

**APPENDIX A.****Survey Questions**

1. **Are you currently employed full-time in the United States?**  
Yes  
No
2. **At which level are you currently employed?**  
Entry-level  
Associate-level  
Director-level  
VP-level or higher  
I am self-employed
3. **Please state which industry you are currently employed in: \_\_\_\_\_**
4. **Within a week, approximately how many hours do you spend on work-related responsibilities?**  
30-50 hours  
51-70 hours  
71-90 hours  
91+ hours
5. **On a daily basis, how likely are you to be satisfied with the work you completed at your workplace?**  
Very likely  
Somewhat likely  
Neutral  
Not very likely  
Not at all likely
6. **How likely are you to complete work-related responsibilities outside of your physical work environment?**  
Very likely  
Somewhat likely  
Neutral  
Not very likely  
Not at all likely
7. **On a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning most important and 5 meaning least important, which of the following is the most important to you as an employee?**  
Stimulating tasks  
Work-life balance  
Benefits and monetary compensation  
Flexible work hours  
Professional learning and development

8. **On a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning explicitly clear and 5 meaning not at all clear, how clearly does your supervisor communicate to you his/her expectations for the tasks you are to complete?**
  - Explicitly clear
  - Clear
  - Neutral
  - Unclear
  - Not at all clear
9. **To what extent do you believe it's likely that another team member can execute tasks as efficiently as you can?**
  - Highly likely
  - Very likely
  - Neutral
  - Unlikely
  - Highly Unlikely
10. **How would you react if your supervisor distributed a part of your work responsibilities to another team member?**
  - Highly displeased
  - Displeased
  - Neutral
  - Pleased
  - Highly pleased
11. **How confident are you that your supervisor would encourage you to use paid time off in general for mental health?**
  - Highly confident
  - Very confident
  - Neutral
  - Very doubtful
  - Highly doubtful
12. **How intense would you describe your workload to be on a daily basis?**
  - Highly intense
  - Very intense
  - Neutral
  - Not very intense
  - Not at all intense
13. **How satisfied are you as an employee working at your current place of employment?**
  - Highly satisfied
  - Very satisfied
  - Neutral
  - Unsatisfied
  - Highly unsatisfied
14. **According to you, does the word "Hustle" have a positive or negative connotation?**
  - Positive
  - Negative

15. **When third parties, such as a client or another department, assigns tasks that require you to work beyond standard work hours, how likely are you to bring this to your supervisor's attention as a problem?**  
Highly likely  
Very likely  
Neutral  
Unlikely  
Highly unlikely
16. **How likely are you to voluntarily complete job responsibilities outside of your normal work schedule?**  
Highly likely  
Very likely  
Neutral  
Unlikely  
Highly unlikely
17. **On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least motivating and 5 being most motivating, rank the following sayings from most motivating to least motivating:**  
Rise and Grind  
Just Do It  
Work Hard Play Hard  
I'll Sleep When I'm Dead  
It's About the Journey not the Destination
18. **Which of the following choices is most important to you? When you pick a choice, you automatically do not get the remaining 3 choices.**  
Supportive supervisor  
High-energy culture  
High paying job  
Professional development
19. **How likely is your work to be verbally appreciated by your direct supervisor, a colleague, or team member?**  
Highly likely  
Very likely  
Neutral  
Unlikely  
Highly Unlikely
20. **How likely are you to answer work emails on your day off?**  
Highly likely  
Very likely  
Neutral  
Unlikely  
Highly Unlikely

21. **How would you describe employee morale at your company?**  
Highly positive  
Positive  
Neutral  
Negative  
Highly negative
22. **On average, how many hours of sleep each week do you get?**  
> 15 hours  
15-30 hours  
30-45 hours  
45-60 hours  
60+ hours
23. **How likely are you to recommend someone to work for your company?**  
Highly likely  
Very likely  
Neutral  
Unlikely  
Highly Unlikely
24. **How strongly do you believe in the statement: “My supervisor could easily hire a new employee to replace me”?**  
Strongly  
Neutral  
Not strongly
25. **What is your Gender?**  
Male  
Female  
Other

## REFERENCES

- Abu Bakar, Hassan, and Che Su Mustaffa. "Exploring Leader-Member Exchange, Superior-Subordinate Communication and Commitment: A Within and Between Analysis Approach." *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association, 2007 Annual Meeting 2007*, pp. 1–29.
- Achor, Shawn. "When a Vacation Reduces Stress - And When It Doesn't." *Harvard Business Review*, 2 Nov. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2014/02/when-a-vacation-reduces-stress-and-when-it-doesnt>.
- Apgar, Mahlon. "The Alternative Workplace: Changing Where and How People Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 21 Aug. 2014, <https://hbr.org/1998/05/the-alternative-workplace-changing-where-and-how-people-work>.
- Bellezza, Silvia, et al. "Conspicuous Consumption of Time: When Busyness and Lack of Leisure Time Become a Status Symbol." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2016, doi:10.1093/jcr/ucw076.
- Brummelhuis, Lieke, Rothbard, Nancy P. "How Being a Workaholic Differs from Working Long Hours - and Why That Matters for Your Health." *Harvard Business Review*, 14 June 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/03/how-being-a-workaholic-differs-from-working-long-hours-and-why-that-matters-for-your-health>.
- Cameron, Emma SeppäläKim. "Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive." *Harvard Business Review*, 8 May 2017, <https://hbr.org/2015/12/proof-that-positive-work-cultures-are-more-productive>.
- Carmichael, Sarah Green. "Millennials Are Actually Workaholics, According to Research." *Harvard Business Review*, 22 Aug. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/08/millennials-are-actually-workaholics-according-to-research>.
- Carmichael, Sarah Green. "The Research Is Clear: Long Hours Backfire for People and for Companies." *Harvard Business Review*, 28 Dec. 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/08/the-research-is-clear-long-hours-backfire-for-people-and-for-companies>.
- Cashman, J., Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. J. (1976). Organizational understructure and leadership: A longitudinal investigation of the managerial role-making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 15, 278-296.
- Cassar, Gill, et al. "What Causes Us to Burnout at Work?" *World Economic Forum*, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/10/burnout-mental-health-pandemic/>.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, Tomas. "Embrace Work-Life Imbalance." *Harvard Business Review*, 7 Aug. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2013/02/embrace-work-life-imbalan>.
- Coleman, Jackie, Coleman, John, et al. "Don't Take Work Stress Home with You." *Harvard Business Review*, 15 Nov. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/07/dont-take-work-stress-home-with-you>.

Cooper, Jennifer L., Berdahl, Peter, Glick Marianne. "How Masculinity Contests Undermine Organizations, and What to Do About It." *Harvard Business Review*, 2 Nov. 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/11/how-masculinity-contests-undermine-organizations-and-what-to-do-about-it>.

Corsello, Dylan, Jason Minor. "Want to Be More Productive? Sit Next to Someone Who Is." *Harvard Business Review*, 24 May 2017, <https://hbr.org/2017/02/want-to-be-more-productive-sit-next-to-someone-who-is>.

DeLong, Vineeta, Thomas J. Vijayaraghavan. "Let's Hear It for B Players." *Harvard Business Review*, 11 Aug. 2015, <https://hbr.org/2003/06/lets-hear-it-for-b-players>.

Ewing, Janelle, and Jaesub Lee. "Leader-Member Exchange and Transformational Leadership Communication Behaviors." *Conference Papers -- National Communication Association*, Jan. 2009.

FitzPatrick, L., Valskov, K., & Mounter, P. (2014). *Internal communications: a manual for practitioners*. London, England: Kogan Page.

Friedman, Ron. "Dear Boss: Your Team Wants You to Go on Vacation." *Harvard Business Review*, 18 June 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/06/dear-boss-your-team-wants-you-to-go-on-vacation>.

Fry, Richard. "Millennials Are Largest Generation in the U.S. Labor Force." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 11 Apr. 2018, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/).

Gall, Christine, and Congdon Catherine. "How Culture Shapes the Office." *Harvard Business Review*, 29 Mar. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2013/05/how-culture-shapes-the-office>.

Gallup, Inc. "State of the American Workplace." Gallup.com, Gallup, 4 Dec. 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/reports/178514/state-american-workplace.aspx>.

Graen, G. (1976). Role-making processes within complex organizations, In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1201-1245). Chicago, L: Rand-McNally.

Graen, George B., and Mary Uhl-Bien. "Relationship-Based Approach to Leadership: Development of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership over 25 Years: Applying a Multi-Level Multi-Domain Perspective." *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1995, pp. 219–247.

Graen, G. B., & Scandura, T. A. (1987). Toward a psychology of dyadic organizing. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 1, pp. 175–208). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Griffin, Natalie Shope. "Personalize Your Management Development." *Harvard Business Review*, 1 Aug. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2003/03/personalize-your-management-development>.

Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, and Chaudhry. "LMX Differentiation: A Multilevel Review and Examination of Its Antecedents and Outcomes." *The Leadership Quarterly* 20.4 (2009): 517-34. Web.

Hurley, Robert F. "The Decision to Trust." *Harvard Business Review*, 21 Aug. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2006/09/the-decision-to-trust>.

Johns, Tammy, and Gratton, Lynda. "The Third Wave of Virtual Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 2013, <https://hbr.org/2013/01/the-third-wave-of-virtual-work>.

Jones, Roger. "What CEOs Are Afraid Of." *Harvard Business Review*, 24 Feb. 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/02/what-ceos-are-afraid-of>.

King, Steve, et al. "Coworking Is Not About Workspace - It's About Feeling Less Lonely." *Harvard Business Review*, 28 Dec. 2017, <https://hbr.org/2017/12/coworking-is-not-about-workspace-its-about-feeling-less-lonely>.

Lamude, Kevin C., et al. "Organizational Newcomers: Temporary and Regular Employees, Same-Sex and Mixed-Sex Superior-Subordinate Dyads, Supervisor Influence Techniques, Subordinates Communication Satisfaction, and Leader-Member Exchange." *Communication Research Reports*, vol. 21, no. 1, Winter 2004, pp. 60–67.

Lee, J. (1997). Leader-member exchange, the "Pelz Effect," and cooperative communication between group members. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11, 266-287.

Lieberman, Charlotte. "Don't Do What You Love; Do What You Do." *Harvard Business Review*, 2 Nov. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2014/06/dont-do-what-you-love-do-what-you-do>.

Lieberman, Charlotte. "How Self-Care Became So Much Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 10 Aug. 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-self-care-became-so-much-work>.

Liu, Alex, et al. "Making Joy a Priority at Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 17 Sept. 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/07/making-joy-a-priority-at-work>.

Lloyd, Karina J., et al. "From Listening to Leading: Toward an Understanding of Supervisor Listening Within the Framework of Leader-Member Exchange Theory." *International Journal of Business Communication*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2015, pp. 431–451.

Luce, Sylvia Ann, Hewlett, Carolyn Buck. "Extreme Jobs: The Dangerous Allure of the 70-Hour Workweek." *Harvard Business Review*, 21 Aug. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2006/12/extreme-jobs-the-dangerous-allure-of-the-70-hour-workweek>.

Luft, J. (1969). *Of human interaction*. National Press.

McKee, Annie, et al. "Keep Your Company's Toxic Culture from Infecting Your Team." *Harvard Business Review*, 13 June 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/04/keep-your-companys-toxic-culture-from-infecting-your-team>.

Mirza, Beth. "Toxic Workplace Cultures Hurt Workers and Company Profits." *SHRM, SHRM*, 25 Sept. 2019, <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/employee-relations/Pages/Toxic-Workplace-Culture-Report.aspx>.

Morandin, Marcello Russo Gabriele. "Better Work-Life Balance Starts with Managers." *Harvard Business Review*, 9 Aug. 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/08/better-work-life-balance-starts-with-managers>.

Morgan, Jacob. "Is The Hustle Culture And Mentality Out Of Control?" *Forbes, Forbes Magazine*, 26 Feb. 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2016/02/26/is-the-hustle-culture-and-mentality-out-of-control/#67b88e0c3f29>.

Moss, Jennifer, et al. "Helping Remote Workers Avoid Loneliness and Burnout." *Harvard Business Review*, 15 Jan. 2019, <https://hbr.org/2018/11/helping-remote-workers-avoid-loneliness-and-burnout>.

Mueller, Bridget H., and Jaesub Lee. "Leader-Member Exchange and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multiple Contexts." *The Journal of Business Communication* (1973), vol. 39, no. 2, Apr. 2002, pp. 220–244.

Naidoo, Loren J., et al. "A Longitudinal Examination of LMX, Ability, Differentiation, and Team Performance." *PsycEXTRA Dataset*, 2009.

O'Neill, Sigal, Barsade, Olivia A. "Manage Your Emotional Culture." *Harvard Business Review*, 17 Nov. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/01/manage-your-emotional-culture>.

Petriglieri, Gianpiero. "Is Overwork Killing You?" *Harvard Business Review*, 31 Aug. 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/08/is-overwork-killing-you>.

Plummer, Matt. "How Are You Protecting Your High Performers from Burnout?" *Harvard Business Review*, 29 Aug. 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/06/how-are-you-protecting-your-high-performers-from-burnout>.

Reid, Erin, and Nicole Torres. "Why Some Men Pretend to Work 80-Hour Weeks." *Harvard Business Review*, 5 Dec. 2017, <https://hbr.org/2015/04/why-some-men-pretend-to-work-80-hour-weeks>.

Robinson, Bryan E. "The 'Rise and Grind' of Hustle Culture." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-right-mindset/201910/the-rise-and-grind-hustle-culture>.

Roulet, Michael Gill, Thomas. "Stressed at Work? Mentoring a Colleague Could Help." *Harvard Business Review*, 21 Aug. 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/03/stressed-at-work-mentoring-a-colleague-could-help>.

Scudder, Joseph, et al. "Leader-Member Exchange, Person-Organizational Fit, and Assimilation." *Conference Papers -- National Communication Association*, Jan. 2008

Sears, G. J., & Hackett, R. D. (2011). The influence of role definition and affect in LMX: A process perspective on the personality–LMX relationship. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(3), 544-564.

Sias, P. M., & Jablin, F. M. (1995). Differential superior–subordinate relations, perceptions of fairness, and coworker communication. *Human Communication Research*, 22, 5–38.

Sias, P. M. (1996). Constructing perceptions of differential treatment: An analysis of coworker discourse. *Communication Monographs*, 63(2), 171-187.

Sias, P. M., Kramer, M. W., & Jenkins, E. (1997). A comparison of the communication behaviors of temporary employees and new hires. *Communication Research*, 24, 731-754.

Sin, Hock-Peng, Jennifer D. Nahrgang, Frederick P. Morgeson, and Kozlowski, Steve W. J. "Understanding Why They Don't See Eye to Eye: An Examination of Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Agreement." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94.4 (2009): 1048-057. Web.

Stine, M., Thompson, T., & Cusella, L. (1995). The impact of organizational structure and supervisory listening indicators on subordinate support, trust, intrinsic motivation, and performance. *International Journal of Listening*, 9, 84-105.

Thomas, Maura. "4 Organizational Mistakes That Plague Modern Knowledge Workers." *Harvard Business Review*, 11 May 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/05/4-organizational-mistakes-that-plague-modern-knowledge-workers>.

Uhl-Bien, M., Graen, G. B., & Scandura, T. A. (2000). Implications of leader–member exchange (LMX) for strategic human resources management systems: Relationships as social capital for competitive advantage. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 18, 137–185.

Valcour, Monique. "4 Steps to Beating Burnout." *Harvard Business Review*, 10 Oct. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/beating-burnout>.

Wilkie, Dana. "Workplace Burnout at 'Epidemic Proportions'." *SHRM*, SHRM, 31 Jan. 2017, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/employee-burnout.aspx>.

Wilkie, Dana. "Workplace Burnout Is Now an 'Occupational Phenomenon'." SHRM, SHRM, 16 Aug. 2019, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/workplace-burnout-a-medical-condition.aspx>.

Wittenberg-Cox, Avivah. "In Praise of Extreme Moderation." Harvard Business Review, 21 Aug. 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/06/in-praise-of-extreme-moderation>.

World Health Organization, World Health Organization, <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/129180281>.