

Effect of Stress Management Practice on Employees' Performance: Evidence from Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

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Abstract: Understanding the relationship between stress management practice and employees' performance can have significant implications for improving the working conditions and ultimately the quality of education in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. So, the objective of this study was to identify effect of stress management on employees' performance with reference to Evidence from Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia. To this end, the researchers employed quantitative research approach with explanatory research design where the effect caused by the independent variables on the dependent variable is observed through regression analysis. The simple random and stratified sampling techniques have been employed by researchers. The primary data was collected using structured questionnaire that prepared in the form of five point Likert scale. Then, quantitative analyses have been done through SPSS version 24.0 in order to get the reliable research results. Accordingly, the result of regression model showed that variables such as guided meditation, practice deep breathing, maintain physical exercise, good nutrition, manage social media time, and, connect with others has positive effect on employees performance. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher forwarded possible recommendations for the Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia based on statistically significant variables due to fact that they have significant influence in improving employees' retention. For instance, stress management improves the job satisfaction and improvement in organizational commitment towards achieving organizational goals enable to increase in employee's intention. So, that it is recommended to save the Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia should to work on effectiveness of stress management practices in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, total compensation, training and development, and safety of work environment to improve employees retention that enables them to enhance the quality of customer service.

Keywords: Employees' Performance, Stress Management Practices, Private Higher Education Institutions

1. Introduction

Stress has become a pervasive issue in today's fast-paced work environment, affecting employees' performance and overall well-being. In private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, employees face significant stressors due to the demanding nature of their roles (15-17). Consequently, finding effective stress management practices that can enhance employees' performance has become crucial.

However, the existing literature on stress management practices in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia is limited, particularly concerning the impact on employees'

performance. This research aims to bridge this gap by focusing on the effect of stress management practices on employees' performance in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

The dependent variable in this study is employees' performance, which refers to the quality of work, productivity, and efficiency demonstrated by individuals in their respective roles within the institutions. To investigate the impact of stress management practices on employees' performance, we have identified five independent variables [10].

The first independent variable is guided meditation, which involves actively engaging in a form of meditation with the

guidance of a trained professional. Meditation has been proven effective in reducing stress and improving cognitive function, thus potentially enhancing employees' performance [4].

Practicing deep breathing is another important independent variable that can significantly impact employees' performance. Deep breathing exercises can help reduce stress and promote relaxation by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to increased focus, clarity, and improved decision-making abilities [1].

Maintaining physical exercise is the third independent variable to consider. Regular physical activity has been linked to reduced stress levels and improved mental well-being, which can positively influence employees' performance [2, 3].

Good nutrition is another crucial factor that can affect employees' stress levels and performance [19]. A balanced diet rich in essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids, can contribute to improved cognitive function, better mood regulation, and enhanced overall well-being [8].

Lastly, managing social media time and connecting with others also play a significant role in stress management and employees' performance [9]. Excessive use of social media has been associated with higher stress levels, while building meaningful connections can provide emotional support and contribute to a positive work environment [5, 6].

By examining the relationship between these stress management practices and employees' performance in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, this study will provide valuable insights that can inform the development of effective interventions and policies to improve employee well-being and organizational performance.

2. Review Literature

2.1. Conceptual Review

This section reviews the relevant concepts related to the research topic. These are:

Employee performance is defined as how well a person executes their job duties and responsibilities [14].

Use guided meditation for stress management: mediation is a way of managing or resolving armed conflicts that involves third party actively seeking to bridge the gaps between the main antagonists [7].

Practice deep breathing: Deep breathing exercises are a way for you to turn off your body's natural response to stress [4].

Maintain physical exercise: Physical exercise is the performance of some activity in order to develop or maintain physical fitness, reduce stress, and improve overall health [8].

Manage social media time: If social media or the internet has ever made you feel stressed, envious or lonely, or experience feelings of lower self-esteem or social anxiety, know that you're not alone. Manage the message of social media onetime reduces the stress and improve employees performance [11].

Connect with others during stress: sharing the cause of stress and force behind the stress with others during stress will

reduces stress [5].

2.2. Theoretical Review

This section reviews the existing theoretical frameworks related to the research topic. The researchers reviewed five theories related with topic.

2.2.1. The Transactional Theory of Stress Management

This theory suggests that stress management is a process of evaluating and modifying one's cognitive appraisal of stressors [24]. It involves changing one's perception of stress, examining one's response to stress, and implementing coping strategies.

2.2.2. The Biopsychosocial Model of Stress Management

According to this theory, stress should be examined from a holistic perspective, taking into account biological, psychological, and social factors. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how individual characteristics, social support, and the body's physiological response to stress influence stress management [25].

2.2.3. The Self-Determination Theory of Stress Management

This theory posits that individuals are motivated to manage stress when they feel autonomous, competent, and connected to others. It highlights the importance of satisfying these basic psychological needs to enhance stress management [23].

2.2.4. The Cognitive-Behavioral Theory of Stress Management

This theory focuses on the role of thoughts and behaviors in stress management. It suggests that individuals can learn to identify and challenge maladaptive thoughts, develop coping strategies, and engage in relaxation techniques to effectively manage stress [26].

2.2.5. The Conservation of Resources Theory of Stress Management

According to this theory, individuals are motivated to preserve and build their personal resources. Stress management is viewed as the process of mobilizing and replenishing these resources to cope with stressors effectively [27].

2.3. Empirical Review

This section reviews previous empirical studies related to the research topic and presents how it related to current study. The Impact of Stress Management Programs on Employee Performance was studied by [32]. This study examined the effect of stress management programs on employee performance. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between stress management practice and employee performance. The authors concluded that implementing stress management programs can improve employee performance.

The relationship between Stress Management Practices

and Employee Job Performance. In this study, the researchers investigated the relationship between stress management practices and employee job performance [31-33]. The results indicated that employees who actively engaged in stress management practices demonstrated higher job performance. The study emphasized the importance of promoting stress management strategies to enhance employee performance [12, 13].

The impact of stress management interventions on employee performance. The research showed that employees who participated in stress management interventions experienced reduced stress levels and significantly improved their performance. The study suggested that organizations should invest in stress management interventions to boost employee performance [25-30].

Another study entitled Effect of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Employee Performance by [29]. This study explored the effect of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on employee performance. The results demonstrated that employees who engaged in MBSR practices showed enhanced job performance and reduced stress levels. The study highlighted the potential of MBSR in improving employee performance.

The comprehensive review of existing literature on stress management strategies and employee performance. The review highlighted various stress management practices, such as exercise, relaxation techniques, and time management, which were found to positively impact employee performance [28-30]. The study emphasized the relevance of adopting stress management strategies in organizations.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

This section presents the conceptual framework that will guide the research study. The conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between five independent variables such as guided meditation, practice deep breathing, maintain physical exercise, good nutrition, manage social media time, and, connect with others has positive effect on dependent variable which is the employees' performance.

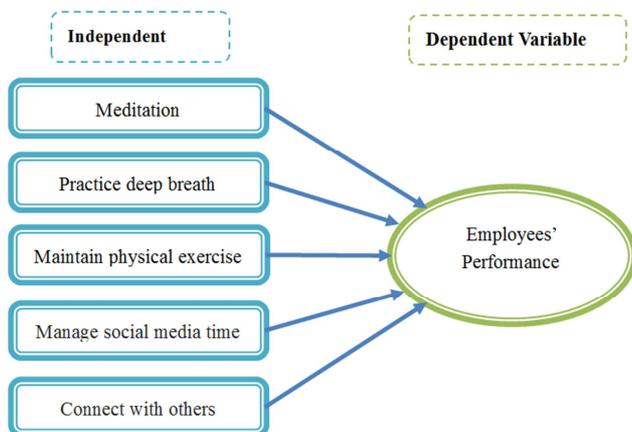


Figure 1. Conceptual Frame Work of the Study.

2.5. Literature Review Gaps

Despite the growing body of literature investigating the relationship between stress management practices and employees' performance, there remains a significant gap in the context of private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Limited empirical research has been conducted to understand the impact of stress management practices on the performance of employees within this specific sector in the country. The existing literature primarily focuses on stress management practices in general organizational settings, with little attention paid to the unique context and challenges faced by employees in private higher education institutions. Therefore, this literature review aims to bridge this gap by exploring and synthesizing existing studies that specifically examine the effect of stress management practices on employees' performance in the private higher education institutions of Ethiopia.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Area Description

The study was conducted in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Private higher education institutions have recently experienced significant growth, offering various educational programs to meet the increasing demand for higher education in the country. These institutions owners or operator were selected as the sample. Thus, understanding the effect of stress management practices on employee performance in private higher education institutions is crucial for the overall well-being and success of these institutions.

3.2. Research Philosophical Assumptions

This section discusses the different philosophical assumptions (positivism, social constructivism, pragmatism) that support the research. The study was based on positivism research philosophical assumptions which states knowledge is objective because the researchers were tested the hypothesis that were derived from prior research works.

3.3. Research Approaches

This section discusses the different research approaches that may be used in the study. In this study, the researchers were employed the quantitative research approach because the questionnaires were coded and all variables were measured numerically.

3.4. Research Design

The researchers were employed correlational research design. Correlational research design is a type of non-experimental study that aims to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. This design allows researchers to determine whether there is a statistical association between variables, but it does not establish causation. By measuring and analyzing the data, researchers

can assess the degree and direction of the relationship between variables, which can provide valuable insights into predicting and understanding behavior or phenomena. Correlational research design is often used in fields such as psychology, sociology, and education to explore the relationships between variables that may be difficult or unethical to manipulate experimentally.

3.5. Data Sources & Collection Methods

This study was used employees private higher education institutions in Ethiopia of primary data sources. Structured questionnaires are a valuable primary data source that the researchers utilized for this research. These questionnaires were carefully designed with a set format and predefined response options to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. By employing this method, researchers were able to gather specific and standardized information from the participants, resulting in a dataset that could be easily quantified and analyzed. The structured questionnaires allowed for efficient data collection as they guided the respondents through a series of relevant questions, ensuring that all necessary information was captured. This approach also enabled researchers to easily compare and contrast responses across participants, facilitating the identification of patterns and trends in the data.

3.6. Sampling Design

According to [41] there are 550 Private higher education institutions operating in Ethiopia. The total population of the study is 550 owners/operators private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Sample size is determined using the

$$\text{Employees' Performance} = \beta_0 + (\beta_1 * \text{Meditation of conflict}) + (\beta_2 * \text{Practice deep breathing}) + (\beta_3 * \text{Maintain physical exercise}) + (\beta_4 * \text{Manage social media time}) + (\beta_5 * \text{Connect with others during stress}) + U$$

Whereas:

β_0 = Constant term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \dots, \beta_5$ refers to coefficients

U = Error term

3.8. Reliability Test

This section discusses the methods that were used to ensure the reliability of the research findings. To measure the consistency of the questionnaire particularly the Likert-type scale the reliability analysis is essential in reflecting the overall reliability of constructs that it is measuring. The test of reliability is another important test of sound measurement showed in the table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Test.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.921	30

Source: Survey result, 2023

In this study, Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.921 (see table 1). This indicates that all the variables under consideration accounts above the scientifically accepted threshold,

formula proposed by [34]. So, the sample size for the study is calculated as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n= is sample size

N= is the population size and

e= is the level of precision

With 95% confidence level and then e = 0.05. The total sample size will be

$$n = \frac{550}{1 + 550(0.05)^2}$$

n = 231

Hence, the representative sample size for this study is 231 private higher education institutions owners or operators in Ethiopia.

3.7. Data Analysis Methods

In this study, quantitative data analysis methods were used. When it comes to model specification, employees' performance will be measured through Likert scale questionnaire. The multiple linear regression models will be employed by researcher to measure employees' performance. The dependent variable (Employees performance) is a linear function of use guided meditation for stress management, practice deep breathing, maintain physical exercise and good nutrition, manage social media time, and, connect with others are the independent variables and the error- by u, the model is given by the following Equation as:

therefore the study are reliable under this circumstance. compared with the minimum value of alpha 0.70 advocated by [33] then the responses generated for all of the variables 'used in this research were reliable enough for data analysis. This implies that the data incorporated in SPSS is reliable.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

During the data collection process for this research study, ethical considerations will be highly prioritized. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was ensured by assigning unique identification codes to each participant instead of using their actual names. Participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study, and their voluntary participation were explicitly emphasized. Informed consent forms were obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in the study, and they were informed that their participation is completely voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. Additionally, measures were taken to protect sensitive information obtained during data collection. All data were stored securely and accessed

only by the researchers involved in the study, ensuring that any personal identifying information is removed to guarantee participant privacy and confidentiality.

4. Results

4.1. Response Rate

Response rate in research refers to the percentage of eligible participants who respond to survey invitations or participate in a study. In this research the response rate was 91.77 which imply almost all participants were engaged in data collection process.

4.2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Summary of descriptive statistics in research refers to the collection, organization, analysis, and presentation of numerical data in order to summarize and understand the characteristics of a particular sample or population. Descriptive statistics help researchers to interpret the data, identify patterns, and draw initial conclusions, enabling them to make informed decisions and draw appropriate inferences from the data.

Table 2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees performance	212	1.00	5.00	2.6415	1.19389
Meditation of conflict	212	1.00	5.00	2.5943	1.12514
Practice deep breathing	212	1.00	5.00	3.0660	1.34389
Maintain physical exercise	212	1.00	5.00	3.3046	.96625
Manage social media time	212	1.00	5.00	2.8302	1.25038
Connect with others during stress	212	1.0	5.0	2.830	.9782

Source: Survey result, 2023

Employees' performance was the dependent variable of this study which has overall mean of the variable was 2.6415 a maximum of 5 and a minimum of 1 Likert scale values. The standard deviation value is 1.0845 which indicates there was variation of actual responses from the mean. With regard to other variables the meditation of conflict 2.594 with SD of 1.12514, Practice deep breathing of mean 3.066, (SD) of 1.34389, Maintain physical exercise 3.3046 with SD 0.96625, Manage social media time 2.8302 with SD of 1.25038, Connect with others during stress 2.8300 with 0.97082 with SD have the overall mean and standard deviation respectively. In summary, all variables incorporated in the model have moderate contribution to the response variable employees' performance (see table 2).

4.3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables in research. It aims to determine whether

there is a linear association between the variables and to what extent one variable changes when the other variable(s) change(s).

In correlation analysis, a correlation coefficient is calculated, which quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. The correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1, where a positive value indicates a positive relationship (both variables increase and decrease together), a negative value indicates a negative relationship (one variable increases while the other decreases), and a value of zero indicates no relationship between the variables. Correlation analysis helps researchers understand the degree of association between variables and provides insight into potential patterns, trends, or dependencies in the data. However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, meaning that even if two variables are highly correlated, it does not necessarily mean that one variable causes the other to change. The correlation matrix for this study was computed as follow.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Employee performance (1)	1	.				
Meditation of conflict (2)	.343**	1				
Practice deep breathing (3)	.151*	.312**	1			
Conduct physical exercise (4)	.242**	.149*	.054	1		
Manage social media (5)	.353**	-.170*	.473**	.035	1	
Connect with others (6)	.370**	.278**	.020	.003	.410**	1

Source: Survey result, 2023

The table 3 shows the relationship between dependent variable which is employees' performance and independent variables with coefficient of correlation 1 indicates that each variable is perfectly correlated with each other. The result

shows that, all five independent variables such as use meditation for stress management, practice deep breathing, maintain physical exercise and good nutrition, manage social media time, and, connect with others have positive relationship

with employees' performance since p-value is more than 1% level of significance since p-value is less than 0.01.

4.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a set of statistical processes for estimating the relationships among variables. Moreover, it includes many techniques for modeling and analyzing several variables, when the focus is on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

More specifically, regression analysis helps one understand how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variables changed, while other independent variables constant. Multiple regressions are used to identify the dominant factor among multiple independent variables that have significant and stronger effect on the given dependent variable. In this case multiple linear regressions were run to identify the dominant variables that have significant effect on turnover intention.

Table 4. Model Summary of Regression Analysis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.682a	.465	.452	.88367	.465	35.831	5	206	.000	1.916

a. Predictors: (Constant), Connect with others during stress, Maintain physical exercise, Practice deep breathing, Meditation of conflict, Manage social media time
 b. Dependent Variable: Employees performance

Source: Survey result, 2023

In the above table 4 R Square indicates the proportion of the variance in the turnover intention which is accounted for the model. In essence, this is a measure of how good a prediction of the turnover intention we can make by knowing the variables. Accordingly, R Square value for this model is 0.465. This means that 46.2% of the variation in dependent variable (employees' performance) can be explained by the

independent variables (meditation for stress management, practice deep breathing, maintain physical exercise and good nutrition, manage social media time, and, connect with other) and the rest of variance in employees' performance can be attributed to other factors which are held constant or not included in the model.

Table 5. ANOVA Result of Regression Analysis.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	139.895	5	27.979	35.831	.000b
	Residual	160.859	206	.781		
	Total	300.755	211			

a. Dependent Variable: Employees performance
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Connect with others during stress, Maintain physical exercise, Practice deep breathing, Meditation of conflict, Manage social media time

Source: Survey result, 2023

With the P-Value of 0.000 compared to the alpha level of 0.05 it can be concluded that, the independent variables predict the dependent variable. The model reaches statistical significance Sig=0.000, this means P<0.05. When the model is statistically significant it will have low p value which indicates that there is a significant portion of the variation in the

dependent variable by change in independent variables. The value of F illustrates the extent of association of independent variables and retention intention. Greater the value of F, greater will be the association among variables value and it must be greater than 10 to say a model is fit. Accordingly, in this model F value is found 35.831 (see table 5).

Table 6. Coefficients of Regression Analysis.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.838	.363		-5.060	.000	-2.554	-1.122
Meditation of conflict	.441	.060	.416	7.298	.000	.322	.560
Practice deep breathing	.174	.056	.196	3.111	.002	.064	.284
Maintain physical exercise	.192	.064	.155	3.007	.003	.066	.318
Manage social media time	.356	.063	.373	5.690	.000	.233	.479
Connect with others during stress	.410	.073	.336	5.584	.000	.265	.555

Source: Survey result, 2023

Fitted Model

Employees Retention = -1.838+0.441* Meditation of

conflict+ 0.174* Practice deep breathing +0.192* Maintain physical exercise + 0.356* Manage social media time +

0.410* Connect with others during stress +Error... (See table 6).

The coefficient of explanatory variables such as Meditation of conflict 0.441, Practice deep breathing 0.174, Maintain physical exercise 0.192, Maintain physical exercise 0.356 Connect with others during stress 0.410 implies that 1% increase in the variables leads to 44.1%, 17.4%, 19.2%, 35.6%, and 41.0 % increase in employees performance (see table 6).

5. Discussion of the Results

In addition more explanation of the model of this research let us discuss each variables incorporated in the model one by one as follow: The result of this study shows that support from Meditation of conflict with standardized coefficient of regression [$\beta = 0.441$] has a positive and statistically significant at 1% level of significance since (p-value of $0.000 < 0.01$). Hence, hypothesis one is accepted. This finding is consistent with idea of study result by [18, 23] and idea of the transactional theory of stress management which evidenced that meditation of conflict has positive effect on staff performance. In this study the relationship between meditation of conflict and employees' performance is generally positive. By practicing meditation techniques and adopting a mindful approach to conflict resolution, employees can reduce stress, improve communication, enhance problem-solving skills, and create a more harmonious work environment. This ultimately leads to improved performance and increased organizational success.

The result of this study shows that Practice deep breathing with unstandardized coefficient of regression [$\beta = 0.174$] has a positive and statistically significant at 1% level of significance since (p-value of $0.002 < 0.01$). Hence, hypothesis two is accepted. This finding is consistent with idea of study result of [35, 36] and concept of the biopsychosocial model of stress management which evidenced that Practice deep breathing has positive effect on employees' performance. This implies that more organizational commitment is positively contributes to the employees' performance because the Practice deep breathing has been shown to be positive relation to employee attitudes about their work. Practice deep breathing is likely to be higher among employees who perceive they have input into decision making because it allows them to help shape the organization and shows that they are valued by the organization [37, 39].

Maintaining physical exercise during times of conflict can have numerous positive effects on employees' performance. It helps manage and reduce stress, improves mental clarity and focus, promotes discipline and resilience, enhances work-life balance, and fosters positive workplace relationships. Employers should encourage and support employees in incorporating physical activity into their routine, especially during times of conflict, as it can significantly contribute to their overall well-being and performance. The result of this physical exercise during times

[$\beta = 0.192$] has positive and statistically significant at 1% level of significance since (p-value of $0.022 < 0.05$). Hence, the researcher accepted hypothesis two. This finding is consistent the finding of other study [38] and the cognitive-behavioral theory of stress management which suggest that conducting physical exercise during times of conflict can have numerous positive effects on employees' performance.

Effectively managing social media time during conflict, employers can promote better focus, mental well-being, time management, and a more professional work environment. This, in turn, can enhance employees' performance and contribute to a more productive and harmonious workplace. When comes to the managing social media time, the Coefficient of regression of variable is [$\beta = 0.356$] which is positive and statistically significant effect on employees performances with p-value ($0.002 > 1\%$, level of significance). Therefore, hypothesis three was accepted by the researchers. This result is consistent with findings of [40, 42] and the self-determination theory of stress management which support that effectively managing social media time during conflict reduces conflicts. Monitoring and managing social media time can help employees better manage their time during conflict. When employees are encouraged to limit their social media usage, they are forced to allocate more time to problem-solving, finding resolutions, or focusing on their assigned tasks. By doing so, they can prioritize their work and contribute to conflict resolution efforts more effectively, ultimately enhancing their overall performance.

Connecting with others fosters collaboration and teamwork, leading to improved employee performance [20-22]. When employees are able to effectively communicate and connect with their coworkers, it creates a positive work environment where ideas can be shared, conflicts can be resolved constructively, and productivity can be boosted. Engaging in open and healthy discussions helps in building understanding and empathy among employees, ultimately enhancing their performance. The Coefficient of regression of variable is [$\beta = 0.410$] is positive and statistically significant effect on employees Performance with p-value ($0.000 > 1\%$, and 5% level of significance). Therefore, hypothesis five is accepted by the researchers. The result is consistent with the cognitive-behavioral theory of stress management thoughts and [42]. This implies that connect with other for consulting on conflict resolution give an immense impact to the employees' performance either towards the positive outcomes.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the factors that can positively influence employee performance in Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia. The regression model results highlight the significance of incorporating guided meditation, practicing deep breathing, maintaining physical exercise, good nutrition, managing social media time, and connecting with others in the workplace. By implementing these strategies, institutions

can potentially enhance employee well-being, productivity, and overall performance. As such, it is recommended that higher education institutions in Ethiopia consider integrating these practices into their organizational policies and employee development programs to create a supportive and thriving work environment. This study contributes to the existing literature on employee performance and serves as a foundation for further research in the field of workplace well-being in Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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