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Failure-Tolerant and Success-Celebrating Organizational Cultures: Effects on Employee Motivation and Job Satisfaction

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Article

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Abstract

This study examined how failure-tolerant and success-celebrating organizational cultures are associated with employee motivation and job satisfaction. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory and organizational culture research, we investigated how organizational reactions to workplace success and failure shape employees' work motivation and job satisfaction. A sample of 415 Hungarian employees completed measures assessing workplace success experiences, workplace failure experiences, job satisfaction, and multidimensional work motivation. To address the lack of existing instruments, we developed and refined two new questionnaires measuring success-celebrating and failure-tolerant organizational practices. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported reliable multidimensional structures for both measures. Correlational analyses demonstrated that organizational practices emphasizing the celebration of success, particularly "*Rejoice*" and "*Recognition*", were positively associated with job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and identified regulation, while negatively associated with amotivation. "*Failure acceptance*" was also positively related to adaptive motivational outcomes and satisfaction. In contrast, the "*Negative Consequences*" of failure were associated with increased amotivation and stronger forms of extrinsic motivation, while negatively related to job satisfaction and autonomous motivation. Structural equation modeling further revealed that perceived "*Negative Consequences*" of failure dimension directly reduced job satisfaction and strengthened amotivation and extrinsic regulation. The findings highlight the importance of organizational environments that not only recognize success but also approach failure as an opportunity for learning rather than punishment. The study contributes to the literature by introducing new measurement tools and demonstrating that supportive organizational cultures may foster employee well-being, autonomous motivation, and more adaptive interpretations of workplace failure.

Introducion

Work constitutes a significant part of an adult's life. Therefore, it is particularly important to understand how employees' motivation changes when they achieve their goals, that is, experience success, or when they fail to achieve them, that is, experience failure. A lack of motivation may lead to decreased performance, burnout, higher turnover rates, and deteriorating workplace morale (Pârjoleanu, 2020). Consequently, it is essential for organizations to understand the factors that influence employee motivation in situations involving success or failure.

At the same time, when examining the effects of success and failure on employees from a work and organizational psychology perspective, it is also important to consider job satisfaction, which is closely related to both work motivation and performance. Employees who are happy and satisfied with their jobs tend to work with greater commitment and motivation, thereby contributing more effectively to the achievement of organizational goals (McClelland et al., 1953).

Aziri (2011) also emphasizes that job satisfaction is a key determinant of organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In modern organizations, increasing attention is being paid to employees' personal needs, as workplace satisfaction contributes to employee well-being and happiness, which in turn positively affects job performance and organizational success (Aziri, 2011).

Nevertheless, previous research has not yet examined how organizational-level measures, reactions, and practices related to the experience of success or failure influence employees' motivation and job satisfaction. Our study aimed to address this question. To gain a more precise understanding of how workplace experiences influence psychological functioning and organizational behavior, it is also necessary to conceptualize the notion of failure in greater detail. The following chapter therefore presents the theoretical and definitional frameworks of workplace failure.

Definition of workplace failure

Interpreting the concept of failure is a fundamental starting point for the psychological and organizational study of the phenomenon. Experiencing failure is an inevitable part of work, affecting even highly successful and widely recognized individuals (Axelton, 1998; Diller, 1995). Research also suggests that a significant proportion of leaders face failure in their professional roles, and estimates indicate that this may affect nearly half of organizational leaders (Burke, 2004). At the same time, when discussing work experience, it is important to highlight success as another possible outcome of performance. Although our research primarily focuses on the experience of failure, to better understand this process, it is important to clarify the concept of success as well, as it can nuance our understanding of the experience of failure. According to the definition by Judge and colleagues (1995), success is equated with positive or work-related positive outcomes and results. According to another definition, success is a desirable work-related outcome (Arthur et al., 2005). Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2007) describe the concept as an actual or perceived positive outcome in the context of work experiences.

We can see that there is no consensus among authors regarding the concepts of failure and success. Furthermore, even in the most prominent definitions of failure (e.g., Cannon & Edmondson, 2001; Newton et al., 2008), the concept of failure does not specifically interpret

the experience in relation to work. In these definitions, the psychological experience of failure is similar, whether the focus is on work, relationships, or any other experience in which performance is a central element of self-evaluation and personal identity (Newton et al., 2008).

This gap provides the basis for creating a specific definition that explicitly defines the experience of work-related failure. In this context, we define workplace failure as any experience occurring in an organizational environment and/or work-related performance situation that is a relative and partly subjective phenomenon, and which occurs when an individual evaluates the outcome as insufficient or inadequate in comparison to their own and/or their supervisor's goals, expectations, norms, or frame of reference, feels personally responsible for the result obtained, and experiences significant psychological and/or professional consequences as a result. The perceived discrepancy causes cognitive and emotional tension, which triggers further processes of interpretation and coping.

Defining the concept of workplace failure allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological processes these experiences can trigger in employees. However, interpreting the motivational consequences of failure and success also requires a theoretical framework capable of explaining how these experiences influence individuals' psychological functioning and motivation. In our research, Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) serves as the fundamental framework for this interpretation.

Motivation, Failure, and Success in the Framework of Self-Determination Theory

In this study, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides the fundamental theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between work motivation, failure and success (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to the theory, individuals' motivation is fundamentally determined by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy (the need to act freely, following our own decisions, with as little influence from external constraints as possible), competence (the need to experience ourselves as effective and successful individuals), and finally relatedness (relationships with others based on love, support, and respect). Satisfying these three needs promotes the development of intrinsic motivation, while their frustration can reduce motivation and lead to negative psychological consequences.

In the context of the conceptual framework of failure, the impairment of the need for competence may become particularly prominent. When a discrepancy arises between an individual's goals and actual performance—that is, when failure occurs—it can directly threaten the individual's sense of competence. This process can reduce intrinsic motivation and affect one's belief in and persistence with further efforts. At the same time, with adequate environmental support (such as psychological safety or supportive feedback), failure does not necessarily reduce motivation.

In addition to failure, it is also important to understand the motivational effects of success within the framework of self-determination theory. Success primarily influences the need for competence, as it reinforces the individual's sense of being able to function effectively and successfully in the work environment. Experiences of success provide positive feedback on performance, can increase self-efficacy and self-confidence, and can reinforce the belief that the individual is capable of controlling and successfully resolving work-related challenges.

Success can also contribute to the satisfaction of the need for autonomy. When an employee achieves positive results through their own decisions, initiatives, or independent efforts, success can reinforce a sense of personal control and self-determination. This is particularly evident when the organization supports autonomy and provides opportunities for individuals to pursue their own initiatives. Finally, success can also have a positive impact on the need for connection. Successes at work often go hand in hand with recognition and support from managers and colleagues, as well as shared joy, which can strengthen the sense of belonging to the organization and the workgroup. Shared and recognized successes can thus enhance not only individual well-being but also social cohesion and commitment.

In summary, reactions to experiences of failure and success can support the fulfillment of all three basic psychological needs, which may contribute to higher intrinsic motivation, increased job satisfaction, and long-term psychological well-being.

Although Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the role of basic psychological needs in the development of motivation, the fulfillment or deprivation of these needs does not depend solely on the individual's internal processes. Employee motivation is also significantly shaped by the organizational environment in which they relate to success, mistakes, and failures. Therefore, it is particularly important to examine how organizational culture shapes the experience of failures and successes.

The Defining Role of Organizational Culture in Employees' Experience of Failure

The relationship between organizational attitudes toward errors is further supported by the theory of High Reliability Organizations (HROs; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). According to this perspective, the effective management of errors and failures constitutes a fundamental element

of a successfully functioning organizational culture (Roberts, 1989). Early definitions (LaPorte & Consolini, 1991; Roberts, 1989, 1990, 1993; Roberts et al., 1994; Rochlin, 1986) described HROs as organizations capable of operating hazardous technologies in an "almost accident-free" manner, or at least with substantially fewer accidents than would normally be expected (e.g., nuclear power plants).

The most widely accepted HRO principles were identified by Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), who highlighted five core characteristics:

- continuous preoccupation with failures and reflection on them,
- reluctance to simplify interpretations and explanations,
- sensitivity to operations and ongoing processes,
- commitment to resilience and flexibility,
- and deference to expertise and expert decision-making.

Based on these characteristics, the concept of HROs can be interpreted broadly and is not limited exclusively to high-risk industries (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001; Youngberg, 2004). According to these authors, the complexity of the modern business environment (e.g., international competition, rapid innovation) resembles the technical complexity of systems such as nuclear power plants; therefore, these principles are equally relevant for all organizations striving for effective functioning. Hopkins (2007) was among the first to recognize that all organizations may exhibit these five characteristics, although to varying degrees. Subsequent research has further supported the assumption that HRO characteristics can appear at different levels across organizations (Ogliastri & Zuniga, 2016; Vogus & Welbourne, 2003).

Understanding organizational interpretations of failure also requires examining how human error itself is conceptualized. In this regard, the "new view" of human error and accidents (Hoffman & Woods, 2000; Rasmussen & Batstone, 1989; Reason, 2000) is of particular importance. According to this perspective:

- Human error is a symptom of deeper systemic problems.
- Safety is not an inherent property of systems. Systems themselves contain contradictions and pursue multiple competing goals that individuals must simultaneously manage. Therefore, people actively create safety.
- Human error is systematically connected to the characteristics of people, tools, tasks, and operational environments. Progress in safety emerges through understanding and influencing these relationships.

This approach differs substantially from the so-called "old view" of human error and encourages researchers to identify and make visible the underlying causes of mistakes, such as organizational deficiencies, design flaws, or procedural inadequacies (Rochlin, 1999). The central assumption is that human error is not an explanation, but rather something that requires explanation (Dekker, 2002). Consequently, effective interventions should not begin with blaming individuals (who are often themselves affected by systemic problems) but with addressing the workplace conditions that contribute to errors (Reason, 2000).

Overall, organizational culture appears to play a defining role not only in the occurrence of failures, but also in shaping how employees interpret failure, errors, and their consequences. At the same time, the literature review reveals that this remains a largely unexplored area of research. To provide a conceptual foundation for examining this phenomenon, we propose a working definition of a failure-tolerant organizational culture.

Accordingly, a *failure-tolerant organizational culture* can be defined as a system of organizational values, norms, and practices that supports the open recognition, sharing, and analysis of errors and failures, while allowing employees to interpret failures as legitimate opportunities for learning and development. Within such a culture, failure is not viewed merely as a negative outcome, but rather as a valuable and constructive source of information that contributes to both organizational improvement and individual and collective learning.

This working definition demonstrates that the concept of a failure-tolerant organizational culture is closely related to the construct of psychological safety. However, it may be interpreted as a broader organizational-level framework that facilitates the emergence and maintenance of psychological safety. While psychological safety primarily refers to individuals' and groups' subjective perceptions, a failure-tolerant organizational culture is reflected in organizational norms, leadership practices, and patterns of organizational functioning.

At the same time, examining experiences of failure also requires consideration of success. Therefore, we also formulated a working definition of a *success-celebrating organizational culture*. Based on this definition, a success-celebrating organizational culture refers to a system of organizational values, norms, and practices that supports the open recognition, sharing, and reflection on successes, while enabling successes to be interpreted not merely as outcomes, but also as opportunities for learning and reinforcement. Furthermore, in such cultures, both leaders and employees take an active role in making achievements visible and celebrating them.

A review of the literature shows that, although previous research has emphasized the importance of learning from mistakes, psychological safety, and recognition of success, little is known about how these organizational practices relate to employee motivation and satisfaction. In particular, there is a lack of empirical research on the organizational-level mechanisms that structure the experience of failure and success. The present study aims to address this gap.

The current study

The present research aims to explore how organizational procedures, practices related to individual success and failure (i.e., whether they recognize, celebrate, accept, support, or punish these events) shapes employees' job satisfaction and work motivation. While prior studies have emphasized the importance of learning from failure and recognizing success, little is known about how these experiences are embedded in everyday organizational practices and how they impact employees' job satisfaction and work motivation.

To address this gap, we developed and validated measures of workplace success and failure. Along with the theoretical considerations summarized above, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1. What relationships exist between the subdimensions of the "Success-Celebrating Organization" questionnaire and workplace satisfaction and motivation?

RQ2. What relationships exist between the subdimensions of the "Failure-Tolerant Organization" questionnaire and workplace satisfaction and motivation?

Study

Method

Participants

Our study included a non-representative sample of 415 participants from Hungary. Participants were employed either part-time (68.4%) or full-time (31.6%) and held managerial (9.2%) or non-managerial positions (90.8%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 59 years (M = 25.4, SD = 8.62), with 21% identifying as men, 77.3% as women, and 1.7% identifying differently or choosing not to disclose their gender. In terms of education, 39.8% held a four-year college degree, 31.1% had no college degree, and 29.1% had a postgraduate degree.

Measures

Workplace Success. We developed a measure of the impact of organizational culture on individuals' experience of success at work. The construction of the questionnaire was informed by both theoretical approaches and empirical findings from the workplace success literature. Based on these findings our objective was to create a measurement instrument capable of capturing organizational practices and responses related to workplace success experiences. We further developed the original 8-item measure to achieve more reliable factor structures. Although both the original and the expanded three-factor models (which included the newly added items) demonstrated excellent fit indices (original three-factor model: CFI = .983, TLI = .972, RMSEA = .052 [90% CI = 0.032–0.072]; expanded three-factor model: CFI = .981, TLI = .975, RMSEA = .045 [90% CI = 0.033–0.057]), exploratory factor analyses indicated that a two-factor solution was more appropriate. After removing one item with substantial cross-loadings, the final model supported a two-factor structure with excellent fit (CFI = .989, TLI = .985, RMSEA = .039 [90% CI = 0.019–0.057]). The two resulting subscales retained the original factor labels Rejoice (4 items; λ = 0.706 to 0.758, ω = 0.833), and Rituals (5 items; λ = 0.587 to 0.820, ω = 0.871), as these factors remained stable across models. In contrast, the third original factor, Recognition, did not emerge as a distinct factor; one of its two items loaded onto the Rituals factor, while the other was removed due to high cross-loadings.

Workplace Failure. We developed a measure of the impact of organizational culture on individuals' experience of failure at work. The construction of the questionnaire was informed by both theoretical approaches and empirical findings from the workplace failure literature. Based on these findings our objective was to create a measurement instrument capable of capturing organizational practices and responses related to workplace failure experiences. We further developed the original 7-item measure used in Study 1 to achieve more reliable factor structures. Although the two-factor model demonstrated good fit (CFI = .963, TLI = .951, RMSEA = .059 [90% CI = 0.045–0.073]), two items with low communalities and high uniqueness values were removed to improve the parsimony of the factor structure. The final two-factor model demonstrated excellent fit (CFI = .990, TLI = .985, RMSEA = .038 [90% CI = 0.012–0.059]) with the same two reliable subfactors: Negative Consequences (4 items; λ = 0.732 to 0.780, ω = 0.839), and Acceptance (4 items; λ = 0.720 to 0.764, ω = 0.837).

Job Satisfaction. Participants rated their job satisfaction using a seven-item scale adapted from Brady et al. (2020). The scale captured different aspects of job satisfaction, such as overall contentment, perceived meaningfulness, challenge level, and performance (e.g., "*Overall, I am satisfied with my current job*", "*I enjoy going to work*"). Responses were provided on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly agree*). The original one-factor model demonstrated poor fit (CFI = .930, TLI = .895, RMSEA = .117 [90% CI = 0.099–0.136]). After removing two items with low communalities and high uniqueness values, the final one-factor model demonstrated excellent fit (CFI = .991, TLI = .983, RMSEA = .059 [90% CI = 0.023–0.096]). The scale demonstrated strong internal consistency (5 items; λ = 0.656 to 0.902, ω = 0.896).

Work motivation. Work motivation was assessed using the Hungarian version of the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (Kun et al., 2022), originally developed by Gagné et al. (2015). This scale measures six dimensions of work motivation: Amotivation, Extrinsic Regulation – Social, Extrinsic Regulation – Material, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation, and Intrinsic Motivation. Each dimension was represented by three items. Participants responded on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 7 (*Completely*). The six-factor model demonstrated acceptable fit (CFI = .939, TLI = .924, RMSEA = .060 [90% CI = 0.054–0.067]). Each subscale demonstrated acceptable to strong internal consistency (λ = 0.575 to 0.932, ω = 0.656 to 0.928).

Analytic approach

First, we assessed the factorial structure of each construct. *Exploratory factor analyses* were conducted for the modified success and failure scales using the maximum likelihood estimation method with oblique rotation. The number of factors was determined based on parallel analysis. *Confirmatory factor analyses* were then used to evaluate the adequacy of the resulting structures for all scales, including both modified and well-established measures. Based on these results, a preliminary measurement model was specified and tested to assess the psychometric quality of the constructs. For the main analyses, this measurement model was extended into a *structural model*. In this model, latent factors representing success and failure experiences were specified as predictors of job satisfaction and subfactors of the work motivation scale.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and correlations among the main study variables. Spearman correlations between the measured variables are reported below the diagonal, while bivariate correlations between latent constructs from the preliminary measurement model are reported above the diagonal.

Failure acceptance was strongly positively correlated with job satisfaction (r = .64, p < .01), identified regulation (r = .45, p < .01), and intrinsic motivation (r = .44, p < .01), and negatively with amotivation (r = –.40, p < .01) and failure-related negative consequences (r = –.48, p < .01). Conversely, failure-related negative consequences were positively associated with amotivation (r = .36, p < .01) and negatively with most indicators of positive motivation and well-being.

Amotivation demonstrated strong negative associations with job satisfaction (r = –.67, p < .01), intrinsic motivation (r = –.52, p < .01), and identified regulation (r = –.64, p < .01). Job satisfaction, in turn, showed strong positive correlations with intrinsic motivation (r = .70, p < .01) and identified regulation (r = .59, p < .01).

Among the *extrinsic forms of motivation*, material and social regulation were strongly correlated (r = .77, p < .01), and both showed weaker or inconsistent relationships with the internal motivation constructs. Introjected regulation was moderately positively correlated with intrinsic (r = .52, p < .01) and identified regulation (r = .83, p < .01), and negatively associated with amotivation (r = –.40, p < .01).

In summary, the results indicate consistent and significant associations among success- and failure-related experiences, motivation types, and job satisfaction. Failure acceptance, and success rejoicing were strongly related to each other and to internal motivation and job satisfaction. Amotivation showed strong negative correlations with job satisfaction, and autonomous forms of motivation. Extrinsic motivation types, particularly material and social regulation, were interrelated but showed weaker or inconsistent associations with other study variables.

Table 1
Bivariate Correlations Between Latent and Measured Factors

1. Succ.: Rejoice	**M**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**
	5.77	**1.52**	**–**	**.66****	**− .38****	**.83****	**.65****	**− .43****	**.11**	**.29****	**.40****	**.42****	**.42****
2. Succ.: Rituals	3.95	1.86	.55**	–	− .17**	.50**	.36**	− .07	.19*	.20**	.10	.12	.24**
3. Fail.: Neg. C.	3.64	1.64	− .33**	− .12*	–	− .55**	− .49**	.36**	.23**	.05	− .13*	− .26**	− .33
4. Fail.: Acceptance	5.38	1.54	.70**	.41**	− .48**	–	.64**	− .40**	.08	.24**	.36**	.45**	.44**
5. Job Satisfaction	4.18	1.09	.58**	.33**	− .43**	.61**	–	− .67**	.02	.13*	.46**	.59**	.70**
6. Amotivation	2.25	1.33	− .42**	− .07	.34**	− .42**	− .66**	–	.15*	− .06	− .52**	− .64**	− .52**
7. Extrinsic Mat.	3.62	1.31	.07	.14**	.18**	.04	.00	.14**	–	.77**	.42**	.15*	− .02
8. Extrinsic Soc.	4.11	1.39	.18**	.13**	.07	.13**	.06	− .01	.54**	–	.73**	.38**	.11
9. Introjected R.	4.79	1.25	.32**	.06	− .09	.27**	.34**	− .40**	.30**	.55**	–	.83**	.52**
10. Identified R.	5.14	1.27	.38**	.08	− .24**	.38**	.55**	− .62**	.08	.24**	.61**	–	.63**
11. Intrinsic M.	4.65	1.54	.36**	.21**	− .29**	.40**	.67**	− .55**	− .02	.02	.36**	.56**	–

Notes. Bivariate correlations between latent factors of the preliminary measurement model are presented above the diagonal; Spearman correlations between measured variables are shown below the diagonal. Succ.: Rejoice = Success: Rejoice; Succ.: Rituals = Success: Rituals; Fail.: Neg. C. = Failure: Negative Consequences; Fail.: Acceptance = Failure: Acceptance; Extrinsic Mat. = Extrinsic Regulation: Material; Extrinsic Soc. = Extrinsic Regulation: Social; Introjected R. = Introjected Regulation; Identified R. = Identified Regulation; Intrinsic M. = Intrinsic Motivation. *: $p<.05$, **: $p<.01$.

A structural equation model was tested to examine the associations between workplace experiences – specifically rejoice and rituals of success, and acceptance and negative consequences of failure – and job satisfaction and work-related motivation. The model demonstrated acceptable fit to the data (CFI = .913, TLI = .903, RMSEA = .045, 90% CI [.042, .048]). *Job satisfaction* was positively associated with rejoice of success (β = .33, 95% CI [.02, .50], p=.03) and negatively associated with the negative consequences of failure (β=−.21, 95% CI [−.27, −.06], p=.002). Nevertheless, neither rituals of success (p=.16) nor acceptance of failure (p=.94) was significantly associated with job satisfaction.

Amotivation was negatively associated with rejoice of success (β=−.43, 95% CI [−.70, −.03], p=.03), and positively associated with rituals of success (β = .37, 95% CI [.20, .52], p<.001) and the negative consequences of failure (β = .17, 95% CI [.02, .29], p=.02). However, acceptance of failure was not significantly associated with amotivation (p=.12).

Negative consequences of failure were positively associated with two forms of extrinsic regulation: material (β = .37, 95% CI [.14, .42], p<.001) and social (β = .21, 95% CI [.05, .32], p=.009), while none of the other predictors were significantly associated with these types of work motivation (all ps>.06). *Introjected regulation* was positively associated with rejoice of success (β = .49, 95% CI [.04, .73], p=.028) and negatively associated with rituals of success (β=−.31, 95% CI [−.43, −.12], p=.001). However, it was not significantly associated with acceptance of failure or the negative consequences of failure (all ps>.24).

Identified regulation was negatively associated with rituals of success (β=−.27, 95% CI [−.38, −.09], p=.001). None of the other predictors were significantly associated with identified regulation (all ps>.29) and intrinsic motivation (all ps>.11).

Discussion

The goal was to refine the measurement of workplace success and failure experiences and exploring their associations with job satisfaction and motivation. Both satisfaction and motivation are key predictors of employee performance and well-being, as emphasized in organizational psychology literature (Aziri, 2011). Our research examined how failure-tolerant and success-celebrating organizational

practices shape employees' motivation and satisfaction related to workplace success and failure. We explored these relationships using measurement tools that we developed and refined in our study.

In our first research question, we sought to determine how the dimensions of an organization that recognizes success are related to employees' satisfaction with workplace success and their motivation. Based on our results, experiences related to success, particularly "*Rejoice*" showed a positive correlation with job satisfaction, intrinsic regulation, and identified regulation, while it correlated negatively with amotivation. In other words, if an organization makes a point of celebrating successes, its employees will be more satisfied and motivated. Our findings support Barbara Fredrickson's (2000) "broaden-and-build" theory. According to this theory, even the smallest expressions of positive emotion, such as interest or praise, are associated with a variety of interconnected benefits. Positivity broadens an individual's repertoire of thoughts and actions, alleviates negative emotions, and sets off upward spirals toward increased emotional well-being.

In our second research question, we sought to determine how the dimensions of the 'failure-tolerant organization' questionnaire are related to workplace satisfaction and motivation. The dimensions of "*Failure Acceptance*" showed a positive correlation with job satisfaction, identified regulation, and intrinsic regulation, while showing a negative correlation with amotivation and the "*Negative Consequences*" dimension of failure. In contrast, the "*Negative Consequences*" dimension of failure showed a positive correlation with amotivation and a negative correlation with introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic regulation, and job satisfaction.

A model showed that the "*Negative Consequences*" dimension of failure directly reduced satisfaction, increased amotivation, and strengthened extrinsic motivation. These results suggest that for organizations adopting a positive approach to failure, it is important not only to accept failure, but also to avoid its negative consequences, which may undermine employees' motivation and satisfaction. This can be explained by organizational support and social exchange theory, according to which employees who perceive high levels of organizational support feel obligated to reciprocate the organization's positive attitude and commitment with greater organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1990). The findings can also be interpreted within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which states that optimal functioning requires the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Based on the results, in a failure-tolerant organizational culture, support for learning from mistakes may strengthen feelings of competence, while positive relationships and collegial support may enhance relatedness. The fulfillment of these needs may contribute to employees interpreting failures not as threats, but as opportunities for growth.

Limitations

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, our study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability bias and individual differences in self-perception.

Furthermore, the study was conducted within specific cultural and organizational contexts (primarily Hungarian organizations), which may limit the generalizability of the results. Cross-cultural research is needed to determine whether similar patterns emerge in different cultural environments.

Finally, our study did not consider other potentially relevant factors such as personality traits or psychological flexibility, which might further explain variations in rumination.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to the growing literature on organizational culture, work motivation, and job satisfaction that organizational responses to workplace success and failure are meaningfully associated with employees' motivational processes and job satisfaction. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory and organizational culture research, our findings suggest that supportive organizational practices surrounding both success and failure may play an important role in fostering healthier and more adaptive workplace functioning.

More specifically, organizational practices emphasizing the celebration and shared recognition of success were associated with higher job satisfaction and more autonomous forms of motivation, while reducing amotivation. Similarly, organizational acceptance of failure was linked to more adaptive motivational outcomes and greater satisfaction. In contrast, the perceived negative consequences of failure were consistently associated with lower job satisfaction, stronger amotivation, and increased reliance on extrinsic forms of motivation. These findings indicate that organizations benefit not only from encouraging success recognition, but also from minimizing punitive or stigmatizing responses to mistakes and failures.

The study also contributes methodologically by introducing and refining new measurement instruments assessing success-celebrating and failure-tolerant organizational cultures. These measures may provide a useful foundation for future organizational and occupational psychology research examining how workplace environments shape employee experiences and psychological functioning.

Declarations

Ethical Approval:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The study was approved by the United Ethical Review Committee for Research in Psychology (EPKEB) (Ethics approval number: 2024-055, Approved 24/4/2024). Every human participant should provide their consent.

Scope of approval:

Non-interventional, cross-sectional survey of adult participants, covering recruitment, participant information sheet, written consent, data collection, secure storage, analysis, and publication of non-identifiable findings.

Informed Consent:

Every human participant should provide their consent. The participants have agreed for their anonymized data and information to be published.

Anonymity & confidentiality:

No names or direct identifiers were collected or stored. Data are retained on access-restricted storage for 3 years under the approved protocol.

Scope of consent:

Participation; use of anonymized data for analysis and publication; permission to publish aggregated, non-identifiable results.

Risks and voluntariness:

Participation was voluntary, entailed minimal risk, and participants could discontinue at any time before submitting responses.

Minors & vulnerable groups:

No minors or other vulnerable populations were recruited.

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Author Contribution

Kiss, K.: Conceptualization, Acquisition of data, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing

Data Availability

All data supporting the findings of this study are available within the paper.

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