

Attractiveness of the Workplace Environment of Educational Institutions in the Context of Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Overcoming the challenges of Covid-19, every person at an educational institution has faced changes in the workplace environment from working time, scope and content to the transformation of psychological, emotional and physical relationships. The attractiveness factors of workplace environment are essential in thinking of, developing and accepting sustainable attitude, sustainable education and sustainable development in everyday life. The aim of the article is to present the results of the research on the attractiveness factors of workplace environment and organizational culture of educational institutions from the point of view of teachers and heads of educational institutions, evaluating them in the context of sustainable development of education, based on theoretical analysis of literature sources and empirical research. Quantitative research method – survey – was used in the study. 97 participants (teachers (n=84) and heads of educational institutions (n=13)) from different educational institutions of one of the biggest cities in Latvia, Daugavpils, took part in the study. The data were processed in accordance with research ethics and personal data protection, visualized on the basis of numerical data units.

The gained data indicate that the most important factors for the attractiveness of the workplace environment for both teachers and heads of educational institutions are relationships, work fit and security. Respondent groups cite ‘responsibility’ and ‘location’ as the least important factors in making the workplace environment attractive. Workplace attractiveness factors are a combination of workplace environment and organizational culture, and they are interrelated concepts. The results of the study show that both teachers and heads of educational institutions value an innovative culture in the organization that is characterized by the following statements: ‘willing to take risks, a result-oriented, creative, stimulating, challenging’ and they appreciate a supportive culture in the organization that is characterized by the statements ‘willing to cooperate, encouraging and sociable, recognizing personal

freedom'. There are statistically significant differences in opinions on the attractiveness of the workplace environment (such as 'contribution', 'recognition', 'innovation' and 'responsibility') among teachers and heads of educational institutions.

Keywords: Attraction of workplace environment, innovation culture, organizational culture, sustainable development of education, workplace environment.

Theoretical Background

In the European Union's Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027 (ES stratēģiskais satvars par drošību un veselības aizsardzību darbā 2021.–2027. gadam, 2021), one of the three main objectives for the coming years is related to changes in the workplace environment. The professional activity of the head of an educational institution is focused on improving the quality of education, enhancing the organizational culture and creating an optimal workplace environment, taking into account today's challenges in the context of sustainable development. By studying these aspects, it can be determined which factors of the workplace environment attractiveness are important for the employees of an educational institution and which factors should be given more attention. The workplace environment of an educational institution is psychologically and emotionally complex and it is therefore important to provide working conditions, in which employees feel themselves as part of the organization and are able to perform their duties efficiently.

Educational Institution as a Learning Organization and Features of the Organizational Culture

It should be noted that "school is no longer seen as something static, but as systematic – as a learning organization with its own specific rules and conditions, focusing on the teaching – learning process" (Huber, 2004, 44). Furthermore, a strategic vision is necessary for a sustainable organization (Gaile & Pavlova, 2017). An educational institution needs to create a positive social environment that embraces diversity and sustainability in order to achieve high performance (Saiti, 2021).

Organizational culture and workplace environment are interlinked concepts that affect employees' motivation as well as job satisfaction. In order to conduct the study, it is necessary to understand the concept of organizational culture and the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment; therefore, the authors of the study analyze the scientific literature on this topic. The concept of 'organizational culture' was introduced in the analysis of organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Organizational culture can either facilitate or hinder the ability to implement strategy and make sustainable changes. Its dimensions of analysis focus on lived experiences, which mean that the focus is on people, their relationships (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015, 6). In addition, heads of educational institutions are responsible for the culture of the organization (Ruskule & Muška, 2001). It is the head of the educational institution, as the leader, who creates a positive and supportive organizational culture that not only fosters a positive workplace environment, but also serves for developing positive relationships. There are various studies on organizational culture. The American researcher Wallach (1983) identifies three dimensions of organizational culture: innovative culture, supportive culture and bureaucratic culture (see Table 1).

Table 1

Statements Describing the Dimensions of Organizational Culture (Wallach, 1983; Dubkevičs, 2019)

Organizational culture	Descriptive statements
Innovative culture	Results-oriented, creative, pushing, stimulating, challenging, entrepreneurial, driven
Supportive culture	Cooperative, relationship-oriented, encouraging, sociable, recognizes personal freedom, fair, secure, loyal
Bureaucratic culture	Hierarchical, follows procedures, structured, orderly, regulated, stable, prudent, power-oriented

A similar approach is taken by Cameron and Quinn (2006), who identify four organizational cultures: clan (family culture), hierarchical (bureaucratic culture), market culture and adhocratic (creative) culture. Schein (2010) points out that leadership and culture are intertwined. Ešenvalde (2008), analyzing the findings of Schein, distinguishes four organizational cultures: power, role, achievement and support.

Scholar Altinok (2021) concludes that bureaucratic organizational cultures have a negative impact on management practices, while supportive and innovative organizational cultures have a positive impact. If culture refers to “the beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence a school, often defining the school system” (Johnson & Sessions, 2015, 49), then culture influences leaders who prefer a directive or supportive style. Followers may obey because of their belief in the legitimacy of the instructions given, because they sympathize with the leader, or because they have no alternative options (Pheysey, 1993).

These different characteristics of organizational cultures show that they play an important role in the functioning of the organization, influencing the leadership style of the head of organization and the workplace environment. The work environment – location, design, security, etc. – is important for motivating people to achieve organizational goals. Motivation increases when a person gets satisfaction, when the culture of the company or organization is in line with the person’s values, etc. (Forands, 2004).

According to research by Chandra and Priyono (2016), positive organizational culture and work environment have a positive impact on performance, which shows that management style, work environment and job satisfaction have an impact on performance. In addition, improving employees’ working conditions also contributes to a more positive work atmosphere.

Other researchers (Judge et al., 2001) showed that the correlation between job satisfaction and productivity was weak because the most satisfied employees were not necessarily the most productive employees. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs cooperate with their colleagues and also take on additional responsibilities and encourage their colleagues to work harder.

Every employee, including those working at an educational institution, has their own attractiveness factors that determine work satisfaction. It is therefore necessary

to look into the nature of the concept of the working environment and to update the factors of attractiveness of the workplace environment.

The Concept of the Workplace Environment

The term 'workplace environment' can be defined as the workplace with its physical, chemical, psychological, biological, physiological and other factors to which an employee is exposed in the performance of their work where the term 'workplace' means the place where an employee performs their work and, within an undertaking, any other place to which an employee has access in the course of work or where the employee works with the permission or under the direction of the employer.

The concept of the working environment has different meanings in theoretical literature. The working environment can be seen as the environment in which people work: the physical working environment (e. g., heat), as well as specific workplace characteristics such as workload, broader organizational features such as culture and history, extra-organizational factors (e. g. work-home relationships), which are all part of the working environment. Working environment has both positive and negative effects on employees' psychological well-being (Briner, 2000).

The working environment also includes the organization's culture and values. As an employer, it is important for the head of an educational institution to create a positive and supportive working environment in order to foster employee motivation. The Labor Protection Law of the Republic of Latvia defines the general principles of labor protection, the obligations of employers, and the duties and rights of employees, based on which the working environment is "the workplace with its physical, chemical, psychological, biological, physiological and other factors to which an employee is exposed when performing his or her work" (Darba aizsardzības likums, 2001).

It should also be noted that Principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (Eiropas sociālo tiesību pīlāra rīcības plāns, 2021), "Healthy, Safe and Well-Adapted Working Environments and Data Protection", is also about employees having the right not only to a high level of protection at work, but also to a working environment that is adapted to their professional needs. In turn, Regulation No. 660 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia of October 2, 2007 "Procedures for the Performance of Internal Supervision of the Work Environment" lays down how internal monitoring and assessment of the working environment is carried out. When inspecting a workplace or type of work, not only physical factors are assessed, but also psychological and emotional factors, such as working hours, inability to influence the work process, monotonous work, responsible decision-making and other factors of the working environment (Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta 2007. gada 2. oktobra noteikumi Nr. 660 "Darba vides iekšējās uzraudzības veikšanas kārtība"). According to the authors of the study, at educational institutions, employees are exposed to physical factors as well as psychological and emotional factors, the latter being the most important in shaping the workplace environment of the institution. Bole, in the monograph "How to Make Your Employees Flourish", also points to the relevance of health disorders caused by emotional factors and the fact that the future transformation of management principles will be influenced by the work environment (Bole, 2022).

Šmite (2004) emphasizes that the psychological environment of an educational institution is related to attitudes, security, and the possibility to believe and trust. A positive atmosphere and other aspects are important in the team work and workplace environment as well (Šmite, 2004; Martinsone et al., 2023). In addition, it should be

taken into account that the educational environment is constantly changing. The building of the employees' team is changing in terms of demographics (gender, age), ethnicity and professional background, and the individual characteristics of the staff must be taken into account (Reņģe, 2007).

Research on work environment and employee job satisfaction shows that management style and work environment have an impact on job performance (Chandra & Priyono, 2016). Moreover, there is a positive relationship between leadership style and employee engagement (Li et al., 2020). On the other hand, Muhammad (2021) in his study on how teachers perceive their work environment, found that encouraging the work group as well as having a good relationship with the head of an educational institution was the most important factor for ensuring a conducive institutional environment. Physical comforts in the working environment were the least important aspect, while positive mood, conflict avoidance and honesty were the most important aspects of organizational encouragement. Interestingly, those with more work experience perceived a supportive environment more positively. It is understood that no two organizations have the same structure, vision and also culture.

The authors conclude that the workplace environment can be perceived as the environment in which the employee works, i.e., the physical work environment, as well as the psychological work environment, and it is characterized by various factors. A number of studies (Briner, 2000; Muhammad, 2021; Bole, 2022) show the relationship between management style and work environment. The organizational culture, values, and work environment of an organization determine the job satisfaction of its employees, as evidenced by attractiveness factors of the workplace environment. Besides, there is an acute need and challenge for us "to re-evaluate our recent lived experience, to get rid of the habits that have been accumulated in shallow everyday views of life, the world and education, and to continue our search for the deeper scientific foundations necessary for the development of humanity" (Salīte et al., 2022, 1).

Factors Determining the Attractiveness of the Workplace Environment

The concept of work environment is closely linked to work attractiveness factors, which are important because they influence employee motivation. If an organization can offer an attractive working environment, it can attract qualified and motivated employees, as well as 'retain' existing employees, as teacher vacancies are a particular problem for educational institutions and for the education system in the Republic of Latvia as a whole. It is important for the head of an educational institution to understand which factors of the working environment are most important for employees in order to improve the attractiveness of the working environment. As Dubkevičs (2019) points out, a good workplace is a kind of synonym for a positive, efficient, strong, functional and healthy organizational culture and climate.

Education is a field in constant flux, and fostering innovation in the workplace, social dialogue between employees and their representatives, and participation at different levels are essential (Eiropas sociālo tiesību pīlāra rīcības plāns, 2021). In general, recognition for work done is a universal motivator for people (not only for teachers). It is recognition for the hard work that teachers do on a daily basis (Williams & Williams, 2001, 61). Recognition and appreciation for the work they do is also important for employees. If a supervisor acknowledges an employee's performance, this can also contribute to the employee's job satisfaction.

As Mārtinsone and Miltuze (2015) conclude, remuneration, management, support, working conditions and other aspects influence employees' job satisfaction. An important aspect is remuneration: if employees are paid a wage that satisfies them, this could also contribute to both motivation and performance. Job satisfaction is one of the indicators that show how an employee values their job.

The associations that employees have with the working environment and culture of an educational institution are and can be different, but what they have in common is that they determine whether an organization is perceived by its employees as having a good working environment. Employees spend a relatively large part of their social life in their workplaces and it is important for the head of an educational institution that the employee is satisfied with the working environment and is willing to continue working.

Scientist N. Amundson (Amundsons, 2016) studied the factors that people consider when making career decisions and identified ten key factors of workplace attractiveness. In N. Amundson, M. Corbiere, V. Neduha's model of job attractiveness, the key factors are security, location, relationships, recognition, contribution, work fit, flexibility, learning, responsibility and innovation. The importance of these factors may change after some time, as people's priorities may change, they develop, they gain experience, and so the importance of workplace environment factors may also change (Amundsons, 2016). It should be taken into account that each employee, including teachers and heads of educational institutions, perceive a good working environment depending on their preferences, subjective interests and priorities. However, there are general attractiveness factors of workplace environment, which include appropriate remuneration, safety of the working environment, work-life balance, psychological climate of the working environment, etc. The priorities of these factors may vary, but it is very important for the head of an educational institution to take care of the staff in order to improve their job satisfaction, as well as to attract new and retain existing staff. By gaining an insight into employees' views on the attractiveness factors of the working environment, it is possible to gain insight into the most important of these factors, which, based on data, allow for changes to be made to the culture of the organization in order to create a motivating working environment.

Methodology

Research Design

The empirical study developed a research design with defined steps on the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment of educational institutions and the culture of organizations in the context of sustainable development. The research design, which is "a research plan and procedures that involves researchers' decisions ranging from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis, is an intersection of philosophical assumptions, cognitive strategies and specific methods" (Mārtinsone & Pipere, 2011, 278), allowed the researchers' team to collect, process and analyze the data.

Participants

The study was based on the following educational institutions of different levels in one of the biggest cities of Latvia (Daugavpils): pre-school educational institutions, comprehensive primary and secondary schools, gymnasium, vocational educational institution, and educational institution of interest. 97 participants (13 heads of educational institutions ($n=13$), 84 teachers ($n=84$)) were selected using a convenience, non-probability sampling method. The respondents – heads of educational institutions ($n=13$) were divided as follows: 46.2 % of respondents had 11–20 years of professional experience as the head of educational institution, 23.1 % of respondents – 21 and more years, 30.7 % of respondents – up to 5 years. In turn, respondents – teachers ($n=84$) by professional experience in the field of education were distributed as follows: 46.4 % of respondents had 21 and more years of professional experience in the field of education, 20.2 % – 11–20 years, 9.5 % – 6–10 years, and 23.8 % – up to 5 years.

Instruments

After defining the aims and tasks of the study, a survey was developed. Part 1 of the survey included a test of attractiveness factors of the workplace environment (Amundsons, 2016). The test was validated and translated into Latvian. It is suitable for this study to obtain data on the most important workplace attractiveness factors. A total of ten workplace environment attractiveness factors were included in the survey, with a maximum score of 28 points per factor (i.e., four statements, each of which can be scored on a scale of 1 to 7).

The following workplace environment attractors were included in the first part of the survey: security (1st factor), location (2nd factor), relationships (3rd factor), recognition (4th factor), contribution (5th factor), work fit (6th factor), flexibility (7th factor), learning (8th factor), responsibility (9th factor), innovation (10th factor). The authors of the research coded the workplace environment attractors in order to ensure that the titles of factors did not give respondents additional ideas or influence their opinions (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Coding of the Workplace Environment Attractiveness Factors (Amundsons, 2016)

1.	Security	WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT ATTRACTIVENESS FACTORS	Work fit	6.
2.	Location		Flexibility	7.
3.	Relationships		Learning	8.
4.	Recognition		Responsibility	9.
5.	Contribution		Innovation	10.

Part 2 of the questionnaire included Wallach's questionnaire on the dimensions of organizational culture, identifying three dimensions of organizational culture – bureaucratic culture, supportive culture and innovative culture. The results of the survey indicate an organizational culture that is likely to dominate in organizations (Wallach, 1983, 29–36; Dubkevičs, 2019).

Closed-ended questions were chosen for the survey because of their advantages – respondents do not spend a lot of time completing the survey and can answer a larger number of questions in a given time frame (Geske & Grīnfelds, 2020). Given the heavy workload of heads of educational institutions and teachers, the use of closed questions in surveys allows respondents to avoid spending a lot of time filling in the survey and may thus also encourage a greater response to the invitation to take part in the survey and to complete the questionnaires.

The findings would help to understand the most relevant attractiveness factors of the workplace environment for the heads of educational institutions and teachers and may be useful for the heads of educational institutions who, as strategic leaders, can motivate staff by focusing on the most topical attractiveness factors of the workplace environment and organizational culture.

Data Analysis

The research design was developed by the researchers' team, defining the four stages of the research process, specifying the tasks and steps to be carried out at each stage. The first stage of the research involved the selection and analysis of theoretical literature on the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment and organizational culture in the context of sustainable development. The second stage of the research involved the development of a research methodology, based on the literature analysis, the research criteria were defined: attractiveness factors of the workplace environment and the culture of organizations. In the third stage of the research, empirical data were collected in the period of February–April 2023 from 97 participants (n=97). The fourth stage of the research involved the analysis of data on the attractiveness factors of workplace environment and organizational culture and the secondary statistical processing, analysis and interpretation of the research data using the statistical processing software SPSS Statistics 23.0, as well as the identification of questions for the discussion section.

Results

In the overall analysis of the results of the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment for the teachers (n=84, 86.6 % of the total number of participants) in Part 1 of the survey (see Section 1, Figure 2), we can see that the most important attractiveness factor of the workplace environment for teachers is **relationships** (25.24 %). It is important for the respondents to maintain positive, collegial relationships that are satisfying and create a pleasant working environment.

The second most important factor is **security** (24.74 %), which is related to both receiving a fixed salary and being able to feel physically safe at work, as well as having access to a good bonus system (e.g., medical services partially or fully covered by a health insurance policy, paid annual leave, paid additional leave under collective agreements, paid sick leave, etc.).

The third most important factor (24.48 %) is the desire to have a job that matches their interests and skills, to be able to do work that is in line with their personal values and to be able to enjoy their work (**work fit**). In contrast, the results of teachers show that of the ten attractiveness factors of the workplace environment, **responsibility** (16.99 %), **location** (21.33 %) and **innovation** (21.70 %) are the least important. According to the results, teachers are reluctant to take on more responsibility in their work, as the amount of responsibility for the daily work process is already high. On the other hand, the location of the workplace, which is also related to the distance to the workplace, as well as with regard to the provision of transport to get to work, given the available resources and facilities, is not so important.

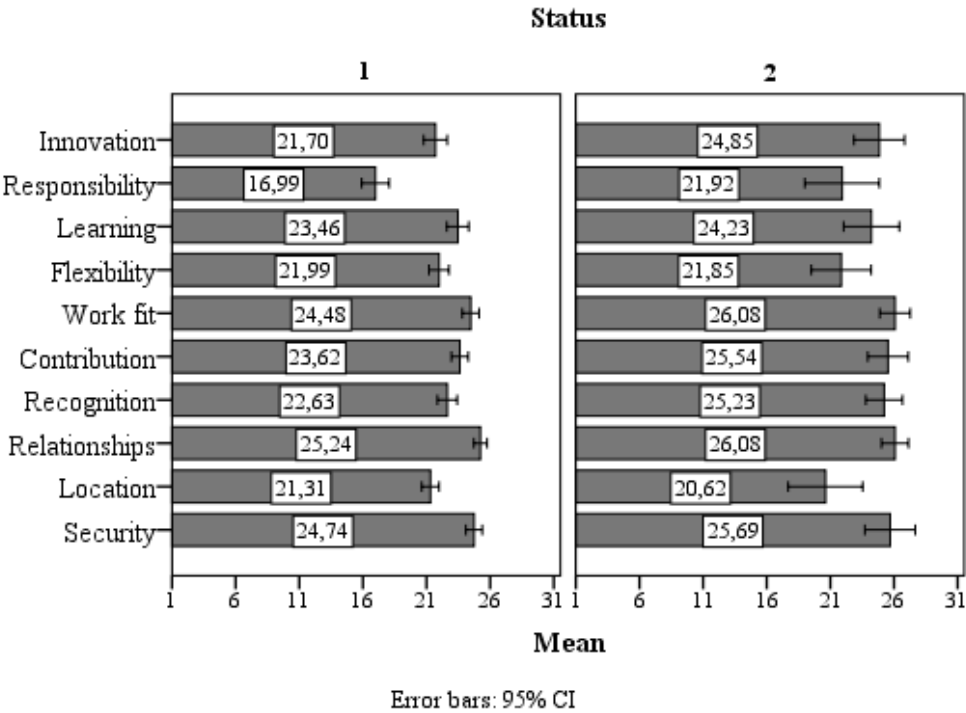
After analyzing the results of survey for the heads of educational institutions (n=13, 13.4 % of the total number of participants) in Part 1, we can see that the most important attractiveness factors of workplace environment are **relationships** and **work fit** (26.08 % of respondents give equal ratings to both factors) and **security** (25.69 %) (see Section 2, Figure 2). Relationships are highlighted as the most important factor, probably because interpersonal relationships play an important role in the workplace environment. Job satisfaction of the heads of educational institutions is influenced by the relevance and appropriateness of the job, which is related to personal skills and values. An interested and motivated head of an educational institution, who has a significant job fit factor, is also provisionally better able to motivate employees to perform effectively. The security factor is the third most important factor for the heads of educational institutions (25.69 %) – both physical and financial security, stability of the workplace are important.

The **location** factor (20.62 %), which is also related to the distance to the workplace and to transport to get to work, is the least important factor according to the survey results. This could also be due to the impact of the pandemic, when many heads of educational institutions worked remotely and now also attitudes towards the workplace have changed, as the employee can travel a certain distance to get to the workplace.

The **responsibility** factor is the second least important factor (21.92 %) in the opinion of the heads of educational institutions, which is probably related to their direct day-to-day duties, involving the possibility of taking on more responsibility, the need to make work-related decisions independently, managing the work of a team and the possibility of influencing other people in this role.

Interestingly, work flexibility (related, for example, to flexible schedules, the possibility to work from home, professional development opportunities, work-life balance) (21.85 %) is not a significant factor in the attractiveness of the workplace environment for heads of educational institutions. It is possible that the respondents – heads of educational institutions – assume *a priori* that it is accepted that the work is carried out in a work environment that takes into account the above-mentioned features of the flexibility of the workplace environment when carrying out their duties. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows statistically significant differences in the scores of the respondents – teachers and heads of educational institutions only for the factor 'security' (p=0.051).

Figure 2
Attractiveness Factors of the Workplace Environment as Rated by Teachers (Section 1) (n=84) and Heads of Educational Institutions (Section 2) (n=13)



After studying multiple approaches to attracting new employees, ten specific attractors to a workplace were identified: (a) security, (b) location, (c) relationships, (d) recognition, (e) contribution, (f) work fit, (g) flexibility, (h) learning, (i) responsibility, and (j) innovation. Analyzing the results of the Independent Samples Test (see Table 2), we can see that the most statistically significant differences between the two groups of respondents “teachers” and “heads of educational institutions” are in the following workplace attractors: **contribution** ($p=0.036$, $p<0.05$), which is associated with doing work to make a significant and lasting contribution to society, to contribute to the well-being of people in the community, to have a positive impact on others; **recognition** ($p=0.013$), which is associated with the opportunity to gain respect from colleagues, to do work that is respected in the community, to receive praise and promotion at work; **innovation** ($p=0.013$), which is associated with the use of creative problem-solving methods, using and creating new approaches and **responsibility** ($p=0.001$), which emphasizes the opportunity to take more responsibility, to make decisions independently, to lead a group project. These results are in direct correlation with the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment that was ranked lowest in importance by the teachers, such as ‘responsibility’ and ‘innovation’.

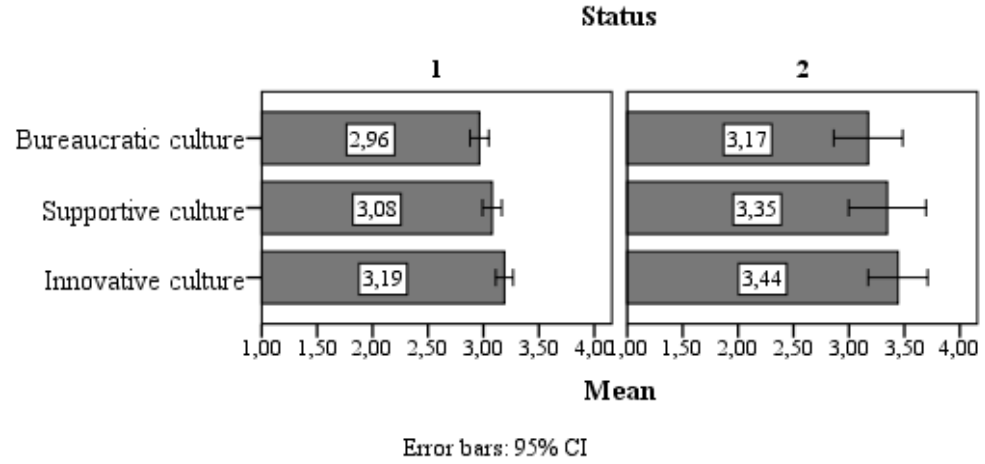
Table 2
Independent Samples Test

Attractiveness factors of the workplace environment	N	t-test for Equality of Means; Sig. (2-tailed)
Security	97	.286
Location	97	.494
Relationships	97	.230
Recognition	97	.013
Contribution	97	.036
Work fit	97	.069
Flexibility	97	.897
Learning	97	.517
Responsibility	97	.001
Innovation	97	.013

The results of Part 2 of the survey, the questionnaire on dimensions of organizational culture (Wallach, 1983), were summarized using MS Excel for data processing. The questionnaire included a total of 24 statements describing the three dimensions of organizational culture: bureaucratic, supportive and innovative. The number of statements describing the culture of each organization is 8. For each statement about the culture of the organization, the most appropriate rating could be selected on a scale from 1 (never or almost never) to 4 (always or almost always).

Summarizing the responses of the heads of educational institutions on the dimensions of organizational culture and the predominant organizational culture in the educational institution (see Figure 3), the results showed that the overall rating of the teachers indicated an innovative (3.19 %) and supportive culture (3.08 %). Also, according to the heads of educational institutions, innovative (3.44 %) and supportive organizational culture (3.35 %) prevail in the institutions, which is very important in the field of education as it promotes trust and support as well as good relations among staff members. However, analyzing the results of the Independent Samples Test (see Table 3), we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups of respondents – teachers and heads of educational institutions in their views on the dominance of a supportive culture ($p=0.039$) and an innovative culture ($p=0.025$) at an educational institution.

Figure 3
Assessment of the Dimensions of Organizational Culture, % (Teachers – Section 1, the Heads of Educational institutions – Section 2)



Interestingly, there are no statistically significant differences ($p=0.088$) between teachers’ and heads of educational institutions’ perceptions of bureaucratic culture, which is characterized by the statements ‘working according to procedures, regulation, structure and hierarchy’, meaning that both groups of respondents rate the bureaucratic component of organizational culture in relatively the same way.

Table 3
Independent Samples Test

Dimensions of organizational culture	n	t-test for Equality of Means; Sig. (2-tailed)
Innovative culture	97	.025
Supportive culture	97	.039
Bureaucratic culture	97	.088

The attractiveness factors that characterize a workplace environment and the culture of an organization are interlinked concepts. The analysis of the research results (see Table 4) shows that there is a moderately strong correlation between the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment ‘recognition’ and ‘bureaucratic culture’ ($p=0.619$), ‘responsibility’ and ‘bureaucratic culture’ ($p=0.534$), and between ‘work fit’ and ‘supportive culture’ ($p=0.506$), as it is important for both heads of educational institutions and teachers to be able to work in a work environment that has a fair, trusting, encouraging and collaborative organizational culture.

Table 4

Relationship Between Workplace Attractiveness Factors and Organizational Culture Dimensions (n=97), Pearson Correlation, Significance (two-tailed)

Workplace attractiveness factors	Dimensions of organizational culture		
	Innovative culture	Supportive culture	Bureaucratic culture
Security	.296 .006	.432 .000	.263 .016
Location	.404 .000	.382 .000	.436 .000
Relationships	.327 .002	.467 .000	.375 .000
Recognition	.412 .000	.367 .001	.619 .000
Contribution	.287 .008	.458 .000	.281 .010
Work fit	.429 .000	.506 .000	.478 .000
Flexibility	.194 .077	.348 .001	.167 .129
Learning	.336 .002	.411 .000	.437 .000
Responsibility	.272 .012	.487 .000	.534 .000
Innovation	.312 .004	.464 .000	.428 .000

In order for an educational institution to function in a way that is consistent with the sustainable development guidelines, it is essential for the head of the educational institution to have an adequate, data-based understanding of employee satisfaction with their work and workplace environment, as this can help to motivate employees to achieve the common goal, especially at a time when innovations in teaching approaches and content are being introduced at all levels of the Latvian education system.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment and the dominant organizational culture from the teachers' point of view shows a seeming inconsistency in the overall view, i.e., teachers mention the innovative culture as the dominant organizational culture, while at the same time they rank innovation as the third least important factor of workplace attractiveness.

The relatively low importance of the innovation factor could indicate that in the current period all the respondents – teachers who represented different educational institutions, starting with pre-schools, comprehensive primary and secondary schools, state gymnasium and vocational secondary school – are actively involved in the implementation of innovations, as the Latvian education system is gradually introducing the competence-based approach into the curriculum and the improved curriculum, starting with the pre-school level in 2019. The introduction of the competence-based curriculum in the lower secondary phase is being progressively extended to the primary level, starting with school year 2019/2020, and to the primary and upper secondary levels from school year 2020/2021 onwards.

From school year 2022/2023, the competence-based approach and the improved curriculum content are implemented in general education institutions from grades 1–12. In the Latvian vocational education system, the approval of modular vocational education programs and the development of general skills and professional competences of teachers, work-based learning leaders and administrators started in 2017, and from school year 2020/2021, all vocational education institutions had to implement competency-based vocational education content in their curricula. This could mean that at the time of the survey in spring 2023, all respondents had been actively involved in the process of validation and implementation of educational innovations and might already perceive this process as an integral part of their daily professional activity.

Another aspect of the study that raises reflection and questions is that both teachers and heads of educational institutions recognize innovation and support as the dominant type of organizational culture, but in their daily professional activities the regulatory framework of the Latvian education system imposes a relatively heavy burden of various bureaucratic procedures based on both external and internal regulatory acts, and compliance with its requirements takes up a relatively large part of the respondents' working time. It is understandable that both teachers and heads of educational institutions often have to carry out these duties outside paid working hours and on weekends. Given this, we can hypothetically assume that the perspectives of teachers and heads of educational institutions might reflect a certain discrepancy with the real situation and that the overall views expressed might be closer to socially expected and acceptable statements.

Organizational culture and workplace environment are interlinked, influencing employees' motivation and job satisfaction. The workplace environment is perceived as both the physical environment in which an employee works and the psychological work environment. The authors conclude that the most important attractiveness factors of the workplace environment for both heads of educational institutions and teachers are relationships, job fit and security. In order to strengthen the capacity of an educational institution for sustainable development as an organization, it is essential to realize the potential of both the team and the individual employee, contributing to the development of a positive organizational culture.

Summarizing the theoretical literature and analyzing the results of the empirical research, the article develops recommendations for heads of educational institutions to improve the attractiveness of the workplace environment and to better ensure the sustainable development of the organization. It is important for the heads of educational institutions to be aware of employees' job satisfaction and workplace environment, to pay special attention to interpersonal relationships, which are the most important determinant of the attractiveness of the workplace environment, motivating employees to improve their performance and can greatly influence the quality of the educational process, creating a supportive organizational culture that is fair, encouraging, recognizes personal freedom, promotes cooperation, provides a comfortable working environment and favorable atmosphere.

As Briede and Drelinga (2020) assure, "sustainable employability is one of today's complex problems viewed by the pedagogy from a broader perspective of open participation, assessing the real individual experiences, emotions and attitudes of students and the relationship with a degree of sustainability achieved in society" (p. 41). It is essential for the head of an educational institution to ensure that each employee is part of the team that embodies common values. The workplace environment is a venue for one's personal sustainable development that can guarantee "the individual's positive relationship with others in the long term, greater satisfaction with his/her life, including work, promoting sustainable employability" (p. 46). Also, the workplace environment of educational institutions should become a place where "teachers are recognized for their work as knowledge producers and key figures in educational and social transformation" (UNESCO, 2021, 4). Koskela and Kärkkäinen (2021) are inviting student teachers to analyze their understanding and views on the change agency in education for sustainable development and recognize students' professional and educational role in building a sustainable future. To build a hopeful society, the responsibility of teachers is fundamental and they are "the leaders of the immediate future, where arrogance and alienation have no place in decision-making" (Kravale-Pauliņa et al., 2023, 423). In order to strengthen the educators' role in promoting education for sustainable development, the teachers should feel recognition and support at their workplace for building a better future.

Some limitations of the study should be noted, i.e., (1) the study was carried out within one country; (2) a relatively small number of participants, especially the number of heads of educational institutions; (3) the timing of the study (social and political processes in Latvia as a member of the European Union); (4) hypothetically we can assume that some respondents in the survey could give a socially desirable opinion. These limitations may have influenced the results of the study, but they are indicative of the perception of the attractiveness factors of the workplace environment and organizational culture among the heads of educational institutions and teachers of the educational institutions surveyed. The study could be extended to include a larger number of respondents and to cover educational institutions in other regions of Latvia, not only in national cities with relatively large populations, but also in municipalities and rural areas with relatively low population densities and networks of educational institutions.

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