

Step 6: Code Raw Data

Participant #1:

[00:18] Interviewer: We will proceed to the first category, which is about workplace experience and challenges. To start with, would you tell me what is a typical workday for you?

[01:34] P1: For a typical workday, I arrive at my company at around 10 o'clock. And then I will check the BI board. I will check if any abnormal things happen. If there's not, I will go through my daily work, such as building some new BI boards and doing some predicting jobs that help us to better understand our game. And also, we will help the test team to examine the data of the new game. Then we will have a break after lunch. And then we will start working at 2 p.m. Each day, I will normally do things on my computer and deal with some new data and some questionnaire data. We normally end our work at seven o'clock so after that, I can go home.

[01:43] Interviewer: Great. So, for lunch break, do you have a one-hour or two-hour lunch break?

[01:47] P1: It's around one hour and a half.

[01:59] Interviewer: So, a typical working day for you usually means eight working hours plus one hour and a half lunch break.

[01:59] P1: Yeah.

[02:12] Interviewer: Okay, so do you often work overtime, or does it happen to you like your weekend will be occupied by extra work?

[02:21] P1: No, our work is always in the office. And also, we don't work overtime much.

[02:32] Interviewer: So, you also do not bring work back home and you can finish all your job in the company.

[02:32] P1: Yeah.

Codes:

- Daily Routine - Describes the structure of a typical workday, including arrival, tasks, and workflow.
- Work Hours - Confirms standard work hours and break times.
- Overtime Work - Indicates that overtime work is uncommon.

[02:52] Interviewer: Thanks. So is it possible for you to tell me about your workplace culture and how team collaboration like cross-department collaboration function in your company?

[04:24] P1: Yeah, I said before that in Guangzhou, we are a small office. So, people are nice over here, including my mentor and my boss. They are kind to me, and they teach me a lot of things since I am in my first year in this company. And, this is a mobile game company, and we

play a lot of games together and we also try the new games outside, from other companies. So, the workplace culture, I think, is very nice. And for the team collaboration, because we are the user research team here and data analysis team here. Other teams are outside Guangzhou, they could be the main game studio in Fuzhou, we need to communicate with them through DingTalk and mostly we will have some meetings regularly to discuss with them and they will guide us to what kind of job we all need to finish to assist in their work.

Codes:

- Workplace Culture - Highlights a friendly work environment with mentorship and game-related activities.
- Cross-Team Collaboration - Details communication with teams in other locations through online meetings.

[04:42] Interviewer: Okay, thank you so much. So, throughout your work experiences, what are the biggest challenges you face at work? Could you provide me with an example?

[05:28] P1: I think working as a data analyst, the biggest challenge I face at work is the data messiness. I think sometimes the data can go wrong because of the recording method going wrong and I need to check from how the data were varied and how the data was reflected in the system to check where the bug is. So, this is the most challenging thing, I think, in the work when the data has something wrong.

[05:51] Interviewer: Yeah, so you mentioned how the data and debugging will be a very challenging part for you. So would you say it is the aspect that would contribute the most to workplace stress or is it something else?

[06:12] P1: I don't think it's contributing the most to the stress because that kind of thing is kind of annoying but not so stressful. I think it just takes some time to examine those bugs.

[06:21] Interviewer: So, would you say there is any other aspect that would be stressful for you?

[06:59] P1: I think that for me, the most stress comes from I'm new to this industry since I am the first year here and I have less experience than other people. Mobile game experiences are limited for me right now and I need to try a lot of new games. And apart from working, I will have to play in my free time to get more sense about my work.

[07:34] Interviewer: So do you agree that you could say there's stress to keep up with other people and also the stress of feeling how work is eroding your personal life like you previously did not play mobile games but now you have to play it in order to gain more experiences. Do you think that is a correct conclusion?

[08:00] P1: I think kind of...

[But] I still have time to do my own things, and I don't think playing mobile games is very annoying. I think it just takes some of my time to try new things. I don't think that's very stressful for me.

[08:14] Interviewer: So, it's more like an internal stress that you want to keep up with other people. Is that a more appropriate conclusion?

[08:14] P1: Yeah.

Codes:

- Challenges - Data Messiness - Identifies issues with incorrect data due to faulty recording methods.
- Stressors - Lack of Industry Experience - Expresses concerns about being new to the industry and the need for extra effort to learn.

[08:51] Interviewer: So, in terms of keeping up with other people, do you experience any extreme challenges on occasions that you feel so stressful, and this leads to your personal ways to cope with that kind of stress or conflicts? So, the first question is, have you ever had experiences like these stress influence you very much?

[08:57] P1: I think not. There's nothing to my mind right now.

[09:07] Interviewer: But do you have any personal ways to cope with workplace stress or conflicts?

[09:29] P1: Yes, our... I think sports is a good way to deal with some stress. So, after work we will always go to play badminton together with our coworkers. And that's a good way of dealing with our stress.

[09:41] Interviewer: I see. So, is it like a voluntary thing among the workers or is it like a company-initiated event?

[09:42] P1: It's voluntary.

Codes:

- Coping Mechanisms - Sports - Mentions playing badminton with coworkers as a stress relief activity.

[09:59] Interviewer: Okay, then does your company offer resources for managing stress like this? Did they launch any events or have any official help from the company?

[10:24] P1: Actually, we have the company organized some events together to make our coworkers cooperate more, such as last time I think it's in August. The company organized the people in Guangzhou to have a boating together.

[10:59] Interviewer: Oh, I see. So would you say it's more like the company tries to strengthen the relationship between coworkers and this in the end helps you to form friendships, camaraderie and eventually it will help you to feel less stressful in the workplace because it's not an intimidating place anymore.

[11:04] P1: Yes, I think the company did help in this process.

Codes:

- Team Building Activities - Discusses company-organized events like boating trips to improve coworker relationships.
- Workplace Stress Coping Strategies - Discusses engaging in sports and social activities as methods of stress relief.

[11:33] Interviewer: So, apart from this kind of team building events, do you feel like there is any more official help like HR? Will HR talk to you, or will they offer any resources to lead you in managing workplace stress, especially if you are a first-year employee?

[12:02] P1: I don't really interact much with the HR in the office. We don't have HR over here. We only communicate with HR when it is necessary about some document updates. We also communicate with HR through online. So that's kind of a few interactions with HR for me.

[12:19] Interviewer: Okay, thank you. So, you mentioned you are a first-year employee at your current company. I'm wondering if the onboarding process involves HR support?

[12:46] P1: Yeah, the onboarding did include the HR support, but mostly it's only signing some documents online. So, the HR only tells me something about what process we need to finish, and what kind of document we need to sign. That's all.

Codes:

- HR Involvement - Low Visibility - Notes limited interaction with HR, mostly for document updates.
- HR Support During Onboarding - States that HR primarily assists with paperwork and does not provide extended support.
- HR as a Remote Entity - Explains that most HR interactions are conducted online rather than in person.

[13:23] Interviewer: Okay, thanks. We can proceed to the second category, which is more about workplace morale and emotional support. The first thing I'm interested about is what factors would you say influence workplace morale? Like you mentioned how strengthening friendship among workers would help with that. Is there anything to add to that?

[13:49] P1: Yes, I think. Um... I think friendship really influenced our workplace morale. Like we will play some games during our lunch time. That kind of thing make our friendship better and that will make our workplace more friendly.

Codes:

- Workplace Friendships - Highlights the importance of social connections in the office.

[14:09] Interviewer: Okay, thanks. So, um. Can I say that? Do you... do not feel very... deeply supported and managed by the HR department, like there is less presence of HR in your work life.

[14:28] P1: I think I don't because people in this office are more experienced than me and when I need some help, they always give me instant help and that's very much I need.

[14:44] Interviewer: Okay, so then could you please describe a time when you feel truly supported by your coworkers, like your manager or your colleagues?

[14:44] P1: Pardon?

[14:56] Interviewer: So can you describe an experience where you are supported by employees like colleagues or managers?

[15:38] P1: Oh, okay. Okay. So, when I have some problem that I don't know how to solve such as I need to examine the new data from a new game, my mentor, she will help me to do that. She will firstly explain to me what kind of key data we need to look at and how to extract those data from the log data. And I kind of think she will explain to me and guide me to finish the job.

[15:50] Interviewer: Thank you, then apart from work, would you say you will also seek emotional support from coworkers as well?

[16:11] P1: Yes, I think... I think outside of work our coworkers are very friendly, and we also always chat. we will share some interesting things, and we will share some very interesting things.

[16:21] Interviewer: So that kind of socialization provides you with enough emotional support at work?

[16:21] P1: Yes.

Codes:

- Managerial Support - Describes how mentors guide employees through tasks and problem-solving.

[16:32] Interviewer: Okay. Then would you wish HR would sort of help you as much as your coworker currently does?

[16:37] P1: I think my coworker supported me more than the HR.

Codes:

- Reliance on Coworkers for Support - Prefers seeking help from coworkers rather than HR.

[16:50] Interviewer: So you do not anticipate them to be of that help like you more wish like they stay what they are currently at?

[16:50] P1: Yes.

[16:58] Interviewer: Okay, I see. Then... maybe have you ever reported a workplace issue?

[16:59] P1: Not yet.

Code:

- Reporting Workplace Issues - States a reluctance to report concerns to HR due to low visibility.

[17:03] Interviewer: Then have you witnessed anyone do that?

[17:07] P1: I don't have any right now.

[17:19] Interviewer: Yeah. Then apart from all those personal experiences, do you trust HR to handle complaints confidentially?

[17:19] P1: No.

Code:

- Trust in HR Confidentiality - Expresses distrust in HR's ability to handle complaints privately.

[17:23] Interviewer: May I ask why you think that?

[17:46] P1: I don't think there's anything they can help. Since they are not in this office the HR's help may not be so useful. That's more about the co-workers in this office that I really need to interact with.

Codes:

- Lack of HR Presence - Observes that HR is located elsewhere and has little involvement in daily activities.
- Challenges in Seeking HR Help - Mentions difficulty in accessing HR when needed.

[18:07] Interviewer: So you will say that because of this office and you are physically far away from them you do not feel much connection to them and this also means you do not trust them enough?

[18:14] P1: Yes, I don't really have seen the HR from our work over here.

Codes:

- Lack of HR Presence - Observes that HR is located elsewhere and has little involvement in daily activities.
- Trust in HR Confidentiality - Expresses distrust in HR's ability to handle complaints privately.

[18:25] Interviewer: Oh, I see. And also they do not step in. Unless it's a document thing like you previously mentioned.

[18:26] P1: Yes.

Code:

- HR's Limited Role in Conflict Resolution - Confirms that HR does not step in unless necessary.

[18:52] Interviewer: Like, do they do any other work other than submitting documents and all those things? Do they initiate any event or have any other, I don't know, probably meeting, info sessions to help you guide through your first year here?

[19:15] P1: Not really. So the HR in my company, they are more like HRBP and apart from normal HR's job, they also assist with the studio to help them with some other things. So they don't provide us with so many support.

Codes:

- HR's Limited Morale Support - States that HR does not take an active role in boosting workplace morale.
- HR's Focus on Main Studio - Observes that HR focuses more on the main game studio than on satellite offices.

[19:28] Interviewer: So would you say most of HR's attention will be directed onto the studio instead of the Guangzhou office.

[19:28] P1: Yes.

Code:

- HR's Focus on Main Studio - Observes that HR focuses more on the main game studio than on satellite offices.

[19:46] Interviewer: I see. So may I conclude that it's basically the low visibility and low involvement from HR to be the main challenge you will face when trying to contact HR.

[19:47] P1: Yes.

Code:

- Challenges in Seeking HR Help - Mentions difficulty in accessing HR when needed.

[19:58] Interviewer: Okay. Then would you feel hesitant to raise any concerns or report anything to HR because of this?

[20:01] P1: Kind of. Um... yes, I think yes.

Code:

- Hesitation to Approach HR - Expresses hesitation in raising workplace concerns due to HR's detachment.

[20:12] Interviewer: In that way, would you feel more appropriate to talk to your manager or coworker first?

[20:13] P1: Yes.

[20:31] Interviewer: I see. So in that way you will feel HR is more aligned with employers and management instead of the employees, specifically employees at the Guangzhou office.

[20:31] P1: Yes.

Codes:

- Trust in HR Confidentiality - Expresses distrust in HR's ability to handle complaints privately.
- HR's Focus on Main Studio - Observes that HR focuses more on the main game studio than on satellite offices.

[20:49] Interviewer: In light of all these kinds of things, would you say is there a specific event or something you experienced that led you to this kind of attitude toward HR's work?

[21:17] P1: Yes, I think HR... does not really help much in my work, at least in my work. I know that my managers, if they need to hire some people, the HR will help in the process but as for my work right now, I don't really get in much touch with the HR.

Codes:

- HR's Role in Workplace Issues - Reports that HR does not actively address workplace concerns.
- HR's Focus on Hiring - Notes that HR is more involved in hiring processes than employee welfare.

[21:39] Interviewer: Wait, so another question. Does that mean that HR only assists with the hiring process? Because you mentioned team building events, are those organized by the HR or the department itself?

[21:42] P1: It's organized by the department.

Code:

- HR's Limited Morale Support - States that HR does not take an active role in boosting workplace morale.

[21:51] Interviewer: So is HR... the visible help they offered is only... through hiring processes?

[22:02] P1: Yeah. We have an executive member in the Guangzhou office. She will help manage all these things.

Code:

- HR's Focus on Hiring - Notes that HR is more involved in hiring processes than employee welfare.

[22:17] Interviewer: But she doesn't really do much about the workplace morale stuff or show a pretty active role in terms of solving workplace conflicts.

[22:18] P1: Yes.

Codes:

- HR's Limited Morale Support - States that HR does not take an active role in boosting workplace morale.
- HR's Limited Role in Conflict Resolution - Confirms that HR does not step in unless necessary.

[23:10] Interviewer: I see. Thank you so much. So this is the final category. So we would like to know more about AI-powered workplace support. So we are currently developing a tool called Workmate. It can offer you emotional support in a more conversational manner and maybe assist with HR related work such as reporting or raising concerns related to work. So the first question would be, would you feel comfortable using an AI-powered emotional support tool at the workplace?

[23:20] P1: I don't really think AI can understand emotional questions. So I'm not comfortable with that.

Code:

- AI for Work Assistance, Not Emotional Support - Believes AI cannot effectively provide emotional support.

[23:40] Interviewer: So you feel you do not need mere encouragement. You need more concrete advice from co-workers with more experience to help you guide through all these kinds of challenges.

[23:41] P1: Yes.

[23:59] Interviewer: Then apart from that, what would you want in an AI-driven support tool? Like if emotional support would not be a thing you need, what else would you need?

[24:51] P1: I think AI support is necessary in our work right now, but it's not emotional, it's more about that AI can help us, give us some more brand new insights. So when I have a question about my work, I will usually ask it before we use ChatGPT. And we will ask the AI, how can you help us solve this question? Can you give me some insight about this problem and the AI will give us a detailed solution and sometimes can incite me to better do my job.

Codes:

- AI as a Work Assistant - Views AI as useful for generating insights and solving work-related problems.
- AI Chatbot Usage - Mentions using AI chatbots like ChatGPT for work assistance.

[25:15] Interviewer: I see. So instead of... cheerleading purpose, it is more about an assistant role, like how AI could concretely assist with your job, which is the most effective way to help you relieve for our workplace stress

[25:16] P1: Mm-hmm.

[25:37] Interviewer: Okay, thank you. So in that way, would you prefer one-on-one support? Or do you feel comfortable with a group session like everybody connects together with an AI supported tool.

[25:41] P1: For me, it's more like one-on-one.

Code:

- One-on-One AI Support Preference - Prefers individual AI assistance rather than group AI interactions.

[25:51] Interviewer: Okay. Also, would you prefer AI chatbot-based conflict resolution over connecting to HR.

[26:13] P1: If AI is more intelligent, then only we... sending words to AI and it gave us words... If the AI is more like a person, I think I may want to see if AI can help us do the emotional things.

Code:

- AI for Conflict Resolution - Open to AI conflict resolution if the AI is advanced and human-like.

[26:21] Interviewer: So if it's more personalized, you would feel more motivated to use them.

[26:22] P1: Yes.

[26:39] Interviewer: Okay, so another question. So how would you feel about AI handling the sensitive reports like workplace concerns that you would initially raise to HR?

[26:40] P1: Pardon?

[26:47] Interviewer: So how do you feel about AI handling sensitive workplace concerns?

[27:47] P1: I don't think the AI knows more about personal interaction than a real person does. So sometimes, the AI only sees the problem itself but doesn't see the personal interaction behind the problem. It might be that another manager in another office has some other... some bad relationship with my manager in our office. So the AI cannot detect that relation problem, I think. So sometimes I think AI is only more helpful in solving concrete problems but not the problem that only people can feel.

Codes:

- AI's Limitations in Workplace Conflicts - Notes that AI lacks the ability to understand personal interactions.

- AI as a Supplement, Not Replacement - Sees AI as a helpful tool but not a replacement for human support.

[28:04] Interviewer: Yeah. So would you say like you would... like you would be happier to simply consider it as an anonymous channel you are reporting to someone else?

[28:16] P1: Yes, sometimes anonymous channels we can... we can send, then the problem might be solved more privately, I think.

Code:

- Preference for Anonymous Reporting - Supports reporting issues anonymously to avoid workplace tension.

[28:26] Interviewer: Okay. Will that mean you prefer to anonymously report workplace conflicts?

[28:27] P1: Yes.

Code:

- Preference for Anonymous Reporting - Supports reporting issues anonymously to avoid workplace tension.

[28:38] Interviewer: And also reaching HR through anonymous channels without revealing your name and your information?

[29:03] P1: I think that's more appropriate. The thing is we need to... we still need to work in this place. And I don't want any bad relationships with others. So anonymously, it can help us, help me to solve the problem more secretly.

Code:

- Preference for Anonymous Reporting - Supports reporting issues anonymously to avoid workplace tension.

[29:23] Interviewer: So it's more like you're trying to maintain your current relationship with others. It's less about how you feel the HR would actually use that to attack you in the future.

[29:25] P1: Yes, I think.

[29:33] Interviewer: Thank you so much. Are there any additional thoughts or suggestions for us?

[29:34] P1: Not really.

Participant #2:

[00:16] Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, thank you so much. So we can proceed to the first category, which is about workplace experience and challenges. So the first question, is it possible for you to walk me through a typical workday?

[01:03] P2: Okay, so basically I entered the office and then... I will spend my whole morning communicating with the game directors about their requests and how they would want us to fulfill their request by developing interfaces. And then... personally as a game UX designer, I would draw some user flowcharts and then just scratch the interface. And then I send the whole package to the... with some written notes to the downstream workers, sorry, downstream colleagues. And then they will kind of develop the whole interface and then we release it to the market like that. Yeah.

[01:14] Interviewer: Could you probably provide a timeline of your workday? For example, like at what o'clock you would enter the office, like what is time?

[02:08] P2: Oh, right, right, right. So... at 9:30 to 10 o'clock, I'll enter the office. And from 10 to 11 o'clock, sometimes there will be meetings. And most of the time I will just sit and use our software to develop some interfaces and then from one to... Oh, sorry, from 11 to 12. Again, developing... And then from 12 to 2, this is the lunch break. And then from 2 to 6, just... talking to the game directors or downstream colleagues or developing interfaces and then six half to seven half. It's our dinner break. And then from seven and a half to whatever time. It's work again. So my average uh... My average time of quitting, leaving the company is about 8 to 12, or 2 a.m. Maybe.

[02:18] Interviewer: So would you say the legal working hour is like eight hours plus one hour lunch break and another hour for dinner break?

[02:21] P2: Yeah... No, two, two hours of lunch break.

[02:32] Interviewer: Yeah... two hours lunch break. So for working hours technically it's eight hours from the morning to like the original off time at ...

[02:35] P2: Yeah, it's a six and a half. The original one, yeah.

Codes:

- Daily Routine - Describes the structure of a typical workday, including arrival, tasks, and workflow.
- Work Hours - Confirms standard work hours and break times.
- Overtime Work - Mentions that working late is common, with some employees leaving as late as 2 a.m.

[02:55] Interviewer: You were saying that working overtime is a pretty common thing for you. [Yes] Okay, then could you tell me more about your workplace culture, and more about team collaboration. How do cross-department collaboration work for you?

[03:49] P2: Okay, so it's kind of like a hard question for me because I haven't entered the industry for a very long time but I think like in terms of culture maybe because we are all kind of young people. So I think the whole atmosphere is quite casual most of the time. Communicating with our... cause I'm the ones who write the documents to the downstream colleagues so What I do is just assessing some tasks and um, not assessing some um How do I say that? Some points I would like them to complete them maybe some notifications I would uh want them to um Want to mainly take care of while developing the interface and. I don't think there's a culture of cooperating like...

[03:58] Interviewer: You were saying collaboration is not a thing for your department like most of the time it's a solo project.

[04:09] P2: No, we need to cooperate with our downstream colleagues, but I mean, there's nothing like a cultural thing I think. At least I do not feel anything.

[04:18] Interviewer: Like you just simply write up a document for them to understand what you want them to do and that's all.

[04:22] P2: Yeah, and then I need to kind of check their progress.

Codes:

- Workplace Culture - Describes a casual workplace environment with mostly young employees.
- Solo vs. Team Work - Indicates that UX design tasks are mostly independent, but collaboration occurs with downstream colleagues.

[04:29] Interviewer: Okay, so... maybe can you tell me what are the biggest challenges you face at work?

[04:54] P2: Ah, yeah, like... Because what I do is I need to draw like the whole user flow of what I suppose users would do with the interface, but most of the time, I cannot predict what they would actually do. I think that's the biggest challenge so the interface you produce might not actually match us with the market.

[04:58] Interviewer: Would you say it originated from the work itself?

[04:58] P2: Um...

[05:05] Interviewer: Like it's more about the stress to complete the work as perfectly as possible?

[05:20] P2: Yeah, maybe. Because like... Interfaces are maybe kind of related a little bit to art and more about user psychology. So yeah, completing it sometimes do cause me some stresses

[05:28] Interviewer: In that case, what are the aspects that you think contribute the most to workplace stress?

[05:52] P2: Um...It's a hard question. I had never thought about it. I think the most stress comes from completing the work and at the same time getting some of the pressure from the colleagues because they complete the work very fast. And for me, I do not have as much level of efficiency as they do. So that's why.

[06:02] Interviewer: I see. So you would say like the gap between your experience and knowledge towards the work you're currently doing?

[06:08] P2: Yeah, like the consequence of it, it's the working efficiency. So, yeah.

Codes:

- Challenges - User Flow Prediction - Notes difficulty in predicting how users will interact with interfaces.
- Challenges - Perfection Pressure - Highlights the stress of creating perfect UI/UX designs.
- Workplace Competition - Describes pressure due to differences in work speed and efficiency compared to colleagues.

[06:26] Interviewer: Okay. Have you ever considered, like, do you have any extreme cases of workplace stress? Leading to some very unique actions you took for example um like you feel so much stress that you feel like you need a time to take a break.

[07:09] P2: So far, not so. Like, like the darkness time of me is like I had five tasks ongoing at the same time but I think it's still okay because I'm a newbie there, so they will not give me very, very hard tasks. Yeah, but I do feel a kind of for a little bit of burnout in that specific time but I think it's still okay and what the actions I take is just like. First of all, I asked my leader if I could get some of the tasks completed later. So I'm not doing it with a very kind of extreme way I'm just doing what I can do to make myself alive.

[07:19] Interviewer: I feel like you manage your stress very well. So like, what is your way to cope with workplace stress and conflicts?

[07:48] P2: I think the stress comes ultimately from the actions you are forced to make. So what I do is to kind of complete uh no deal with the work I would like to do first and then the stress might ultimately be gone but I know like the stress is like very common and objectively existing stuff so Yeah, I'm not dealing with it I'm just... living with it. I would say.

Codes:

- Burnout from Task Overload - Expresses feelings of stress from handling multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Coping Mechanisms - Task Prioritization - Uses prioritization techniques to manage stress effectively.

[08:18] Interviewer: Yeah, I feel like you're... like yourself took the primary role in managing stress and you also mentioned how your manager would respond to you when asking for help,

like your manager will help you to manage your workload as well. So I would just say, is your company, like the company, except for your colleagues or your manager offering resources to manage your stress?

[08:32] P2: Yes, but that's because... like I'm kind of lucky because my manager and my colleagues are good people but I've heard like in other departments it seems can get really worse.

[08:43] Interviewer: So the company, like the HR department or any other department does not offer direct help to you, it's mostly how your manager assists.

[08:53] P2: Yes. As long as you do not go to them, they will never respond to you. That's what happened in our company, though.

Codes:

- Managerial Support - Acknowledges that managers provide workload assistance when needed.
- Colleague Support Variability - Recognizes that some departments have supportive colleagues while others do not.
- HR Involvement - Low Visibility - Notes that HR is mostly inactive unless employees seek them out.

[09:07] Interviewer: Okay. Then do you feel like if you reach out to them, do you feel work stress like workplace stress support is adequately promoted? Like, do they have the proper resources for you?

[09:27] P2: We got like... uh... like a robot spa downstairs. It's something related. And we also have psychological therapy. psychological therapy center But I've never seen people going there. So yeah, but we do have some physical infrastructures. Yeah

Codes:

- Workplace Stress Management Resources - Identifies company-provided resources like a spa and psychological therapy center.
- Employee Hesitation to Use Resources - Mentions that few employees take advantage of workplace support programs.

[09:38] Interviewer: So like you would say, for example, the bar is more like a group session And the therapy center is more like one-on-one support?

[09:46] P2: No, you can like the robot spa bar is also one-on-one because it's the robot doing to you Yeah.

[09:59] Interviewer: Oh, it's a robot spa. I thought it's a bar. Oh, sorry. So like... All the support they provided is like a one-on-one basis instead of like a group session?

[10:02] P2: Yeah, because for privacy concerns and yeah

[10:16] Interviewer: So you personally would prefer one-on-one support as well?

[Yes] Okay. So It's also because of privacy, confidentiality or is there any other perspective you would look at?

[10:28] P2: Yeah, mostly for privacy because they seeking for jobs in China specifically they might look at your resume like about your psychological conditions

Codes:

- Preference for One-on-One Support - Expresses a preference for private support over group sessions.
- Privacy Concerns in Seeking Support - Notes that employees worry about privacy when accessing mental health resources.

[10:44] Interviewer: Oh, I see. So for the second category we would like to look at workplace morale and emotional support. So may you tell me about what factors influence workplace morale in your company?

[10:44] P2: Money.

[10:50] Interviewer: So like pay rise would be the most effective factor to promote morale?

[11:07] P2: Yeah, and some like related to Yeah, mostly it's the pay rate. Maybe like race racing uh compliments from your colleagues like for my stage maybe but i don't think that's a thing for my manager or that kind of level.

Codes:

- Financial Incentives as Morale Boosters - Views pay raises and bonuses as the biggest motivators for workplace morale.
- Encouragement and Recognition - Values verbal and professional recognition, especially early in a career.

[11:15] Interviewer: So would you say the relationship between colleagues is not that essential to you?

[11:47] P2: It is. It's like in terms of one to 10, I think it's a six so it's neutral but a little bit more important because like a little bit more Because I've been in several companies before I entered this company for internships and one of them like we never talked to our colleagues after work i think the whole atmosphere is quite stressful but This one is quite casual so uh yeah it kind of matters for me.

[12:01] Interviewer: I see. So you will feel more supported if like you know your colleagues would offer you help and a stronger connection can actually help you to relieve some sort of stress

[12:08] P2: Uh... I don't think they are like physically helping me to do the task.

Codes:

- Mixed Feelings on Workplace Friendships - Considers workplace relationships important but secondary to financial rewards.

[12:22] Interviewer: Yeah, I understand. It's like emotional support Okay, so then can you describe a time when you feel truly supported by your employer, like the company, not your colleagues.

[12:29] P2: Um... Oh, like house rent support. They offer us some extra money to help you pay your rent.

[12:31] Interviewer: So it's like a financial reward?

[12:32] P2: Pardon?

[12:34] Interviewer: Is it like a financial reward?

[12:35] P2: Yes.

[12:42] Interviewer: Do you have any other examples like financial rewards or any other forms of support?

[13:01] P2: I've actually won like a... good ux design race for each month and for each month about 30 Yeah, 30% of the whole department will get the reward. And I've been on that list for three times and I haven't received any money from them

[13:05] Interviewer: Is it supposed to have a financial reward?

[13:18] P2: Yes, it's supposed to have some financial rewards, but I haven't received any. So I would say they're It should be but yeah But I haven't got it, so I'm not very sure.

[13:26] Interviewer: Like, would you feel like being nominated for that award alone can provide you some sort of support?

[13:36] P2: Kind of, but I don't think I'm doing a really, really good job so Yeah, I'm just... I'm just questioning about the award.

[13:43] Interviewer: But you could say like there's a system of encouragement. and how effective is it?

[13:47] P2: Yeah, but it's still encouragement, so I'll take that.

Codes:

- Company Support Beyond Salary - Mentions housing subsidies as a form of employer support.
- Unfulfilled Incentives - Describes a financial reward system that exists but does not always pay out.

[13:53] Interviewer: Yeah. Then have you ever hesitated to seek emotional support at work?

[13:53] P2: No.

[14:02] Interviewer: Like it means like you never need to seek emotional support or you always reach out for emotional support?

[14:19] P2: I'm not always reaching for emotional support, but if I need it I would want to somehow get it yeah but it's not like mainly I would ask my colleagues to compliment me. It's not something like that i would just

[14:27] Interviewer: So like when you're seeking emotional support, you would reach out to your colleague instead of HR or any

[15:23] P2: No, no, no, I will not reach out to my colleagues. I might just like to get several versions of my work and kind of make myself satisfied first. And then reach my colleagues because like as a UX designer, there will be like several downstream game directors, colleagues to judge your work so yeah many times, some of them may just say, oh, this is not working for me, but it might work for your clients that, oh, I think this will work for the game directors but it's not working for me so that's kind of You want to get different opinions. It's very hard to get like emotional support for from like one sector of your colleagues but mainly... from the other departments sometimes as well yeah

Codes:

- Lack of HR Encouragement - Notes that HR does not provide supportive or encouraging feedback.

[15:34] Interviewer: So like the HR resources or the resources company offer like the spa or the psychology center would you go there for emotional support?

[15:37] P2: Robot spa, yes. HR and therapy? No

[15:39] Interviewer: Why would you say that?

[15:41] P2: I don't want to meet people.

[15:47] Interviewer: Oh, I see. And I remember you said you were concerned with privacy as well.

[15:47] P2: Yes.

[15:59] Interviewer: Then in that case, do you think HR and people who work at the psychology center will prioritize employee well-being or the company's interest more?

[16:07] P2: Employees' well-being because they got their... I think I got their moral standards.

[16:15] Interviewer: Like... where does confidence originate from? Like you're confident they will prioritize your interest

[16:25] P2: I think for HR, they might prioritize the company's interest but like for the therapy center maybe the employee's interest.

Codes:

- Trust Issues with HR - Expresses concerns about HR prioritizing company interests over employee well-being.

[16:33] Interviewer: Okay, so if HR could improve your morale and emotional support system, what changes would you suggest?

[16:39] P2: It's very hard to imagine for me because our company's HR is kind of tricky.

[16:50] Interviewer: It's more like reflecting on what they currently do. So maybe you can just tell me what you think they are lacking right now.

[17:42] P2: First of all, they're just like um They seldom They do not kind of encourage you because like for my career uh since I've passed like the we've got like an exam to pass to become like a from internship to a real regular time job Like the formal employee and in that the whole kind of area they're like I don't care if you just failed. I would just let you know if you pass. Yeah so they seldom offer you encouraging words but maybe just like I just want you to know like we don't care if you pass us or not. Yeah, but this is what you would get if you pass it's a very kind of passive aggressive and fully passive attitude I would say

[17:54] Interviewer: So the quality of HR is quite low and they do not take an active role in trying to present all those kinds of support they could provide with you.

[17:57] P2: Yes, they are pretty passive, I would say.

Codes:

- HR's Role in Employee Transitions - Mentions HR's limited involvement in the transition from internship to full employment.
- HR's Passive Approach - Observes that HR does the bare minimum in engaging with employees.

[18:06] Interviewer: I see. Well, that could get us to a third category, which is more about workplace conflict and HR interactions.

[18:07] P2: Okay.

[18:12] Interviewer: So have you ever reported a workplace issue? Like how was the experience?

[18:47] P2: For me, no, but I know one of my colleagues has just left the company because he was fired. And Um... fired because like it's not like his problem but i do not know the details but i think he's having some conflict with the other colleagues But I think if the HR is doing it right, you will not end up Exiting the company. So yeah, I think there should be something HR is doing wrong that causes this.

Codes:

- HR's Handling of Employee Concerns - Reports dissatisfaction with how HR addresses workplace conflicts.

[18:51] Interviewer: What made you think that HR has done something wrong?

[19:11] P2: It's like because depending on my personal experience of it doing very passive for me passing the exam I don't think they will do something helpful to maybe dealing with the two person so that's best it's fully based on my own personal experience

[19:20] Interviewer: I see. So back to your experience so what would you want HR to do when you are passing like trying to pass the exam?

[20:06] P2: I think they should give me a full quota of what I should do and what I need to do. Maybe myself is scavenging information about like how is the task I'm completing like who's who's the manager like who's the manager that was assessing me like this kind of information i think they would just tell me and Like this is a very small support, but I still would want to get it. I mean, I do not need them to give me very physical support like, I'll give you the task. I will help you to pass it. No, I just want them to not deny me before the results come out, yeah.

[20:26] Interviewer: So where does this sense of denial come from? Does it come from your interaction with them? You feel like they do not treat you as a prospect candidate for that position. Is it like in the condescending tone or could you expand on that?

[20:39] P2: I think it's probably because we got two exams and I did not, I did not do well on the first one so I think it's reasonable but too obvious.

[20:57] Interviewer: I see. Then like, would you say you would prefer an AI-powered support tool that can converse with you in a more polite and encouraging manner, but provide you with the basic information you would want for your exam?

[21:09] P2: Yeah, just like I don't think they got the power to determine anything but if they are just more like an AI assistant, right?

[21:17] Interviewer: Okay. Then back to our HR related questions. So do you trust HR to handle complaints confidentially?

[21:17] P2: No

[21:18] Interviewer: Why that?

[21:28] P2: Based on my experience but i think that's maybe just like the only one HR I was dealing with the others might be fine.

[21:36] Interviewer: May I ask what are the Experiences you had with that HR, like why would you arrive at conclusion.

[21:37] P2: Sorry, pardon?

[21:45] Interviewer: So what's your experience with that HR to make you feel like they are like they're not worthy of your trust.

[21:56] P2: Um... there's another story because there are two employees, me and another guy who has just entered the company through xiaozhao.

[21:56] Interviewer: Yes.

[22:12] P2: He's just quite annoying to me and I was like Could you please make him shut up? And then she was like, oh, she has some you are doing something wrong to her. She's not confidential at all.

[22:13] Interviewer: oh he was harassing you?

[22:20] P2: Yeah, verbally. Verbally. He thought he was funny but he's not. It's just annoying.

[22:30] Interviewer: Yeah, and you wanted the HR to address this in a more official and also discreet way but she did not do that.

[22:36] P2: I think it depends on the EQ of the HR. And apparently she does not have it.

[22:48] Interviewer: Then that's one of the challenges you would face when raising concerns at work. Then except from confidentially, do you have any other concerns

[22:54] P2: That's not like... like what they do is all kinds of things making me feel unright.

[23:00] Interviewer: So you would feel they're more aligned with employees or more with

[23:08] P2: No, no, no. They are more aligned with the company's interest which is the big boss's interest Yeah.

[23:15] Interviewer: And on top of that, you feel like they usually address your concerns in a very poor manner.

[23:25] P2: I do not have many concerns, but I've heard them addressing with other's concerns and they are addressing them in a poor manner.

[23:28] Interviewer: Would you provide an example?

[23:41] P2: 53 Like the ones like two of my colleagues are having verbal fight and then she was I don't think she has done anything effective to handle the whole situation

[23:46] Interviewer: So she didn't step in where you think she should voluntarily do that.

[23:47] P2: Yes, kind of.

[23:52] Interviewer: So all in all, it's more about how she is very passive.

[24:11] P2: She's just only like she's just I think she's doing her job like what she is doing is like, oh, let me know your consequence. Let me know the results of your fight and I will just kick that one out and that's what she did.

[24:20] Interviewer: I see. So she's not mediating this verbal fight, but waiting for things to settle on themselves And...

[24:31] P2: Yes, yes. I don't think she ever... I don't know if that's covered in her job, I don't know. Is that something HR should do?

[24:39] Interviewer: So instead of aligning with the company it is more about she is doing the minimum of her job required of her to do.

[24:41] P2: Yeah, kind of that way.

[24:47] Interviewer: It's more of her interest, like doing things in the most efficient way.

[24:54] P2: Yeah, like I think she's doing the minimum things like her job requested her to do.

Codes:

- Limited HR Mediation in Conflicts - Notes that HR does not proactively mediate disputes among employees.

[25:06] Interviewer: I see. So would you be more likely to report workplace conflicts if it's done anonymously? like would you need anonymous channels to reach out to HR.

[25:06] P2: Yes.

[25:08] Interviewer: So why would you say yes?

[25:10] P2: Confidential again.

[25:12] Interviewer: Any other things, though?

[25:12] P2: Um...

[25:19] Interviewer: It's more like you would fear that HR would treat you very differently if you report as that.

[25:32] P2: I don't care because she's like if she will only reach you if you got in trouble or you got trouble to reach her so in other cases, we have no crossovers

[25:38] Interviewer: So the only concerns you have if you cannot report anonymously are privacy concerns.

[25:39] P2: Yes

[25:48] Interviewer: Okay. Is it because like the privacy has once like cause you any trouble or is this something you are just cautious about

[25:50] P2: I am cautious about it.

Codes:

- Anonymous Reporting Preference - Prefers anonymous complaint channels to avoid potential repercussions.

[26:14] Interviewer: Okay, thank you. So that we can get to our final category, which is more about AI powered workplace support. So we are currently developing a tool called workmate. And like we have like I had previously asked about. So would you feel comfortable using an AI-powered emotional support tool?

[26:24] P2: For me, I can kind of get my emotions. I can treat my stress. So far, so good so I would say I can use it, but I will not rely on it.

[26:34] Interviewer: So do you currently use any AI-powered tool? Rather, it's pure like AI assistant or AI emotional support like you chat with it

[26:43] P2: I don't have something to try it with, but I got like an AI assistant so I would ask it some questions.

[26:50] Interviewer: So is that an in-house AI assistant provided by the company to help you with your daily work.

[26:54] P2: We just connect to GPT and deep seek. So, yeah.

[27:03] Interviewer: Oh, I see. So how do you feel about this AI chatbot based conflict resolution over HR, based on your experiences?

[27:09] P2: It might help to make them speak some proper words with caution, maybe.

[27:44] Interviewer: Like it's more about would you feel more happy if you have an AI chatbot that would appear much more polite and friendly compared to your current HR like in a conversational manner, you can talk to it um talk to it about your current work. How you feel stressed, what's your struggle, for example, the previous harassment you talk about. Would you feel less or much more like would you accept that more compared to talking to ...

[27:53] P2: Oh, I had a question. I have a question. So my words will ultimately go to HR is that like the people, I mean.

[28:06] Interviewer: Yes. Yeah, it's more about like instead of reporting it to write a note to the HR, now you can report it in a conversational manner with the AI chatbot anonymously.

[28:18] P2: Uh-huh. Yeah. Oh, anonymously. And then this message will be like. Simplify it to maybe several bullet points and then get to HR ultimately, right?

[28:18] Interviewer: Yes

[28:19] P2: Um... Yes. Yes.

[28:29] Interviewer: So it's the anonymous channel that struck you the most or is it a conversational manner like the friendlier Attitude.

[28:41] P2: Anonymous, I think. I don't care if I would just need my words to get to the HR. And honestly, I don't care if the AI system is friendly or not

[28:49] Interviewer: Okay. Okay, thank you so much. So do you have any additional thoughts or suggestions for us?

[29:09] P2: Maybe... maybe set different levels cause most of the time we are very busy so maybe set some already pre-programmed questions that you can just tick some boxes and it will just directly go to the HR. And open another channel where you can say anything.

[29:17] Interviewer: So you are more interested in how it could help with HR's work instead of the emotional support we talk about.

[29:25] P2: Yes, because like the ultimate goal like the goal is to get the stuff solved for me so yeah

[29:36] Interviewer: Then for emotional support, you will still turn to your current way like you would go to the spa or you were just trying to manage it yourself

[29:51] P2: For me, maybe, but because for me talking is like a chat box, even though it's an AI chat box I also thought there's somebody or something monitoring me. That's my personal thought. Yes

[29:55] Interviewer: Oh it's again the privacy concern. I see

[29:55] P2: Yes.

[30:00] Interviewer: Thank you so much. I think that's it. Thank you so much.

Codes:

- Skepticism Toward AI Emotional Support - Believes AI cannot effectively replace human emotional support.
- AI for Conflict Resolution - Suggests AI might be helpful in facilitating more professional HR communication.
- Anonymous AI Reporting System - Expresses interest in AI-based anonymous reporting mechanisms.
- AI for Simplified HR Interactions - Suggests AI could make HR processes more user-friendly and efficient.
- Concerns About AI Surveillance - Worries that AI workplace tools might be monitored by employers.

Participant #3:

[00:00] Interviewer: Hi, Rachit. Thank you for participating in our interview about workplace experiences, morale, and HR interactions. We are currently developing a product to support employees in managing workplace challenges. Your insights will help us better understand the struggles employees face and how we can address them. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. May I have your consent to record this interview?

[00:30] P3: Hey Interviewer. Sure. Thanks for having me.

[00:35] Interviewer: All right. So let's get started. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, your age, your gender, and your ethnicity?

[00:45] P3: Sure. so my name is Rachit Arora. I'm 27 years old, male, from South Asia. I'm Indian by nationality. Currently I'm working with McKinsey and Company as a consultant in their customer experience practice. I've worked in the management consulting industry, I think, for about 4 years in total, with 1.5 years in India and now 3 years almost in the Middle East. I did my graduation from University of Delhi and I have a finance and business background there along with some experience running a startup here in Delhi.

Codes:

- Code: Professional Experience – 4 years in management consulting.
- Code: Demographics – 27-year-old male from South Asia, working in the Middle East.
- Code: Job Role – Consultant in customer experience practice at McKinsey.
- Code: Work-Life Balance – Has a background in finance and business.

[02:00] Interviewer: That's, that's amazing. so, in Middle East, do you work remotely or is it a hybrid model, or is it completely in office?

[02:15] P3: So in our profession, because it's usually client-driven, right? So whenever there's a client requirement to be on site, we usually get hosted by the client at their office. So again, it's a project to project thing where I would say most of my projects are on site and it's hybrid in the sense that because a lot of the consultants, they fly in from their host cities, so you would visit the client for 3 days in a day, in a week, and then 2 days are remote where the rest of the team continues from their home office with people flying back. So I would say most of the times it's a hybrid setup with some contingency on who the client is and what their requirement is, but if we're all in the same city, we will locate and work from the client office and in person, while I would say some parts of the week or some weeks we decide to go remote and the entire team can work from their home office.

[04:00] Interviewer: OK, excellent. So, do you feel any restrictions when you're working from home on what sort of data or what you can do at home and what is not allowed?

[04:15] P3: So we have a secure VPN that we have to connect to every time we're working remotely. I don't think there's any restriction from a data sharing perspective, but in some cases, right, depending on the project we're working on, where we need to have client data and connect with their systems in order to access some data, then we have to be there at the client site, which is, I would say a very rare instance. Usually we can freely work from home and, do our thing. So there's no restrictions from a technology standpoint in that sense. But of course, the way you can socialize and the way you can connect with teammates is something that is quite restricted when it comes to working remotely.

[05:30] Interviewer: Right, got it. What would you say is the size of your company? I believe it's a large corporation.

[05:40] P3: Correct, it's a large corporation. We have, I don't know, 100 plus offices in all the global cities, and I would expect it's like 6000 to 7000 employees.

Codes:

- Code: Hybrid Work Structure – Project-dependent hybrid model.
- Code: Client-Driven Work – Presence at client office varies by project.
- Code: Remote Work Feasibility – Secure VPN access, but some tasks require client site access.
- Code: Collaboration Challenges – Limited socialization when working remotely.

[06:00] Interviewer: Right. So what type of communication tools do you use, in your workplace? for example, is it Slack, Teams, or any other

[06:10] P3: Tools? Again, it's a very client driven business, we have some software that we use internally, like Slack, for communication. We have Zoom as well. We have Teams as well, and a lot of these, I would say Outlook is also a big one. We recently have pivoted to SharePoint where you can work collaboratively on Excel or PowerPoint. I would say that's also one more channel that we have added to our suite of services that we use. But again, since it's a client-driven, industry, a lot of the times the the software tools that the clients use, we also for the course of the project tend to latch on to them and then use during the course of our project. So, I mean, we are pretty flexible with the tools that we use for internal logistics and to manage things that are not related to client content, we also use WhatsApp for day to day.

[07:30] Interviewer: Oh, OK. That's interesting. So, is your WhatsApp also monitored by your workplace?

[07:40] P3: No, it's not monitored, but from a guidance perspective, it's purely logistics, right? So for example, we have to plan, OK, what time do we meet tomorrow, then that communication can happen on WhatsApp or if you want to find out, OK, which meeting room that we all go to for for a client meeting, but anything related to the content that we're working on, guidelines are that we purely should not discuss it on WhatsApp. And I would say there's a big push on using Slack for all communication, but WhatsApp is just more accessible for everyone and more

convenient, especially when it involves clients and, we can see teams and a lot of us are easily there to sort of to get all the moving parts together. I would say WhatsApp is a much more convenient source.

[08:45] Interviewer: All right. And do you have any other in-house communication tools, other than the ones which are third party?

[08:55] P3: Mm, I don't think so. No.

Codes:

- Code: Large Corporation – Global presence with 6,000–7,000 employees.
- Code: Client-Specific Tools – Uses software as per client preferences.
- Code: Internal Communication Tools – Slack, Zoom, Teams, Outlook, SharePoint.
- Code: Informal Communication – WhatsApp used for logistical coordination.
- Code: Data Security – Workplace guidelines prevent discussing content on WhatsApp.

[09:00] Interviewer: All right. Moving forward, is it possible for you to give a small summary of your workday and what you go about in one workday?

[09:10] P3: So, again, it depends a bit on the nature of each project, but usually what would happen is, if you're working in person at the client, you, you, you just show up at 8 or 9 a.m. in the morning, then you have a daily check-in that happens with, it could be internal or it could be external, including the clients, where we discuss our daily priorities for the day, things have been had to close there's a mix of, process things that we're going to do, for example, what meetings each person has to attend, who are going to be the attendees, what will be the agenda for the meeting. It's a bit of a mix of content as well.

What am I going to do in terms of analysis, in terms of the presentations we're going to prepare, in terms of, other work streams that you're driving for the client, the problem solving, what are the pieces of the puzzle you will be working on that day and it is a mix of, next steps and, if there's anything that you want to highlight or if there's any blockages that you're facing, you discuss it with your team and then I would say a for like a common ground where everyone can come together, highlight what they are working on, find out what others are working on, and if there's any blockages, you just get help from your teammates and from your management that they can help resolve early in the day.

[10:45] P3: I would say then we get on to the set of meetings that happen with clients, with experts that we are working on. With our teammates on different topics during the course of the day, there's, you can do this ad hoc or you can also have some problem solving that's scheduled with leadership on the project with clients, with your own engagement manager. So all of these meetings happen, you sometimes have expert calls. Depending on if there's a project that I'm working on or where I'm not too attuned to what the content is, then you get on a call with people who've worked in the space before, in, in, in the company. You ask them about

their experience, about the problems that you're working on, get their inputs and then use that when you solve a problem or build a strategy on a particular topic.

[11:50] P3: So all of this happens during the course of the day. you will also work on your analysis in the background, run the excels, do some modeling, prepare the presentations for the day. During the week you'll have one or two very important meetings involving the major stakeholders like let's say a CXO or a chief of some function or, the top management of the client. So for these meetings you usually have, every day there's some review that happens with the internal leadership with more junior level clients, so that happens during the course of the day.

Towards the end, you also have a checkout usually which is at like 6 or 7 p.m. and here you would discuss what was the progress during the day and if there's any issues you faced and how you plan to close the day, basically. Then you head home and then, you continue working depending on if there's any urgent priority for the next day or you close and then you, you go to bed. before this, what usually happens is you finish up your presentations and you send it to the design team at night so that when you wake up in the morning, the presentation is back and you're ready with the higher starting point for the next day.

[13:20] Interviewer: So when would you say your work day ends at what time, on average?

[13:25] P3: On average, I would say 8 to 9 p.m.

Codes:

- Code: Work Hours – Starts at 8-9 AM, ends around 8-9 PM.
- Code: Morning Meetings – Daily check-ins with team and clients.
- Code: Task Planning – Identifying priorities, scheduling meetings.
- Code: Collaborative Problem-Solving – Engaging with leadership and domain experts.
- Code: Client Presentations – Creating decks, modeling, data analysis.
- Code: Evening Checkouts – Discussing progress and next steps.

[13:30] Interviewer: So you would say around 12 hours of work every day? Yeah, yeah. All right. So, with such a heavy work schedule, how would you say your workplace culture is and how would you say your team interacts and collaborates?

[13:45] P3: I think though the work is quite intense in how it operates, but it's, it's a place where you'll find a lot of talented people, very driven, very hardworking, very smart, very sharp. So it always keeps you on your toes and the problems that that we usually solve are quite high terms of strategic priorities for organizations or stakeholders that you're working with are top folks, in their respective fields, so it drives you every day, right, to push for the best and to get to the best possible solution for your clients. In terms of team morale, again, because it's quite, intelligent bunch of people, very talented, creme de la creme from their respective cultures, it's a good mix

to interact with on every project. You meet new people, a lot of times from different geographies, from different offices that come together.

[15:00] P3: so overall I would say it's a new experience in every project and it brings like the best of, the best of time possible from a global scale to our team room and you, you get to learn a lot from different perspectives, people who have worked in the industry, in different industries, at different points of, their career coming together, so it's a lot to learn, every day on the job, right? So it keeps things quite interesting and I would say, also because projects are usually 8 to 12 weeks I would say is the average length, it's like 2 or 3 months and you could be involved in the project for the full course or even partially, right? You could do 6 weeks on a project and then roll off the project to a new one. So the typical duration that you would interact with colleagues is like 1.5, 2 months in cases, they would roll off or you would continue and move on to another project.

So it's not that long that you're involved with them, right? Of course, your office folks are someone, some folks that you would see, every now and then, but on a day to day basis, your working team, it, it changes quite a, quite a bit, right? So overall I would say morale. It's quite an energetic bunch of people from different walks of life, coming together, very talented, so you have interesting conversations in the team room. And again, it's a busy environment, so whenever you get the time to socialize, you make the most of it.

Codes:

- Code: Intellectually Stimulating – Surrounded by smart, driven colleagues.
- Code: Global Talent Exposure – Works with professionals from different geographies.
- Code: Short Project Cycles – 6 to 12-week projects; frequent team changes.
- Code: Team Socialization – Limited but valued social opportunities.

[16:30] Interviewer: Right. So, since it's such a busy environment, what do you feel like are like the biggest challenges that you're facing at work, and what do you, like, do you feel like you want to just leave this workplace because of any of the challenges that you face?

[16:45] P3: I would say, I mean, I'm quite motivated at my job for now, although there are challenges where, there's shorter deadlines and you have to really think about a problem and get the best possible solution for your client. it's a bit more on the expectations on how do you best deliver on those expectations for your client for your leadership in the time that you have, right? You want to get a good quality answer across and you have to do it quickly. So you have to manage the quality and the time part of it to solve the equation in the best possible manner and again, it's a very collaborative process where it's not just you, for every part of the problem, there's experts at the firm that you can always reach out to.

There's people who we work with, so I think it's about, managing those networks and bringing, taking help when it's most needed, and not, just struggling with the problem or this involves your teammates, your management, your project leadership, and also other colleagues across the world who worked on a similar set of problems to get their inputs in a timely manner. That's the

most challenging part, like the visibility on when I would need the help and activating it at the right time so that you, you're not facing a problem by yourself.

[18:15] Interviewer: So do you feel like reaching out for help is difficult or is it, are the people approachable or has there been any challenges in that area when you're reaching out to people for help?

[18:30] P3: I mean, the only challenge is that everyone is quite busy in terms of the projects they're working on, so you have to really take all the shots possible. If there's a topic that you need help with, it's better to reach out to, let's say 5 or 6 people, and usually you would get a reply from 2 or 3 people, right, so you wouldn't expect, everyone you email would get back, but there are always people that will, so you make the most of it, and it's better if you plan in advance, right, if you want, if you can, foresee that, OK, next week this topic is gonna be a priority for the client and for me.

Then you make sure that week itself you've sent out a request, you've asked them for some time on their calendar, get them an overview on what you're working on, and how you could potentially involve them during the client meetings just so that they are prepared, there's time on their schedule that you can already plan for and you manage things before they escalate. So, I would say it's just about proper planning on your part, more than the, the systems I would say are quite facilitative to getting the right people to connect. There's visibility in terms of, OK, who are the experts, there's quite a bit support infrastructure wise which helps you find the right people, and also helps you to connect with them, I would say.

[20:00] Interviewer: That's great. Since this is such an intense job, do you feel like you have a lot of workplace stress, and what aspects of this job are contributing to that workplace stress?

[20:15] P3: I would say just, because it's quite demanding in terms of intellectual capacity, just the time to relax and rejuvenate a bit more, would be quite conducive. So I would say that is a bit of a challenge, just managing the time, and the work-life balance of, of that equation, but otherwise, I would say it's quite promising and quite interesting in terms of the problems that we work on.

[20:45] Interviewer: Have you, personally, done any activities to cope with workplace stress or conflicts?

[20:55] P3: Yeah, so I mean in terms of the resources that are provided, we have access to therapists on call that we can reach out to if needed. There's also systems in place where you can talk to someone anonymously. There's leadership that is involved, you can, seek help and the helpline if you, if you ever need it. There's also subscriptions to meditation apps that can help us de-stress and clear the clutter in terms of your, your headspace. So that I think is quite helpful and supportive in terms of the, the, the support and infrastructure that is provided. By our employer. I think we're lucky in that sense that there's, there has been quite a bit of thought that goes into it and there's action that you see, in terms of, the support systems that you can provide for your employees to help them manage and of course perform better, right? Because in the equation, if, if you're not making sure of emotional mental well-being for your employees,

and you wouldn't get their best that you can deliver them to the clients because essentially in our industry we are

[22:00] P3: the product, right? It's our brainpower, it's how we think about problems and how we can best bring a solution for those problems that our clients have. So I would say it, it is a big, big, push in terms of making sure that despite the stress, despite the fact that it's very busy. And quite a demanding job. There are support systems that help us perform better and make better use of all those systems that we can leverage as we do our job.

[22:45] Interviewer: So, in these, resources provided by your company, Would you prefer that the resources that provide 1 to 1 support are better, or do you prefer group sessions, and why?

[23:00] P3: I would say one-on-one is a much more engaging environment considering my problems are quite unique in terms of what I face, there may be personal issues, there may be professionally very specific to your team and the people you're working with. So it's always better to have that extra layer of private space where you can discuss things in confidence, and just freely express, right, what you feel, I would say 1-on-1 is a much more of an intimate setting would work better for emotional support, emotional and mental needs that you might have.

[23:40] Interviewer: And your company is able to provide those resources well.

[23:45] P3: Yeah, I mean, as of yet, you can access content that of course is the one we want. You can do group sessions, but we haven't done that yet. I mean, I haven't come across it. and in terms of the helplines, again, their support, you can call to, which is basically the health insurance provider, they have their own helplines and help desk where you can reach out to medical professionals and do it on a global help desk where they can provide that support to you.

[24:30] Interviewer: Alright, talking about working hours, are there any particular working hour policies in the country you're working in which impact or which you feel personally impact your well-being as an employee?

[24:45] P3: I think from a local regulations perspective, I haven't come across anything. There's policies around benefits around the leaves that you can take annually, which I think our companies very careful in terms of how they comply, and, they make sure so reasonably it depends on the local regulations and they meet the local regulations, right, in terms of the allowance for leaves that you can take for medical leaves for personal leaves and so on, and there's also unpaid leaves that you can take. So every year there's 2 months that you can take as per policy as an unpaid leave. So if you really want to disconnect and relax or if you have any other personal private matters to attend to, then you can also go for that option and it doesn't affect any evaluation cycle, so you can, you can apply for it in advance and then go for it, which I think makes a lot of difference for people.

Codes:

- Code: Intense Deadlines – Short turnaround times for high-quality deliverables.
- Code: Performance Expectations – Managing quality vs. time pressure.

- Code: Strategic High-Stakes Work – Working with top-level stakeholders.
- Code: Availability of Help – Need to proactively reach out to multiple experts.
- Code: Planning for Support – Seeking help in advance is key to efficiency.

[25:50] Interviewer: Right. So, moving forward to a more personal experience, can you describe any time where you felt truly supported by your employer, during your workplace?

[26:05] P3: Yeah, so I, as I was saying, there's a 2 month unpaid leave policy, so I went for it when I wanted to take a break and just do something else besides work because I had gone through an intense project. Before that break, I also went for internal form training where we all go through a training with others in our cohort, so at the same stage of their career, like as an analyst slash associate position where you go to Europe and then you have an in-person training there where you get leadership focused modules that people and trainers experienced trainers will teach you how to go across your career, and you learn a lot of stuff and it's very collaborative in the sense that they operate. So that training part of it and then the unpaid leave that I was able to take, it really helped me disconnect and I got back to reading and, just, it was very refreshing in that sense. So I was glad that those systems were active and I could make the best use of it to improve as a performer.

[27:20] Interviewer: OK, that's great. So, while seeking emotional support at work, have you ever hesitated or, and why have you hesitated if that's the case?

[27:30] P3: I mean, the only hesitation I would say comes from the fact that there might be another person at the end of it, so yeah, although the policies per se, make sure that it's all anonymous and that there wouldn't be any tagging on you as an employee, but what you are worried about is, OK, would the other person judge me, would they feel differently about the way they, they see me, so I think those are very human concerns and how we feel about things, per se, that's the hesitation that comes from my, my mental thinking, but from a systems perspective, I think they want to make it more personal and make it more real for you, so they have people on the other side that can help you with all these issues, but I just feel OK. I don't want to be judged and I don't want to share too much. Am I sharing the right amount and so on.

[28:30] Interviewer: So, would you feel that the people that are in front of you, for example, HR or anyone related to the support team, are trying to prioritize the employees' well-being, or do they have the company's interests at their heart?

[28:45] P3: I mean, I think we are quite a people-centric company in terms of the systems that I've seen, right, people try to support you, to the maximum extent, but of course it's a corporate entity, right? And there are corporate concerns but in our business because again, the product is quite tied to the people, we are the product in essence. I would say in our case, it is much more. The best interest, make sure that the employee's well-being is well taken care of, because otherwise they wouldn't have a good product. In essence, the employees are the product here which is different from other industries where employees work on something and their efficiency is much more correlated to other things, but, in our case, at least, I think it's quite well taken care of.

[29:45] Interviewer: Makes sense. So, going back to the previous question, would you feel like you'd be more comfortable reaching out to HR through anonymous channels or do you like the one on one, in-person support that you get?

[30:00] P3: I think there's a lot of instances where anonymous channels can be much more helpful. I can't remember the scenario, but there was one where I came across the Slack channel and we have these, at the firm where, you can post anonymous questions and HR or people from that field, they will answer it for you, which are related to some policies, let's say, and you can easily ask these questions without being judged. So these happen on Slack and there's also anonymous forms that are sent out every week, end of week, end of, let's say a quarter on, OK, how are you feeling and how's the morale, and how, how are you performing on the project? Do you think some things could be done better? So all of these anonymous channels exist I think, yeah, it's quite helpful, right, and you really can share what you, what you really feel.

Codes:

- Code: Unpaid Leave Policy – Employees can take a two-month break.
- Code: Training Opportunities – In-person leadership training in Europe.
- Code: Work-Life Balance Struggles – Work can be exhausting despite company support.
- Code: Cultural Barriers to Seeking Help – Hesitancy in discussing issues due to fear of judgment.
- Code: Confidentiality Concerns – Employees worry about how HR views their problems.

[31:00] Interviewer: All right. So, have you personally ever reported a workplace issue and if you have, how was that experience?

[31:10] P3: Personally, I haven't done it yet.

[31:15] Interviewer: All right, and have you, do you feel that HR can be trusted to handle any complaints confidentially, and why or why not?

[31:25] P3: I think in my experience, I mean my interactions that have happened with HR. They are trained professionals, and they have been helpful, at least for me, whenever I have any concern, I'm OK, how can I do something differently. They are quite helpful and quite transparent in terms of the policy and if it can happen or cannot happen, what is the reason or rationale, and they're also flexible in terms of exploring potential solutions that could help me. So, I would say it again depends on the company that you're working in, but at least in my case, I'm quite happy with the level and degree of support that I've received and in terms of the professionalism and the way that they deal with, with the employees, I think it, it's quite appreciable as an employer.

[32:15] Interviewer: Great. So, would you be more likely to report workplace conflicts if done anonymously or do you prefer the current scenario?

[32:25] P3: I think of course, like, anonymity if it's sensitive and if it's problems that I feel are much more at ease, if I can deal with it, in an anonymous manner, so I would welcome the option to have such a solution as well, right? Depending again on the nature of issues that you're facing, it's always helpful to have an anonymous process.

Codes:

- Code: People-Centric Company – Employees' well-being is prioritized due to business model.
- Code: Anonymous HR Channels – Slack-based anonymous Q&A sessions.
- Code: Regular Employee Feedback – Anonymous forms for morale checks.
- Code: HR Confidentiality – Generally trusted, but concerns about judgment remain.

[32:50] Interviewer: Right. Other than you personally, have you witnessed any of your colleagues, use any HR conflict resolution tools, and did you personally feel that they helped your colleagues?

[33:05] P3: Yeah, I think it's quite well publicized, so we have this helpline that you can email, that is like. A moderator in essence in terms of if you see anything that's going wrong, if any policy is being broken, or if you're facing any personal issues while being involved in the professional workspace, you can always raise a red flag and get other people involved in an anonymous fashion. I mean they can track you, but it's not supposed to be disclosed in terms of who made this complaint or who raised this issue. So, you are trackable, but in essence, the support that gets provided to you, you, you stay anonymous throughout it, so they will resolve the problem for you and not bring up, your name, and I think it's, it's quite helpful in terms of that they're not being a track to whoever raises it, and they can easily raise whatever issues they are facing. Again, it's much better if there's no tracking at all, but they try to make the best that they can with existing technology, existing solutions, I think anonymity can play a huge, huge role.

Codes:

- Code: Conflict Resolution Process – Moderated helplines for reporting concerns.
- Code: Anonymous Complaint Handling – Issues tracked but identities remain undisclosed.
- Code: Limited Personal Experience – Interviewee has not reported issues personally.
- Code: Encouraging Feedback Culture – Open forums for discussing concerns.

[34:30] Interviewer: That's great. So, what would you, on a scale of 1 being completely uncomfortable and 10 being extremely comfortable, on this scale, what would you say if there was an AI powered emotional support tool to come in at your workplace, and since you mentioned that Slack is the most used tool of mode of communication in your workplace, if we

worked with Slack and there was an AI powered emotional support tool available on Slack on a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable would you be?

[35:00] P3: I think I would be a 9 on the scale considering a lot of times I reach out to ChatGPT for any issues that I'm facing and get its perspective. Also drawing on Slack itself, with the right checks and balances in place, I think it could be very helpful if it's accessible enough for everyone and it's again anonymized as a for then I think it's super, super helpful.

[35:25] Interviewer: So, you had mentioned anonymous forms previously. Would you prefer an AI chatbot-based conflict resolatory or would you still prefer sending in HR forms by filling them yourself anonymously?

[35:40] P3: I would say chatbots are much better. It feels much more human and it's easier for you to just reply on the chat, right? It feels like, OK, you're texting a friend, so it's much more accessible and it's much more convenient in terms of, OK, just go and you chat with the chatbot and you get, you can, go back and forth on issues. So in a form, it's just you need direction, right? There's a question and you submit an answer and it gets done, but there's no, that's a real-time response to whatever you're entering, right? there could be follow-up questions, you can probe, let's say depending on the nature of the answer that the user submits. I think that level of flexibility that a chatbot can provide is much more helpful also from a systems perspective, let's say the HR or whoever is designing the people policies of the company. In terms of the inputs that they can get from their employees, I think it would be much more relevant, much more insightful, right, in terms of what they can gather.

Codes:

- Code: AI in Workplace Support – Comfortable with AI-powered tools for well-being.
- Code: Slack Integration for AI Support – Prefers integration with existing communication tools.
- Code: AI vs. HR Forms – Prefers chatbot over traditional forms for support.
- Code: AI Benefits – Instant, conversational, and more human-like interaction.
- Code: AI Limitations – Must be designed with ethical checks and balances.
- Code: AI for Workplace Trends – Continuous learning could improve support services.

[36:45] Interviewer: Right. So, overall then, how would you feel about AI handling such sensitive workplace concerns and such sensitive information?

[36:55] P3: I mean, like I said, right, with the right checks and balances, it should not be an issue, but again, you have to make sure that there are guidelines in place as guardrails that. To keep the confidentiality and also the source data for the AI is verified and it comes from the source and the training takes place, in a manner which is congruent with the way of dealing with issues, right. So you need to have those systems in place with the right testing, in terms of the early rollouts, so you test and you see how it's performing and how the data is versus if

someone else was doing it in person and you improved the for and before you rolled it out to the entire company. So it's quite helpful and I feel there's a lot of potential. But again with the footnote that it has to be with the right checks and balances in place and the right systems that are supported by people at the end of the day.

[37:50] Interviewer: Right, that makes a lot of sense. Finally, what would you feel could be changed, or what would your suggestions be to change in your HR workplace/HR policies, which could help support employees better?

[38:05] P3: I think overall, just ensuring that OK, people are motivated in, in how they are working, just regular inputs from people, issues they face, level of excitement and what can be done better. The answer always comes from, OK, the folks that work in that company. It is very tied to the environment they're working in the industry they're working in. So I mean, I don't want to speculate for other folks, but I would say just having an open for where people can discuss and freely express themselves is going to be very, very helpful, and then there should be systems in place that take this input to the real decision makers, right? Did they get the right level of spotlight based on how important they are in terms of organizational culture, and they feed into decisions and actions that get taken by the management.

Codes:

- Code: Regular Feedback Loops – Employees should regularly voice concerns.
- Code: Decision-Maker Awareness – HR must act on employee feedback.
- Code: Open Discussion Forums – Employees need safe spaces for expressing concerns.
- Code: Workplace AI Potential – AI has significant promise if developed properly.
- Code: Ethical AI Development – Needs careful rollout with human oversight.

[38:50] Interviewer: Mhm. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And finally, do you have any other additional thoughts or any suggestions for this interview or anything in general?

[39:00] P3: AI in the last couple of years already has made big strides and how it has been in our day to day, in terms of professionally for problem solving for any industry that we're working in, it plays a huge, huge role in, in our projects and, it's quick and easy way for you to get the world's information at your hand. So I think there's a huge potential, in, potentially using it for problems and issues that you face in the workplace to use it as a support system, because if people interact with the AI that it builds and feeds and learns on. Different experiences of different people that use it, right? So I think the continuous learning loop can make this a very promising product or service that can be provided by employers and, I'm very excited if something like this comes in the future.

[39:45] Interviewer: Thank you so much, Rachit for your input, and I really appreciate giving your time to us for this interview. and I hope you have a nice rest of the day.

[39:55] P3: Thank you, Rachit. I hope it was helpful and all the best.

[39:59] Interviewer: Thank you.

Codes:

- Code: AI as a Workplace Solution – AI has transformed problem-solving across industries.
- Code: Future Workplace Trends – AI-based HR support can be revolutionary.
- Code: Workplace Learning Culture – Continuous improvement benefits both employees and employers.

Participant #4:

[00:00] Interviewer: Hi, P4. Thank you for participating in our interview about workplace experiences, morale, and HR interactions. We are currently developing a product to support our employees in managing workplace challenges, and your insights will help us better understand the struggles employees face and how we can address them. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. May I have your consent to record this interview?

[00:22] P4: Yes.

[00:23] Interviewer: OK, great. So, let's move on with the general question first. Can you tell me more about yourself, like your age, your job title, years of experience, your ethnicity, etc.

[00:33] P4: Sure. I'm Vinod Mehta. I got 25+ years of experience in IT consulting services. I'm based out of Hyderabad, India. I belong to Jain community. It is a very small religious community, focusing on the core principle of non-violence. My job title is associate partner and account executive. I'm 52 years of age and I've got two college-going children. That's about me.

Codes:

- Code: Professional Experience – 25+ years in IT consulting services.
- Code: Demographics – Based in Hyderabad, India; Jain community.
- Code: Job Role – Associate Partner and Account Executive.
- Code: Work-Life Balance – Two college-going children.

[01:05] Interviewer: OK, great. About your work, do you work remotely, in office, or is there a hybrid structure?

[01:13] P4: We are a hybrid structure. We go to the office 3 days a week, and 2 days we work from home.

[01:20] Interviewer: Great. So if it is hybrid, do you feel like there are any restrictions when you're working from home?

[01:27] P4: No restriction as such. I mean, what kind of restriction are you talking about?

[01:32] Interviewer: Like handling any sensitive data or some sort of actions or tasks that cannot be completed when you're working from home, or are forbidden or restricted from working from home and can only be worked out when you're in office.

[01:45] P4: Not really. I mean, the work that I'm doing absolutely can be done remotely, and I don't need to, I don't face any challenges in working from home. Yes, we do have to follow certain data security and privacy practices, which are even applicable even in offices also, and we are all connected via VP internal, and we use computer company provided laptops. So, no, absolutely no. All the work can be done from home. I don't feel any restrictions.

[02:15] Interviewer: All right, that's great. So, which company do you work at if you're comfortable letting us know, and what would you say is the size of a company? Is it a startup? Is it a large corporation, or is it a mid-size business?

[02:27] P4: I would not like to name the company, but I can tell you it's a global multinational company, with a presence in 170 countries. We have a very large setup even in India with multiple offices in each city, more than 100,000 employees in India itself.

[02:45] Interviewer: OK, that's great. What would you say is your main mode of communication or the main communication tools you use in your workplace, for example, Teams or Slack, etc.

[02:56] P4: Yeah, so, we're an IT consulting business, so primarily, the company that I work for, we use Slack, and then what we do is we use client provided tools and systems. So, a lot of time, I use Teams for calls and messages as well if I'm communicating with my clients because they are on Teams.

[03:18] Interviewer: Got it. Do you have any other in-house communication tools as well, and how comfortable are you using those compared to Slack and the other tools you have mentioned which are third party?

[03:28] P4: Predominantly in my role, the first tool I use to communicate is emails, right? But post-COVID, there are teams in different cities within India, they are working, some of them are remote working from home, some of them are in other cities. So what has happened is post COVID, a lot of communication is also happening over phone call, or on messaging systems, we have created groups on Slack, we have created groups on WhatsApp. So no confidential information, we use these kinds of tools for communicating with each other. So, email, phone calls, messaging systems are predominantly very heavy for communications. Slack is used as well.

Codes:

- Code: Hybrid Work Structure – Works from the office 3 days a week, remote 2 days.
- Code: No Remote Work Restrictions – Tasks can be completed remotely; adheres to data security policies.
- Code: Communication Tools – Uses Slack, Teams, Email, and WhatsApp for different purposes.
- Code: Post-COVID Communication Shift – Increased reliance on phone calls and digital tools.

[04:10] Interviewer: All right. So, if you're comfortable, can you walk me through a typical workday for you, like your timetable, how does it start and how does it go through and then end.

[04:20] P4: Yeah, my typical day would start roughly around 9 o'clock, 9 to 10, between 9 to 10, depending on, yeah, so I would first go through my important mails, action them, then I will look at my calendar. How does it look, what are the most important meetings that I have for today,

and then I'll see whether any preparation is required for that. And that gives me, that takes me around, 1 hour to between 1 to 2 hours, and then during that time, the peak of my call starts.

So I would say roughly on a given day, I would be spending 4 hours, 3 to 4 hours on scheduled calls with my team, with my clients, with my organizational leadership, that's where I spend a lot of my time. Then, in these calls, my role will be a varying role where some meetings are for information sharing. Some meetings are for providing me information, wherein I will be required to take certain decisions, so those will be the meeting and few meetings will be relating to sales capability build.

[05:20] Go to market kind of meetings where we are planning for the future, strategizing, planning things for the future growth. So that will be taking a significant amount of time. Then there will be a lot of communication conversation, if there's a fire somewhere because I lead a very large delivery team of, across various geographies, India, US, Mexico, so, and, depending on the complexity and challenges that we are facing on a day to day basis.

I might jump on a call, quick call, a call or talking to my boss is giving him an update about some important needs he has, or some of the team members that need my help in making a good decision, some situation. A lot of my time during the day is also spent on the people management aspect in terms of hiring, attrition risk, managing people aspect, many such challenges.

[06:10] So, that's how a typical day would look like. I would try and wrap up my day around 5 p.m., and, typically, to 8 o'clock, I don't do much work, but I might have calls in the evening, at least one call in the evening from, between. Right now, most of my clients are located in the Pacific time zone, so I would take a call or two, in the evening between 8 to 10 p.m. India time. This is what a typical day would look like for me. That's all, yeah.

[06:35] Interviewer: So, so you'd say your work day goes from almost 12 hours or 14 hours sometimes as well?

[06:42] P4: You can say, start to end, but in between, I do get pretty good, my time. Some days are really hectic, but some days, you may not have Fridays that you wouldn't have a lot of calls. So it will be a little easier. Some days you may not even have evening calls. So I would say weekly, I would say 2 or 3 days I will have calls after 8 p.m.

Some days I may not have an early morning call like 9 o'clock. Most time my call starts at 10, 10:30. So, it's quite flexible, I would say. I can pace my day depending on how things are looking. I would say on a given day, I'm working probably between 8 to 10 hours.

[07:22] Interviewer: Interesting. So, how would you feel is your workplace culture and how does your team interact with you, even your seniors and your juniors, and how do you feel about the collaboration in your workplace?

[07:33] P4: So, I think we have a very, very open, transparent, and flexible work culture, and the hybrid also decides when they want to come. We are not really concerned about how much time teams spend in the office. I mean, it has both challenges. It also provides flexibility for

employees to manage work at their own pace because we are working with clients which are in different geography and sometimes, the length of the work time zone spans between 12 to 13 hours. Between those 12 to 13 hours, we can expect people to be flexible and work for 8-9 hours every day, right? That's what is happening.

[08:15] So that's very quite flexible. I don't see a lot of challenges in terms of collaboration. Yes, I think people are coming to the office and we are meeting each other, collaborating as and when needed, but now most of the collaboration is happening via virtual tools only. So if you ask me that's where some of the challenges lie.

Communicating, interacting, collaborating with other employees, and we are just relying right now on digital media, phone calls, team calls, video calls. One of the challenges I find, especially when people are working with a very long shift, but working for 8 hours is when you are not able to see the face of the other party, right? A lot of people are not turning on the camera. That's sometimes a challenge even if you're working from home, that can, that can help, sometimes, but that's one of the challenges I find in collaboration.

Code:

- Code: Time Management – Starts work around 9 AM, reviews emails and calendar.
- Code: Meeting Load – 3-4 hours of scheduled calls daily.
- Code: Leadership Responsibilities – Decision-making, strategy planning, team updates.
- Code: People Management – Hiring, attrition risk, employee support.
- Code: Extended Work Hours – Occasional evening calls (8-10 PM), workday lasts 8-10 hours.

[09:05] Interviewer: That's a very interesting aspect. What would you say would contribute the most to your workplace stress as part of your job?

[09:13] P4: Yeah, so I would say, workplace space, one is, you know, sometime, coping with this sudden change in the organizational strategy, there is one area where it causes, sometimes the information is not very fluidly moving, and it's not very transparent about, where, how do you deal with that change, right? The second is, also a lot of, it's a very large organization, large team, but there are also intrapersonal conflicts that are also there about human to human interaction because you're not meeting in person.

A lot of these interactions are happening over phone calls, or, so communication barriers could be a big challenge. And sometimes it brings its own stress that I'm not able to articulate myself very well, and I'm not that effective in my work.

Codes:

- Code: Flexible Work Culture – Employees manage their schedules within long work windows.

- Code: Virtual Collaboration Challenges – Communication barriers, lack of face-to-face interaction.
- Code: Camera Usage Issue – Employees often don't turn on cameras, reducing engagement.

[10:00] Interviewer: So, what aspects of your job would you say contribute the most to your workplace stress or affect your emotional well-being?

[10:08] P4: Yeah, I think it's a great question. So there are a few areas, especially in my case where I find workplace stresses. One is intrapersonal communication. Definitely when you have got a global team, you have too many people you're dealing with India, Mexico, US, your metric organization in your own organization.

And that too, you are communicating virtually most of the time with all the stakeholders. I think it also brings its own intrapersonal challenges. Something is lost in communication. So that sometimes, not all the time, and when you have a longer relationship with another person, it is easier. But, when there are a lot of changes happening, for example, your boss's boss changes or your boss changes every two years, and then you build the relationship, and when you're, when you're remote, it takes a longer time for you.

[10:55] Then you know sometimes it causes stress for you. So I think I would say intrapersonal challenges brings a lot of stress. The second thing is also the kind of work that you do, the, the, your clients, we work on some of the mission critical systems and obligations. Any failure in meeting those commitments also causes some stress.

We are working for a corporation, which runs for profit, right? So there are quarterly numbers, monthly financial commitments we have, and we have to meet those numbers, although, the organization where I work is very flexible and it's very employee friendly, but definitely that also brings, meeting the commitment also brings a lot of stress. So, I mean, yeah, I mean, these are the areas I would say that causes stress.

Codes:

- Code: Organizational Changes – Unclear communication about company strategy shifts.
- Code: Interpersonal Conflicts – Remote work increases miscommunication.
- Code: High-Stakes Work – Managing mission-critical systems adds pressure.
- Code: Performance Expectations – Quarterly financial goals contribute to stress.

[11:38] Interviewer: OK, that's a very interesting aspect. Have you ever considered leaving your job, or your particular company because of the workplace challenges you face there or any stress that you face there?

[11:50] P4: Not for the reason of stress. I have definitely considered quitting and finding another company. The primary reason why I would, I was looking at that was, one is, financial,

opportunities, better financial prospects. And the second would be, better career growth, in the future.

So those are the reasons I don't think, in fact, when I decide to look for another company, it is on the other side that I want to be very conscious about that, I do not want to go to another organization, which is toxic culture or in a very stressful job.

[12:25] So, I mean, that is on the other side that I check and make sure that, they are also a very equally transparent kind of organization and value people's time and manage the let you manage work life balance. So, no, not, not really. I would, I'm looking at, leaving the job for stress, but for better career opportunities and financial prospects.

Codes:

- Code: Job Retention Factors – No intention to leave due to stress.
- Code: Career Growth & Financial Motivation – Seeks better financial and career advancement opportunities.
- Code: Toxic Work Culture Awareness – Evaluates company culture before switching jobs.

[12:45] Interviewer: OK, that's great. So, the current stress that you do face or any of the conflicts in your workplace that you do have, how do you cope with them personally or do you have any methods you use to relieve them?

[12:56] P4: Yeah, I think it's a great question. I think, my, in my, in my case, I try to make myself busy, with my family commitment or, I start doing, spend time with my family and friends and take away, take a break from, that sometimes it is easier than none because many times what I've seen is, the stress comes from, unknowns.

We start extrapolating the result of that problem, right? In many cases, those things never occur, right? We just start taking stress about, hypothetically extrapolating effects of those causes, right? Or, something has happened and now you start going into the worst of those. And so I try to keep myself a little positive energy, positive thinking, spend time with family friends, look at the better aspects of this, and do whatever best you can do to mitigate the risk or, the stress, what is causing it. That, that sometimes works, you know. Meditate some of them, yeah.

Codes:

- Code: Personal Coping Strategies – Family time, meditation, positive thinking.
- Code: Avoiding Negative Speculation – Stress from hypothetical worst-case scenarios.

[13:55] Interviewer: That's a very nice way. Do you feel like your company has any resources that would help manage stress and are they effective?

[14:05] P4: I think there are many informal ways, we have a helpline. If you are having, facing mental health challenges, you have a helpline to talk to somebody and share your concerns and they can coach, and they can be advisors or a support system. There is a more formal official. We do have some, many informal, your informal, networks within the organization.

Sometimes they also help you, mitigate, talking to them, help you mitigate the stress. But, I don't think there is any, any other, formal way where organizations provide you a stress management system. I mean, we do run some, meditation and by, by employer, employee groups, a few employees have created their own group and they are running.

[14:50] Just for the, for the center, they're running mindfulness session, they're running some, some of these sessions, but we do have, various, series or various, sometimes, company organizes some events and they focus on doing some consultant and talk about, mental health and stress management and some of those things. So there is definitely some amount of work in educating people and that's what's happening. I exactly do not know what the frequency is and a lot of those things, but I do remember I never use them, so I never pay attention to them.

[15:20] Interviewer: OK. So you feel they're not adequately promoted?

[15:24] P4: They are probably, I mean, they are promoted. It's just that, if you're not interested, you will not, but yeah, you can say it is, it is there actually. I, I mean, I don't think there's any concerns I have. Maybe, they should promote it better and provide it to employees when they need it. Maybe you can say there is an opportunity for us to do better there absolutely.

Codes:

- Code: Mental Health Resources – Helpline available, informal employee networks.
- Code: Employee-Led Initiatives – Mindfulness and meditation groups.
- Code: Awareness Gap – Resources exist but are not well-utilized

[15:45] Interviewer: OK. So in this area, would you feel that one or more, one support is better or would you prefer group sessions?

[15:52] P4: My view is that, first, we should acknowledge that there is workplace stress, OK? An employee should also accept that there's workplace stress. Second is that it is definitely manageable. Secondly, it is definitely manageable.

And the third is, I would say, maybe, most cases it is a group. And very rare, in a few cases you might need to do one on one sessions, which is, more counseling kind of session, but, I would still focus on the first two things, acknowledge that there is, there could be work-based stresses. And what are the strategies that are working for some of the people? What can be deployed to easily manage workplace stress? I think those are the things I would say from my experiences.

Codes:

- Code: Acknowledging Workplace Stress – Employees must recognize stress exists.

- Code: Stress is Manageable – Emphasizing that stress can be controlled.
- Code: Preference for Group Sessions – Most cases benefit from group strategies.
- Code: Need for One-on-One Support – Counseling sessions needed in some cases.
- Code: Workplace Stress Strategies – Identifying and deploying effective coping methods.

[16:35] Interviewer: So, how do you think the working out policies in your particular country impact an employee's well-being overall in any company, not just particularly your workplace?

[16:45] P4: Yeah, I think it's a great question. We are in an offshoring business where we do the work for, for a, for, customers from different geographies, right? So, they are, I mean, we have to work in the, we have to work in the time zone, which are sometimes not very comfortable, right?

So if I, like some of my team members, might have to work on call in the night, not me. I might get it as well, but if there is very high, in the last few years, I've never seen any high severity issue come and then I have to wake up in the middle of night. No. But there are people who may be required to do this in this industry, a lot of work is happening.

[17:25] In the very odd hours, right? A lot of people are working in shifts in this industry, and that's a challenge. That's a challenge. So flexibility to work from home definitely helps. I don't think there's any government regulation in India around working hours, right? It also provides a lot more employment opportunities when there is work happening in different time shifts.

But definitely, I think, sometimes it could be stressful if you're working every day, not especially for me, but I'm just talking more in general for the industry. The bigger problem and the challenge I find is a commute in India. In some of the cities where our businesses are located are huge, huge, traffic problem. It creates a lot of stress for employees if they have to commute for a one-way commute of 1 to 2 hours.

[18:10] That's an average commute for many cities in India. So, even coming to the office two days a week could be a challenge. And it is extrapolating every day. So, the stress is also coming from some of these things. Stress is coming to employees on, on their, personal front also. The personal relationship, many such, and it also impacts the work.

Working in the very, working in the very late night hours, commuting a lot, some of these are the real challenges of the current world workforce from a stress perspective.

[18:35] Interviewer: Oh, that's a very interesting take. What would you say are like the time where you have felt truly supported by your employer?

[18:43] P4: When did the employer support me?

[18:48] Interviewer: Like a particular time where you felt, yeah, my employer does care about my well-being and my emotional and mental support.

[18:55] P4: I do not remember from my experiences, but I can talk about the experiences of many of my colleagues, right? There were times when an employee, some family members were admitted to hospital and his limits of insurance coverage were getting over, right?

The employer, it was a part of the policy, right? The employer was quick enough to, providing even the additional coverage for the critical illness. So I think that was a very good gesture and very well supported, very well appreciated by employees and also, it motivated them, the larger chunk of some of these life situations can create a huge amount of stress for employees, right?

[19:35] And you cannot, I mean, not everyone can, increase their insurance coverage to this level out of, hundreds and hundreds, thousands of only 1 may need it, right? So a company providing this kind of facility in such a critical situation, makes employees less stressful in those situations. I also find that providing them enough opportunity to take vacations should also manage and help them.

Other ways to, improve this is, bringing their families to office once in a while, provide a lot more, engaging activity in offices, not just people are coming to office, not just for, for work, but bring people to office for fun as well, family time, network plan and all these activities will, distress them making friends in our workerless because a significant amount of our life, span is spent in offices, and that should also be a place for fun, which will help them, make friends, which will help them network, which will reduce the stress for them. So that, what I would say.

[20:35] Interviewer: All right. Have you ever hesitated to seek emotional support at work?

[20:41] P4: I do not remember. I have not had such a situation recently, but I, if I have, if I need, then I might have hesitated. I mean, I don't know. When I need it, I don't know where to go and how to go. So, it could be challenging finding the help if I, if you really need help. Let me put it this way.

Codes:

- Code: Offshoring Challenges – Employees work across global time zones.
- Code: Employer-Provided Medical Support – Additional insurance coverage for emergencies.
- Code: Hesitation in Seeking Help – Employees unsure of how to access support.

[21:05] Interviewer: So would you say your HR would prioritize an employee's well-being or does it prioritize the company's interests above employee well-being?

[21:13] P4: I think there is a, there's a very fine balance between both of them, right? I think it's a very professional organization and they go by the various norms of the employees well-being is definitely a very, very high priority. Having said that, we are in the industry where people have to work sometimes very, stressfully weeks and months to complete certain timelines, right?

But, I don't think that our employer is not providing support when needed. It is, it is definitely available when you need it. My view is that there should be more education in the employees

about what is stressful. OK. First, first and foremost, what is the stress, except the acknowledge it is there, it's, it's not going back. The most important is how do you manage the distress, and that's where a lot of work needs to happen, especially the country where I'm coming from, the society, the culture I'm coming from, that's where people will not not accept those things. And sometimes, it causes a problem..

[22:15] Interviewer: Right. So would you feel particularly more comfortable in reaching out to HR to anonymous channels? Would that make it easier for you?

[22:22] P4: I don't, yeah, maybe an anonymous channel might be better. See, a lot of times, nowadays I'm seeing stress for most people is coming because of their job security because markets are very volatile. People are losing jobs and they are worried about losing their jobs. So a lot of stress is coming from that, right? So, people may be hesitant in reaching out to HR, especially in our company, the HR, there, there's no direct line HR. Line HR is only available to managers. OK, so for employees, the HR is through their own people manager, and the people manager has access to HR processes and tools and exceptions and all of that.

[23:05] Interviewer: Right. So you, do you feel that the access to HR is not enough to all the employees or equally there for all the employees?

[23:12] P4: Absolutely, absolutely. There is no second thought about it. There is very, very less human HR support available today. And it is reducing it significantly more. So I can say, you can have only one HR person in physical human for, maybe 5 to 10,000 employees.

[23:30] Interviewer: OK. So, have you ever personally reported a workplace issue? If so, how was the experience?

[23:37] P4: I have not reported. I did report one workplace issue, long time ago. My experience was, well, I would say I have escalated or about my own performance evaluation. It was a little complex, so I was given an opportunity to talk to managers, manager who evaluated me. He patiently listened to me and he provided his own justification and yeah, finally, I was OK with it, right? There were other times when another employee of mine has escalated against me about certain things. And IBM has handled it also very well, so I would say with the cases it was OK.

Codes:

- Code: HR Prioritization Balance – Balances employee well-being with company interests.
- Code: Workplace Stress Education – Employees need better stress awareness training.
- Code: Access to HR – Limited HR accessibility for non-managers.
- Code: Anonymous Support Preference – Employees might be more comfortable with anonymous support.

[24:15] Interviewer: OK. All right. So do you feel like HR handles the complaints confidentially and do you trust in the process?

[24:22] P4: I would say more or less I do trust HR and their confidentiality and yeah, I think more or less they are more biased towards employees than managers.

[24:32] Interviewer: OK. Do you feel you would be more likely to report a workplace conflict, anonymously or is it similar to your situation with workplace stress or not?

[24:42] P4: I think workplace conflicts are a very, very complex topic. I don't know. It is better resolved amicability with people than, reporting and seeking HR help. I think that is only required when you, when you reach a point where it becomes, you do not manage it, yeah, then probably being anonymous is the best way.

[25:05] Interviewer: All right. Have you ever witnessed others use any HR conflict resolution tools that have been provided by our workplace?

[25:12] P4: No, I have not found it, because I don't think there's any, I think that will be a great opportunity to provide a tool because most people may not even report. Second thing is even if they report, it is, I, I think it's more a human touch point. But I'm not, I have, I've not heard. It definitely would be helpful.

Codes:

- Code: Workplace Conflict Resolution – Prefers resolving conflicts personally rather than escalating to HR.
- Code: HR Complaint Handling – Generally trustworthy but biased toward employees over managers.
- Code: HR Confidentiality – Believes HR maintains confidentiality.
- Code: Lack of HR Tools – No widely used digital tools for conflict resolution.

[25:32] Interviewer: Would you feel on a scale of 1 being most uncomfortable and 10 being most comfortable, would you feel comfortable using an AI powered emotional support tool?

[25:42] P4: Yeah, it could be a great idea. It could be, it could be a pretty good solution, yeah, absolutely. I think, it's a pretty good way of looking at it because I, that's what I was mentioning, when you are in stress, you need to talk to somebody, right? Or you need somebody to bounce off your idea and tell him to end your frustration and what you, what you should do. And so I think it will be a great idea.

[26:05] Interviewer: So, on a scale of 1 to 10, what would your rate be? And a portal support tool powered by air.

[26:12] P4: I would say it's pretty high. I would say 9 or 10. I mean, I have not thought about that, but it's, it's really, it's a great tool because my view is that the problem is not in the solution. The problem is in the first place when the problem, when there's a stress, acknowledges the stress.

And mitigating the distressful situation, that's where those are the very, very important things. What is causing the stress and what will be the end result of this stress. In between, this point is where you know a lot of the problems are happening. So anyway, I think that that's what I, but yeah, I think it's a great idea. And, the beauty of this idea is that, it the.

[26:50] The larger corporations have a huge support system and they can invest money in all of this, but the smaller organization may not have, financial muscle power to deploy these kinds of things, right? So for them, these technology enabled options would be a very cost effective solution for them. They will have, they cannot afford an HR commitment in this area, but definitely they can get a cheaper technology provided solution for mental well-being or help for their students. I think it could be a good starting point.

But at the same time, we also need to understand that the chat board is working with humans, right? So it has to have, it has to be highly rated and, it should be trained on the data which is really a very highly sophisticated time that can be used in the situation. So, that's what I would say, but it's a great idea.

[27:40] Interviewer: So how would you feel about air handling sensitive workplace concerns and data, in such areas?

[27:47] P4: I think it will be very unbiased. It will be taking decisions based on the facts. It could be a first level of conflict resolution tool. It could be acting as a tool to manage your stress, mental well-being, and, also can be used for conflict resolution situations and can provide you help.

[28:05] Interviewer: So, would you prefer AI or chatbot conflict resolution over HR forms?

[28:10] P4: Definitely, I think because HR it's a very sometime I'll tell you the frustration not only comes from humans, frustration also comes from, it takes a very, very long cycle to reach a human and, get the support and all of that, right? It can take and when you're in a stressful situation, you want now, you want immediate. So that's why I think I needed somebody to talk to at night in the middle of the night, yeah, again.

[28:40] Interviewer: So, one last thing, if you could change one thing about your workplace emotional support, and mental well-being, resources provided by your company, what would it be?

[28:50] P4: Yeah, I think, one is educating more people about stress, and it's OK to stress, it's more important to manage them, acknowledge them. The second is, create a lot of networking community opportunities so that people can talk to them, or, I mean, if nothing is there, there should be a very easy way for them to reach out to somebody. Either a board or a health center to get resolution to their problems.

Codes:

- Code: AI as a Support Tool – Finds the idea of AI-powered emotional support valuable.

- Code: Immediate Response Need – AI provides instant support, unlike HR's slow response.
- Code: AI vs Human HR – Prefers AI for conflict resolution in urgent situations.
- Code: AI for Small Businesses – Cost-effective for companies lacking dedicated HR teams.
- Code: AI Limitations – Requires sophisticated training and unbiased data handling.
- Code: Stress Education – Promote awareness that stress exists and is manageable.
- Code: Community Building – Encourage employee networking and informal support systems.
- Code: Easy Access to Support – HR or AI-based support should be easily reachable.

[29:15] Interviewer: OK. Thank you so much for your time. Do you have any additional thoughts or suggestions you would like to provide?

[29:22] P4: Not really. I think I did cover a lot of my thoughts in my conversation. I think it's a great idea. I love the technology part of it, and, the reason is that it gives me an immediate response and support with my own, interface, could be a digital, chatbot app or a phone call, one of these three, and sometimes it may not be just textual conversation, if there's a human interaction or a voice-based support is also there in this chatbot, I think that will make it more, convenient.

[29:55] Interviewer: Great. Thank you so much for all your input, and for your time, and I hope you have a great rest of the day. Thank you.

[30:02] P4: Thank you so much. I appreciate having me on, for your, for your questions. All the best with your project.

[30:10] Interviewer: Yeah. Thank you so much.

Codes:

- Code: Tech-Driven Support – Prefers digital interfaces (chatbots, apps, voice support).
- Code: Holistic Well-Being Approach – Workplaces should integrate fun and social activities for stress reduction.