

Research Paper

From Fatigue to Friction: A Case Study Exploring the Negative Impact of Morning Meetings in a Third-Tier Institutional Culture

Muhammad Haseeb Shakil

*Lahore Business School, Faculty of Management Sciences,
The University of Lahore, Raiwind Road, Lahore, Pakistan*

*Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration,
COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Lahore, Pakistan*

Jaffar Mahmood Butt and Rana Nadir Idrees

*Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration
COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Lahore, Pakistan*

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Abstract: Organizational teams are set for the day during morning meetings, which are conducted universally across institutions for their claimed benefits. Despite their growing popularity, the efficacy of these meetings is continually being challenged, especially in bureaucratic institutional settings where there is employee burnout, disinterest, and reduced productivity. This case study illustrates the challenges associated with morning meetings in third-tier institutions using interview data from 20 employees in different sectors, observational data, and existing literature concerning the topic. A qualitative approach was chosen to capture the nuanced emotional, cognitive, and workflow-related experiences of employees, which quantitative methods may overlook, thereby directly addressing the research questions. This study uniquely identifies the cognitive and emotional toll of morning meetings in bureaucratic, low-autonomy workplaces, a gap overlooked in prior research. Findings indicate that morning meetings, when inadequately designed, lead to cognitive interruptions, adherence-related workflows, and excessive psychosomatic strain on employees. Participants, as reported, displayed signs of apathy, with a considerable number shifting to passive engagement or other forms of work as coping strategies. In addition, this study documents the effects of toxic domination. Participants reported experiencing disempowering criticism and vertical dominance, which made the meetings further counterproductive and demoralizing. Employees, on the other hand, expressed a strong preference for asynchronous communication tools that allow flexibility. The study makes recommendations to transforming meeting policy through inclusive leadership and attending to the health of employees through supportive measures. Addressing this set of needs can enable organisations to transform meetings from a source of problematic behaviours to enduring, friction-free, productive practices.

*Correspondence: Muhammad Haseeb Shakil, COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Pakistan. Email: malikhaseeb246@gmail.com

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Introduction

As reported by Allen et al. (2012), morning meetings have received significant attention as an integral part of the organisational culture, purported to aid in team alignment, strategizing, communication, and social interaction. Referencing the classical management theory, this practice is designed to streamline prioritization, objective setting, and instil a sense of identity within the organization's framework (Almangoush et al., 2024). Unfortunately, due to the poor practicality of undertaking morning meetings, especially in hierarchical and rigid institutions often referred to as third-tier organizations, the outcomes often differ from the intended results (Hernandez, 2024). For this study, we define third-tier institutions as lower-resourced, highly procedural public and private organizations characterised by rigid hierarchies, limited job autonomy, and strong compliance norms (i.e., typical features of a bureaucratic organization). These institutions commonly enforce mandatory attendance and standardized routines that constrain individual scheduling flexibility, which in turn amplifies the productivity cost of ill-timed synchronous meetings (Brown, 2023). Findings suggest that employees report commencing their workdays chained to monotonous conversations, cyclical talk, and severe mental fatigue that severely limits their capacity to engage with any real work (Rogelberg et al., 2006). The gap between reality and expectation poses a dilemma regarding the usefulness of morning meetings and what repercussions, if any, they have for organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.

The existing studies on workplace meetings are quite diverse. Some scholars, for example, focused on meetings as the main tools for coordination and decision-making within entities (Mintzberg, 2010). Others have studied the more psychological dimensions of the meetings, like the negative impact, both emotional and cognitive, of repetitive meetings or meetings without structure (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2016). Scholars have highlighted the open observation of “flow” states, as disjointed as compulsory morning meetings are, set off deep work that constituents knowledge-intensive work (Dale & Burrell, 2015), which in turn impacts tasks that foster value creation (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Employees tend to experience a recovery lag, struggling to focus and needing substantial time to redirect attention

post-meeting (Meinecke & Handke, 2023). Compounding these symptoms is emotional distress with the never-ending anticipation of the morning meetings, which junior staff do not seem to enjoy because the ready-made, routinized sleep-wake cadence frequently breeds stress and sleep issues, especially for remote workers, who have minimal control over their timetable (Bailey & Konstan, 2006; Eugene, 2023).

The study examined third-tier institutions, where this issue becomes exceedingly worse when combined with the lack of action within the organizational structures. In these institutions, employees complain about morning meetings deteriorating into window-dressing exercises—boring, unproductive, and a waste of time (Gottschalk & Hamerton, 2024). These meetings are often scheduled at hours that are not compatible with the natural cycles of individual productivity and are therefore suboptimal for work (Taras et al., 2024). Even more worrying, toxic leadership behaviours, including open ridicule, overstepping of bounds, and claiming others' work, turn meetings into episodes of turmoil that dissociate people from the true purpose, undermining the foundation of trust and cooperation. Based on four years of experience in such an institution, the authors directly observed instances where senior staff dismissals contributed to junior employees' feelings of mortification and contempt, consistent with participants' accounts and prior studies on vertical dominance (Guesnet, 2025).

With this context in mind, this study aims to answer the following two guiding questions: (1) What are the effects of morning meetings in third-tier institutions on employees' productivity, cognitive load, and emotional status? (2) What other options can organizations use to alleviate or avoid the scenarios described? The study reveals key themes through qualitative interviews with 20 employees and observations of meeting interactions: cognitive overload, chronic disengagement, workflow interruption, and preferences for asynchronous collaboration. This is in line with emerging proposals for focus periods where meetings are eliminated, alongside strict agendas and flexible check-in methods such as recorded briefings.

This research goes beyond the scope of third-tier institutions, as it provides important insights for organizations facing meeting fatigue. Institutions can reclaim morning meetings as alignment sessions rather than being counterproductive, by restructuring meetings, showing empathy and understanding to employee input. This study seeks to address the lack of compassion in organizational communications by using evidence on the disparities between workplace productivity ideals and actual experiences, in its attempt to resolve the ongoing debate concerning work efficacy.

Literature Review

The literature on workplace meetings suggests a broad spectrum of views regarding their efficacy. Many scholars argue that meetings, especially in the morning, serve as

an essential tool for organizational coordination. However, recent studies indicate that excessive meetings, particularly early in the workday, lead to cognitive overload, reduced motivation, and productivity losses. As noted by Mintzberg (2010), interaction is one of the basic managerial activities that enables leaders to relay objectives and expectations through proper communication. Allen et al. (2012) also explained that meetings are meant to facilitate and structure collaboration as well as decision making. On the contrary, having too many poorly planned meetings can be counterproductive. Studies show that too many meetings can stifle deep work, leading to mental exhaustion (Sundari & Gangalapudi, 2025). Employees report feeling exhausted even before commencing their work, which greatly cripples their productivity.

Sundari and Gangalapudi (2005) contended that unscheduled meetings account for a large percentage of relative work hours without tangible results. Morning meetings intended to “kickstart” the day do the opposite by postponing the start of actual work (Beedham, 2022). Disengaged employees, because of poorly executed meetings, do not adhere to organizational standards. According to Pennington and McComas (2017), unproductive meetings are viewed as unwelcome distractions but paradoxically lead to a radical decline in workplace satisfaction. Instead of enhancing focus, perhaps the overriding of personal work rhythms caused by scheduled morning meetings leads to task-switching inefficiency. Constant interruptions make it impossible for someone to reach deep states of work like flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly, 1990). Additionally, Sundari and Gangalapudi (2025) highlighted the role of frequent meetings at workplaces in contributing to stress. Employees are compelled to be active participants and often suffer chronic levels of anxiety as well as burnout in the long run.

The Role and Rationale of Morning Meetings

The classic organizational theory has highlighted the importance of morning meetings as a synchronizing tool for the team’s focus on their goal and team building (Mintzberg, 1973). While classic management texts (e.g., Mintzberg) and earlier empirical work (Allen et al., 2012) explain the coordinating function of routine meetings, recent syntheses show a more nuanced picture: meeting format (in-person, virtual, hybrid), meeting load, and organizational context strongly moderate meeting costs and benefits (Handke et al., 2024). Large recent reviews and meta-analyses of remote and hybrid work highlight that virtual/hybrid meeting structures can both reduce travel and scheduling friction but also increase “meeting load” and boundary blurring, with measurable effects on well-being and productivity when not managed carefully (Gajendran et al., 2024). These newer findings require us to treat meeting frequency and format as contingent variables, rather than universally beneficial rituals.

As with most meetings, it is common understanding that morning meetings serve as a ritualistic warm-up that allows teams to orient their minds, define what is expected of them, and reaffirm their collective commitment to the mutual objectives. Allen et al. (2012) agreed that in complex organizational ecosystems, formalized meetings are integral for effective alignment and decisions to be made. Still, in the real world, distinct theoretical frameworks do not seem to work. For low autonomy or highly bureaucratic settings like third-tier institutions, morning meetings tend to function as superficial log-in/out exercises rather than productivity-enhancing activities. Some research scholars have expressed dissatisfaction regarding how uneventful, futile, and time-wasting these meetings are, which is quite provocative, considering their objectives.

Cognitive Overload and Deep Work Disruption

Contemporary workplace studies focus on “deep work,” which is the type of productivity necessary for information-enabled activities (Jones & Hyde, 2019). Csikszentmihalyi’s flow model identified several prerequisites for deep, absorbed work: clear goals, immediate feedback, a balance between challenge and skill, and critically-sustained uninterrupted attention. Bureaucratic morning meetings commonly violate these prerequisites in two ways. First, mandatory, ritualized meetings remove workers’ autonomy over when to schedule focused work, so employees cannot align tasks to their personal high-focus windows (Bartholomeyczik et al., 2023). Second, meetings introduce task switching and social evaluation (especially in hierarchical settings), fragmenting attention and reducing the probability of re-entering flow after the meeting ends.

Recent studies on flow at work and meeting dynamics confirms that interruptions and low-autonomy contexts substantially reduce flow incidence and task performance, particularly in knowledge-intensive roles (Végh et al., 2025). There is also reports of increase of fatigue, mental fragmentation, and enervation among employees with overly strenuous or unproductive meetings (Todd, 2024). Another study found that most employees who attend morning meetings do not get into a work focus, for quite some time after they have finished a meeting, commonly described in literature as a recovery lag (Kreamer & Rogelberg, 2024). Some studies described the meetings as a “jolt,” which, which although is not considered a full switch to work, helps them transition into a pre-work state, which lowers productivity and creates an accumulation of cognitive fatigue (Quinn et al., 2025).

Employee Engagement and Meeting Structure

While meetings, in moderation, can theoretically increase engagement, evidence shows the opposite is true when it lacks inclusivity (Woods et al., 2024). McComas

et al. (2017) noted that chronic, redundant structured meetings without any perceived value often leads to disengagement. Employees tend to “zone out”, do side tasks, or engage in silent participation (Saraiva & Nogueiro, 2025). A case study found that most employees expressed feeling “stuck” in meetings where they were neither asked for their input nor acknowledged (Twemlow et al., 2023). The rigid framework of mandatory attendance, particularly for junior staff members, obliterated morale and autonomy. Intention versus execution here strengthens the notion that the psychological cost of participation far exceeds the collaborative value in such contexts (Abbas et al., 2024).

Emotional and Physiological Toll

Morning meetings, apart from their cognitive implications, impact emotionally and physically, which drains employees (Johnson & Mabry, 2022). Excessive meetings also contribute to workplace stress and burnout (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Morning meetings set off a chain reaction that impacts sleep cycles, personal routines, and work-life balance. This results in feelings of dread akin to the Clockwork Orange syndrome (Sriram & Rajini, 2024). For remote workers in particular, morning meetings pose a scheduling challenge with time zones and caregiving responsibilities. Junior staff who could not refuse are forced to accept a barrage of unsolicited calendar appointments (Luebstorff et al., 2023). Every unmeetable deadline increases stress vulnerability. Some studies describe attitude of workers that readily correlates with disengagement and attrition, both known symptoms of feeling helpless. The mental load for meetings followed by post-meeting fatigue rolls into a lose-lose cycle of burnout, where all inputs are diminished (Archambault et al., 2022).

Alternatives to Traditional Morning Meetings

An expanding segment of literature endorses asynchronous forms of communication as a valid, and often better, option (Belt & Lowenthal, 2023) to morning meetings. Productivity tools such as Slack, Trello, and Microsoft Teams are equipped with features that allow for updates to be posted and accessed at any time, even if team members are not present simultaneously (Burmistrova, 2024). Research indicates that such platforms, when strategically deployed, increase transparency, inclusiveness, and protect deep work time (Hoque et al., 2025; Shakil, Hassan, et al., 2024). Employees benefit from enhanced scheduling flexibility and can conserve cognitive resources for core tasks. Reduced cognitive load associated with strict scheduling and public speaking enhances overall well-being (Uhlig et al., 2023). Considering these insights, organizational leaders need to think more deeply about the actual utility of meetings. Thus, meetings, as a default form of organizational communication, should readily be considered a source of exhaustion.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative, exploratory case study methodology grounded in both personal experience and direct observations of employee behaviour in response to morning meetings (Makri & Neely, 2021; Shakil, Mukarram, et al., 2024). The research design was chosen to capture the nuanced emotional, psychological, and productivity-related impacts that are often overlooked in traditional quantitative evaluations of workplace practices (Lehmann, 2010). This approach emphasizes lived experiences, making it particularly suited to investigating how institutional norms, like mandatory morning meetings, affect employee well-being and organizational efficiency.

Sample and Data Collection

A total of 20 employees across various departments and levels of seniority were interviewed (Malterud et al., 2016). Participants were selected from industries where daily morning meetings are standard practice, including education, healthcare administration, customer service, and public sector institutions. The interviews focused on participants' feelings before, during, and after morning meetings, their perceived value of the meetings, and any coping mechanisms they employed. Questions were open-ended to allow for rich, descriptive responses and to encourage participants to share personal anecdotes.

Moreover, observational data were gathered from attending live morning meetings over four weeks. Notes were taken on participant engagement levels, meeting duration, adherence to agenda, and visible signs of fatigue or disengagement (e.g., multitasking, lack of participation, or expressions of frustration). Both in-person and remote meetings were observed to compare contextual differences. Interviews continued until thematic saturation was reached, whereby no new themes or insights emerged from additional interviews (Malterud et al., 2016). While the sample size limits the statistical generalizability of the findings, it was deemed sufficient for in-depth qualitative exploration.

Participant Demographics

Participants included 12 female and 8 male employees, aged between 25 and 54, with varying job roles from administrative assistants to department heads. Special attention was paid to representing both junior and senior staff, as well as remote and in-office employees, to capture a diverse range of perspectives. All participants were informed of the study's purpose and gave verbal or written consent. Data were anonymized to protect privacy, and pseudonyms were used in all written references. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection,

and ethical principles of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity were strictly upheld.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to process interview transcripts, observational notes, and journal entries. Data was coded to identify recurring patterns and categorized into major themes such as cognitive fatigue, emotional stress, disengagement, disruption of workflow, and preference for alternative communication tools. Triangulation of data sources (interviews, observation, and journaling) ensured that insights were well-rounded and credible. Further, to mitigate researcher bias stemming from the authors’ personal experiences in similar institutional settings, two researchers independently coded all transcripts and compared results to reach consensus. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion, and coding decisions were documented to ensure transparency.

Findings

Key findings from the study indicate that employees reported feeling mentally exhausted after morning meetings, making it challenging to focus on their primary tasks. Many employees admitted to zoning out during meetings, indicating a lack of engagement and perceived irrelevance of discussions. Participants frequently cite difficulty in resuming their work after meetings, leading to inefficiencies and deadline pressures. Employees expressed a strong preference for email updates, digital task boards, and recorded briefings instead of daily morning meetings. Repeated exposure to morning meetings contributed to stress and burnout, negatively impacting job satisfaction and retention rates.

Table 1. Thematic analysis results

Theme	Key Findings	Participant Quote/Evidence
Cognitive Overload & Deep Work Disruption	Morning meetings disrupt “flow” states, causing cognitive fatigue and prolonged recovery time. Employees struggled to refocus post-meeting, reducing productivity	“Meetings feel like a jolt—I can’t focus for hours after.” (Participant 3, Junior Staff) “It takes me 30 minutes just to get back to my task.” (Participant 12, Remote Employee)
Disengagement & Passive Participation	Employees perceived meetings as irrelevant, leading to zoning out or multitasking. Mandatory attendance fosters resentment, especially among junior staff.	“I just mute myself and work on emails. My presence adds no value.” (Participant 8, Mid-Level) “Meetings are performative—no one listens.” (Participant 15, Senior Staff)

Table 1. (cont)

Theme	Key Findings	Participant Quote/Evidence
Workflow Disruption	Morning meetings forced employees into reactive modes, delaying high-priority tasks. Deep work was compromised due to rigid scheduling.	<i>“I’d rather start my day coding, but meetings derail my rhythm.”</i> (Participant 5, Tech Role) <i>“Deadlines suffer because meetings eat up prime hours.”</i> (Participant 18, Admin)
Emotional/Physiological Toll	Anticipation of meetings caused stress, sleep disruption, and dread. Remote employees faced time-zone conflicts, while juniors felt powerless to decline.	<i>“I wake up anxious, skipping breakfast to ‘prepare.’”</i> (Participant 7, Junior) <i>“Time-zone clashes make meetings exhausting.”</i> (Participant 11, Remote)
Preference for Asynchronous Alternatives	Employees overwhelmingly favoured digital tools (Slack, Trello) or recorded updates to replace synchronous meetings. Weekly briefings were preferred over daily check-ins.	<i>“A 5-minute recorded update would save us all.”</i> (Participant 4, Senior) <i>“Slack threads are more efficient than live discussions.”</i> (Participant 19, Remote)

Table 2. Participant counts per theme

Theme	No. of Participants (n=20)	% of Sample
Cognitive Overload & Flow Disruption	17	85%
Disengagement & Passive Participation	15	75%
Workflow Disruption	14	70%
Emotional/Physiological Toll	16	80%
Preference for Asynchronous Tools	18	90%

Cognitive Overload & Deep Work Disruption

In hierarchical settings, mandatory morning attendance prevents employees from selecting their deep-work windows. Empirical evidence shows that meeting scheduling cadences alter anticipatory affect and daily outcomes, which aligns with our participants’ admissions (Kreamer & Rogelberg, 2024). Participants consistently reported that morning meetings fragmented their focus, while Csikszentmihalyi’s theory describes general conditions for flow. Our findings extend this by quantifying the disproportionate impact on junior staff, who experienced an average of 45 minutes longer recovery lag compared to seniors. The “recovery lag” described by employees (e.g., Participants 3, 12) underscores the hidden productivity cost of

meetings, as cognitive switching delays deep work. This theme highlights a critical mismatch between institutional rituals and individual work rhythms.

Disengagement & Passive Participation

The performative nature of meetings (Participant 15) and widespread multitasking (Participant 8) reveal a culture of disengagement. Junior staff felt coerced into attendance without meaningful contribution, exacerbating feelings of marginalization. This echoes McComas et al.'s (2017) findings on redundant meetings breeding apathy.

Workflow Disruption

Employees emphasized that morning meetings derailed their most productive hours (Participant 5, 18), forcing reactive work modes. The rigidity of institutional schedules clashed with tasks requiring uninterrupted focus, validating Rogelberg et al.'s (2006) research on meeting inefficiencies.

Emotional/Physiological Toll

Stress narratives (Participant 7, 11) illustrate how meetings extend beyond work hours, affecting personal well-being. Remote employees and juniors bore disproportionate burdens, reflecting systemic inequities in meeting policies. According to Bailey and Konstan (2006), the link between meetings and burnout was evident in their participants' descriptions of chronic anxiety. Similarly, this study revealed that junior staff reported 3× more stress from public criticism than senior staff (9 juniors vs. 3 seniors). Juniors described higher anxiety before meetings and a lower sense of autonomy (7 of 8 juniors reported feeling unable to decline invitations vs. 2 of 12 seniors). In contrast, senior staff were more likely to frame meetings as inefficient rather than threatening (10 of 12 seniors), focusing on wasted time rather than personal stress.

Preference for Asynchronous Alternatives

The unanimous support for the use of digital tools by 18 of 20 participants (90%) expressed a preference for digital tools, indicating a shift towards more flexible forms of communication. The suggestions that participants provided, such as through recorded updates and weekly syncs, adheres to the model framework of synchronicity suggested to maximize autonomy and productivity, emphasising timeliness and efficiency.

Discussion

The study's findings reveal that morning meetings in third-tier institutions significantly disrupt employees' ability to engage in "deep work," a concept central to Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Flow Theory. Participants reported that post-meeting "recovery lag" often consumed 30 minutes or more, delaying task initiation and reducing peak productivity. This aligns with Bailey and Konstan's (2006) interruption cost model, which explains how cognitive switching imposes measurable time and focus penalties. Furthermore, the disengagement reported—such as zoning out or multitasking—mirrors McComas et al.'s (2017) theory of meeting redundancy, which holds that low-value meetings erode morale by failing to offer meaningful participation opportunities.

The emotional and physiological toll observed, including anticipatory stress and disrupted sleep cycles, resonates with Edú-Valsania et al.'s (2022) burnout framework, highlighting the cumulative effect of chronic workplace strain. These patterns collectively suggest that the intended synchronizing function of morning meetings, as envisioned in the classical management theory (Mintzberg, 1973), is undermined in rigid institutional cultures where autonomy is low and leadership styles are authoritarian. The preference for asynchronous tools expressed by the study participants supports Belt and Lowenthal's (2023) argument that digital, flexible communication structures better preserve cognitive resources and employee well-being.

Based on the authors' self-evaluation, after spending four years in a third-tier institution, their experience with the morning meetings was quite demotivating due to the conduct of some senior staff, such as the Deputy Director and the Manager. Despite the support that was consistently demonstrated and the collegial atmosphere that was cultivated, the efforts of the Deputy Director and Manager undermined the actual goals of the meetings.

Instead of providing cohesion and motivation, most morning meetings turned out to be sources of stress and demotivation. The Deputy Director and Manager routinely overstepped subordinate boundaries. They disregarded the organizational hierarchy and intervened in areas that were not their business at all, from positions too high in the hierarchy to interfere constructively. The Deputy Director and Manager's tone often tended to be condescending and arguably crossed into criticism devoid of professional courtesy, leading to junior colleagues feeling undermined and belittled.

For them, this reinforces how decisive leadership influences the culture within a specific meeting. The abuse of authority by senior staff is extremely dangerous in many ways. As trust and willing collaboration begin to decrease, productivity reduces unpredictably. It also reinforces the belief that morning meetings—where one is balanced and approached with concern, framework, and courtesy—have

meaningful outcomes. However, without responsibility for chaotic conduct, it ceases to be productive, as it was in this case.

A clearly defined agenda, set time, enforced professionalism, and a more holistic approach would have alleviated these issues. Most importantly, leaders need to understand that their conduct shapes the behaviour of the entire company. These reflections still echo in my head, especially noting how an organization's culture can support or restrict its constituents.

Conclusion and Implications

The study highlights the challenge that traditional morning meetings pose to third-tier institutions. These meetings add to pre-existing cognitive fatigue, lower the employees' morale, and interrupt their workflow. Although meetings are meant to help align and unite teams, it is now common to find employees being disengaged, over-stressed, or unproductively stressed because of the way meetings are held. The outcomes also depict how employees' expectations regarding the potential benefits of morning meetings are disappointing, as employees prefer asynchronous meetings during which uninterrupted work can be accomplished.

It is also noteworthy that personal observations show how feedback and micromanagement within the meeting context can change employees' perception of these interactions from empowerment to disempowerment as well as erode the trust and the culture of the institution. The combination of these insights strongly suggests that practitioners should rethink, with more consideration structure, compassion, and responsibility, the order and purpose of these meetings to protect and improve their employees' microsystems.

Policy Implications

There are a number of recommendations that can be considered.

1. To start, limit morning meetings to 15–30 minutes with a clear agenda and optimal time constraints to reduce intrusions into deep work.
2. Next, empower employees by replacing non-essential meetings with digital platforms (Slack, Trello) or recorded updates to give employees control over their time.
3. Third, allow employees to focus on prolonged periods by setting blocks of uninterrupted time for high-priority tasks to relieve the burden of cognitive switching costs.
4. Fourth, train leaders to administer respectful and professional meetings free from overreach, where all participants, whether junior or senior, have their perspectives acknowledged.

5. Fifth, ensure practices are aligned with the teams by incorporating employee feedback to refine meeting strategies and alleviate identified pain points.
6. Sixth, restore trust and safety psychologically by holding individuals accountable for harmful behaviour, such as public criticism and credit-taking.
7. Lastly, adjust for the stress meetings put on employees and implement flexible scheduling policies to relieve stress and emotional burden.

Limitations

Despite the insights this research offers about the negative consequences of morning meetings, some limitations must also be considered. To begin with, the research's qualitative approach, although multifaceted, lacking in precision detail, and context, makes it difficult to apply the outcome to other organizational settings. Furthermore, the concentration on third-tier institutions without including dynamic organizations where cultures are more open, rather than hierarchical and bureaucratic may bias results because those findings would likely differ in more agile or decentralized workplaces.

The sample size of 20 participants, while diverse, may not be representative of a cross-section of all the demographic constituents of the workforce. Moreover, the study's reliance on self-reporting is problematic due to the biases associated with perception and memory of the respondents. And finally, the authors' illustrations are increasingly more impressionistic, and therefore, anecdotal evidence is inherently subjective and does not reflect the institutional reality.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should expand on these findings through mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative depth with quantitative surveys to measure the prevalence and severity of meeting-related stressors across industries. Longitudinal studies could track how changes in meeting structures (e.g., shorter durations, asynchronous alternatives) affect productivity and well-being over time. Comparative analyses between hierarchical and flat organizations would help identify how power dynamics influence meeting efficacy. Additionally, exploring the role of leadership training in mitigating toxic meeting behaviours could yield actionable strategies for cultural reform.

Train leaders to be inclusive and respectful in meetings by implementing structured workshops covering active listening, agenda discipline, constructive feedback, and conflict de-escalation. Finally, interdisciplinary collaborations with psychologists or neuroscientists could deepen understanding of the cognitive costs associated with meeting fatigue, informing evidence-based policies. By addressing

these gaps, future studies can refine the best practices for meetings that balance alignment with employee autonomy and mental health.

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