

LSPU's Worksite Wellness Program and Its Effect on the Employees' Health Status

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the status of LSPU's Worksite Wellness Program and Its Impact on Employees' Health Status. It also attempted to evaluate the effect of worksite wellness program to the employees of LSPU. Descriptive method using simple statistical measures were used. Results of the study showed that wellness programs are important interventions to protect and promote employee's health. It helps reduce direct and indirect health care costs, absenteeism, and avoid illness or injury. Likewise, improve the quality of work life and morale. This tool introduces key concepts and strategic tips for planning workplace-based wellness programs rather than individual health promotion events, while highlighting organizational change and development theories central to introduce and implement effective proactive worksite wellness programs. Simple statistical measures such as frequency counts, percentages and mean were used. Majority of LSPU-SCC employees preferred dance exercise in particular Sumba followed with the use of fitness exercising equipment. Among the best practices which were given a remark of "Strongly Agree" are as follows: the program establishes all inclusive approach to total health, flexible scheduling, effective communication, and existence of health professionals. Overall observation by LSPU employees suggest that wellness program has a positive effect on their health.

Keywords: worksite wellness programs, benefits, best practices, participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

As saying goes, happy employees are more dynamic, productive, and dedicated, hence, to be happy, there is a need to address the problem of an unhealthy workforce. One way to address such is to have a program that focused on disease prevention and health promotion strategies. A worksite wellness programs, to say.

A worksite wellness is any workplace where health promotion activity are designed to support healthy behaviour, and better human being. Worksite wellness programs have been known to have positive impacts on productivity, absenteeism, and reduction in health care costs. Many companies have adopted it to encourage their employee's to take appropriate measures that lead to healthier lifestyles and provide early detection and intervention for chronic illnesses.

Worksite wellness programs play a vital role in the prevention of major shared risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke. Engaging employees to participate in different wellness programs must be given due emphasis. Employers need to come out with a tangible program to overcome these barriers and to reap the potential benefits of a workplace wellness program. According to Bate, (2006), one of the effective means to increase participation in worksite wellness programs is to discover the employee's motivational factors such as incentives like cash rewards, redeemable point rewards, reduced premiums, and time-off from work. Employers are known to have used incentives to encourage participation in wellness programs with evidence to date suggesting that incentives most likely have a positive effect on increasing participation rate and improving health behaviors, but that these effects only last as long as the incentive continues. Hemming (2013), indicated that participating in an organized worksite wellness program have positive effects on physical activity, weight loss, and dietary behaviors. In addition, it may lead to secondary improvements in lifestyles of workers and their families outside of the worksite. This is supported by Ray, Allison, and Steven (2011), who were participants of workplace wellness programs, participating in wellness program showed improvement in healthy behaviors such as physical activity, adequate nutrition, quality sleep, and regular use of seat belts. Life satisfaction and improved health status were also increased.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the status of LSPU's Worksite Wellness Program and Its Impact on Employees' Health Status.

1. Determine the number of participants when grouped according to profile-age and sex
2. Determine the type of worksite wellness program do employees prefer
3. Determine the effect of wellness program on the health of the participants
4. Identify specific best practices that contribute to the success of the wellness program

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Engelman (2012) determined that many of the conditions impacting workers were preventable and required increased amounts of education, screening, encouragement, and benefits to help understand how these affected the quality of their lives. These shifts gained prominence during the 1990s from increased research about the importance of prevention and the advantages can provide employers in the marketplace.

Person, A., Colby, S., Bulova, J., & Eubanks, J. (2010), on the other hand cited that insufficient incentives, inconvenient locations, time limitations, scheduling, marketing, and lack of interest were all barriers to participation in health programs. However, program planning that addressed the identified barriers could facilitate higher participation in future worksite wellness opportunities. This likewise was supported by Guerin (2014), that all health-contingent programs are expected to meet these requirements to avoid violating the discrimination rules: among of which are: (1) eligible employees must qualify for the reward at least once a year, (2) the award should not exceed 30% of the total cost of employee-only coverage under the employer's health-care plan and should not exceed 50% for smoking cessation programs, and when dependents participate, they should be offered a reward based on the cost of family coverage, (3) the programs offer full rewards and also offers programs to enhance health or prevent disease to all similarly situated employees, and (4) all available alternatives are exposed in wellness program materials.

The study of Ballard (2012) was focused on identifying variables that affected participation in a wellness program in a large urban healthcare system. The cross-sectional study, conducted at a large healthcare organization, included 12,197 participants that were full and part time employees of the healthcare system. In both the participating and nonparticipating groups, the variables studied include gender, shifts, age, and worksite.

Related studies above were cited as it has bearing in the present study as it deals about how to engage employees to participate in the wellness program which is one of the considered best practices.

The study which concerns "Employee attitudes toward participation in a work site-based health and wellness clinic" by Bright, D., Terrell, S., Rush, M., Kroustos, K., Stockert, A., Swanson, S., & DiPietro, N. (2012) showed and was concluded that the majority of respondents indicated a desire to participate in a work site-based health and wellness clinic, regardless of baseline health status or medication use. These data provide insight into the needs and preferences of participants in work site wellness programs and shows the value of a needs assessment.

O'Boyle and Harter (2014), Worksite wellness programs become more beneficial with appropriate best practices. Creating a worksite wellness program without appropriate best practices provides no guarantee on improving employees' well-being. Practices that increase the workers' awareness about the program and motivate them to use these programs are important to the success of the program. Miller(2013) in his study mentioned that appropriate best practices for worksite wellness programs are associated with improvements in reducing medical cost trends and upgrading WORKSITE WELLNESS PROGRAM 64 employee health status With the shift to proactive chronic disease management and prevention, all employers should be motivated to create worksite wellness programs that will have a significant impact on employees, employers, and the nation's economy.

Riedel ,Lynch, BasseHymel, & Peterson (2001) in their study stated that the most common reasons given for establishing worksite health promotion interventions are to attract and retain good employees, keep workers healthy, improve employee morale, improve employee productivity, and contain employee health care costs.

Chenoweth (2011) Common shortcomings include poor participation levels, lack of appropriate incentives, lack of options for program delivery, and lack of tailoring programs to meet the needs and wants of a diverse workforce.

According to Cox (2003), engaging employees in positive lifestyle behaviors is the first step toward making workplace wellness programs successful for employers. Successful worksite health promotion programs depend on the employees' readiness to participate. Therefore, it is important to collect employees' opinions of perceived barriers and incentives for participating in the programs in order to make programs appropriate and appealing for participation for each employee population.

Goetzel, Guindon, Turshen, and Ozminkowski (2001) have suggested that more than half of employers' health and productivity-related expenses exist in more indirect ways such as absenteeism from work and presenteeism at work. Although these costs are not direct medical costs they are most often a result of related medical conditions.

Robroek, Van Lenthe, Van Empelen, and Burdorf (2009) reviewed studies that explored the characteristics of participants and non-participants in worksite health promotion programs aimed at physical activity and/or nutrition published from 1988 to 2007.

The above mentioned literatures concerns about the positive effect of wellness program which is also one of the concerns of the present study

4. METHODOLOGY

The study followed a qualitative approach of data collection (such as literature review and observation). The respondents of this study were 50 selected faculty members of LSPU- SCC employing purposive sampling technique. Gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods using weighted mean, frequency counts and percentages.

5. FINDINGS

The findings of the study indicated an interest in worksite exercise programs and that incentives may motivate employees to participate in the worksite exercise programs. Recommendations for further study include a need to collect data from other companies and geographical locations, providing a more comprehensive understanding of employees' interests and preferences regarding worksite exercise programs

Table 1. Number of Employees Participating in the Wellness Program when Grouped

According to Age and Sex

Profile Variable	F	%
1. Age		
• 21 years old to 30 years old	16	32
• 31 years old to 40 years old	15	30
• 41 years old to 50 years old	10	20
• 51 years old and above	9	18
TOTAL	50	100
2. Sex		
• Male	16	32
• Female	34	68
TOTAL	50	100

Majority of the employees participating in the wellness program falls under age range 21 years to 30 years old (n=16, 32%) and 31 years to 40 years old (n=15, 30%). The least however are those that fall under the age range of 41 to 50 years old (n=10, 20%) and 51 years old and above, (n=9, 18%).

When grouped according to sex, it showed that more female participates in the program (n=34, 68%) than male, (n=16, 32%).

Table 2. Preferred Wellness Programs of LSPU-SCC Employees

Wellness Program	Frequency	Percentage
1. Use of Fitness Gym Exercising Equipment	12	24
2. Dance Exercise (Sumba)	38	76
3. Ball Games	0	0
4. Competition Event	0	0
5. Others (Aerobic, Cycling, etc.)	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

Majority of LSPU-SCC employees preferred dance exercise in particular Sumba (n=38, 76%), followed by use fitness exercising equipment (n=12, 24%).

Table 3. Perceived Effect of Continual Exercise on Employees Health

Perceived Effect	F	%
Good Effect	50	100
No Effect	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

Table 4. Description of Best Practices that Contribute to the Success of the Wellness Program

Best Practices	Mean	Remarks
1. Establish all-inclusive approach to employees' total health.	4.54	Strongly Agree
2. Considers flexible scheduling.	4.58	Strongly Agree
3. Has an effective communication by learning about wellness opportunities.	4.77	Strongly Agree
4. The program has multiple design components for employees to choose	3.40	Moderately Agree
5. There is a regular reporting that measures the success of the wellness programs.	2.52	Moderately Agree
6. Has an enticing reward to those employees who tried hard and participates actively.	1.25	Disagree
7. Has health professionals who can provide wellness information and exercise instruction	4.62	Strongly Agree

Legend:

<i>Scale Range</i>	<i>Remark</i>
4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51-4.50	Agree
2.51-3.50	Moderately Agree
1.51-2.50	Less Agree
1.00-1.50	Disagree

Employees strongly agree that the wellness program best practices were: It establishes an all-inclusive approach to employees' total health (Mean=4.54); considers flexible scheduling (Mean=4.58), has an effective communication-learning about wellness opportunities (Mean= 4.77), and has health professionals who can provide wellness information and exercise instruction to promote a healthier lifestyle (Mean=4.62).

With regards if the program has a multiple design components and updates on the success of the program, these were given a remark of moderately agree with means of 3.40 and 2.52, respectively. Employees however disagree that a reward is given to those who work hard to change its lifestyle.

6. CONCLUSION

Based from the result of the survey, 100% of the participants mentioned that wellness program has a positive or good effect on their health. The all-inclusive approach to employees' health, flexibility in scheduling, and effective communication as well as existence of health professionals are among the best practices perceived by the employee-participants.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Provide a more comprehensive understanding of employees' interests and preferences regarding worksite exercise programs. Empower institutional health and wellness program through physical activities, awareness of proper nutrition and nourishment of positive outlook in life.

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