

An Exploration into the Factors Affecting the Implementation of Employee Wellness Programmes in the Public Service of Namibia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to address the factors that influence the implementation of wellness programmes in the public service of Namibia, as well as to make recommendations on how to ensure the successful implementation of wellness programmes throughout the public service in Namibia. Qualitative research methodology was applied to collect the relevant data. A qualitative approach was considered the best choice for the study as the intention of the study was exploratory as it sought to gain an understanding of the factors that affect the implementation of wellness activities under the employee wellness programme, how the wellness programme was evaluated, as well as their outcome's perception amongst the staff. The results of this study indicated that organisational support for employee wellness is minimal, taking into account the very low management involvement in decision-making around employee wellness and the underutilisation of funds for wellness activities in the Office of the Auditor-General. The activities in place under the office wellness programme are more physical wellness-based and do not cover other aspects of wellness adequately. The study also revealed that there is a lack of support for employee wellness at senior and management levels despite the overwhelming interest of general employees. Finally, the wellness programme was rated as mostly ineffective based on the evaluation that was done. The findings of this study revealed that uniformed employees in the Public Service of Namibia need wellness programmes. However, the staff rules and policies that are currently in place could drive the public service to successful wellness programmes. Therefore, the Office of the Prime Minister must ensure that all the employee wellness programmes destined for the public service of Namibia are implemented successfully.

Keywords: Employee, Leadership, Organisation, Wellness, Workplace initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Many firms are increasingly turning to employee wellness as a strategy to engage and retain competent personnel, boost productivity, and lower the costs associated with excessive absenteeism and staff turnover. Without healthy and committed employees, no organisation can thrive. As the workforce grows in size, so does the emphasis on employee wellness issues (Cascio, 2020).

According to Steinman (2018), the 1970s saw a paradigm shift and the emergence of a new kind of Employee

Assistance Programme (EAP). This move entailed delivering a greater range of services to employees, including alcohol misuse treatment, marital finance counselling, and a variety of other support services. According to Dickman and Challenger (2019), in the 1980s, the approach to employee health and well-being shifted to Employee Enhancement Programmes (EEPs).

The EEP took a preventative approach, focusing on stress management, holistic health principles, and other addiction issues including smoking, overeating, and overworking. It claimed that if stress was managed and employees were taught healthy lifestyles, problems like those addressed by EAPs might be avoided (Dickman & Challenger, 2003). Today, EEPs are implemented with a focus similar to that of EEPs, but with new ideas from the field of positive psychology incorporated. Employee wellness initiatives are becoming increasingly important in the workplace due to a variety of issues. These include the global spread of HIV/AIDS, the outbreak pandemic of Covid-19, the high cost of recruitment and retraining, the necessity to connect human resource planning with organisational strategy, and the changing workforce composition due to diversity (Cascio, 2020).

The Public Service Workplace Policy on Wellness of 2017 mandated a commitment to a holistic wellness programme for all personnel in the public sector. Despite these good intentions and open commitment, project creation and implementation have proven problematic. Some of these challenges appear to be related to an inability to adapt some international experiences to a particularly Namibian context. This study was motivated by the necessity to investigate the execution of wellness programmes in the public service to identify the elements influencing the planning and implementation of this intervention.

Statement of the Problem

The Public Service of Namibia is still failing to address most of the employee health concerns and wellness needs of employees by providing a comprehensive and integrated wellness programme comprising sufficient wellness activities that are essential for the creation of a conducive working environment. Very little attention is paid to the need for developing a diversified workplace wellness programme that would focus on broader employee concerns such as lifestyle diseases, stress, cancer, other psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorders, anxiety disorders, or the promotion of a healthy lifestyle amongst employees and the provision of education on various health issues such as cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes and substance abuse; and to facilitate access to recreational facilities where these are available. As a result of inadequate implementation of wellness programmes, employees' morale suffers, resulting in high absenteeism due to illness, mood swings, and a high rate of staff turnover, harming the organisation's overall performance (Cascio, 2020). In the Human Resource Activity Report of the Office of the Auditor-General for the year 2021/2022 (Human Resource Activity report, 2022) there was no activity related to financial literacy, emotional wellbeing, as well as physical fitness carried out or team building exercise. The statistics of employees who participated in the wellness activities for the financial year 2021/2022 stands at 40 %, according to the Human Resource Activity Report (2022). Since the formulation of the Public Service Workplace Policy on Wellness, Occupational Safety and Health, 2017, which allows for the inclusion of other areas of workplace or employee wellness other than HIV and AIDS prevention and the implementation thereof, no attempt has been made to determine how the wellness programme is being managed and implemented or how the wellness activities are being executed by the policy formulators in the public service. No feedback regarding wellness activities is being provided to the Office of the Prime Minister for monitoring and evaluation as policy custodians.

Therefore, this paper aims to investigate and analyse the potential factors that are influencing the implementation of the Employee Wellness Programmes in the Public Service of Namibia. The study will give insights on how the Public Service can handle the Employee Wellness Programmes and make

recommendations on how to strengthen internal planning and execution processes and influence great policy planning changes and establish a workable employee wellness programme in the Namibian Public Service to ensure its success. Programmes for workplace wellness have a number of benefits for both employees and employers. The organisation aspires to have a successful, productive, and healthy workforce by implementing these programmes. However, "the implementation of wellness programmes has been relatively poor over the past three decades" (Linnan et al., 2001, p. 603). Creating regulations and guidelines on how to properly execute wellness programmes could help businesses come up with better plans to manage and improve workplace wellness programme implementation. This objective might be accomplished by utilising research findings to identify tactics that could facilitate the implementation of programmes, improve motivators, and remove obstacles to employee engagement in wellness activities.

Research Questions

Considering the current trends concerning employee health and wellness in Namibia, the paper intends to unearth certain strategies and pre-conditions for the successful implementation of such programmes by seeking answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the factors affecting the implementation of employee wellness programmes in the Public of Namibia?
2. To what extent is employee wellness and health supported by the public sector in terms of meeting policy objectives, strategy and funding opportunities?
3. What employee wellness activities are in place and how were they designed?
4. What is the level of interest amongst employees in wellness activities about their wellness needs?
5. How does the public sector evaluate its wellness programmes?

The answering of these questions requires a holistic investigation into the factors that influence the implementation of wellness programmes in the public service of Namibia. Hence, the core research question is whether the Public Service of Namibia is ready for the implementation of employee wellness and health programmes to ensure that key mechanisms are in place to ensure successful implementation.

Trends from the Research Literature

Understanding the concept of employee wellness

Knowing what a phenomenon is or what it implies is essential when investigating it. Regarding the meaning of "Employee Wellness," according to Sieberhagen et al., (2011), the word has not been clearly defined because there is disagreement over what should be covered by the definition. According to Matke et al., (2013), a "formal and universally accepted definition is yet to emerge" (p.21), which is in line with the latter. However, for their study, Sieberhagen et al., (2011) used the following definitions:

"A deliberate and conscious approach toward a high level of physical, mental, and spiritual health". An individual's positive health is described as "a multi-dimensional state of being exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being". Wellness is defined as "a state of well-being that contributes to an improved quality of life" (Sieberhagen et al., 2011:1). Health that results in higher standards of living.

In a nutshell, wellness programmes are intervention tactics designed to improve employee well-being, which

could be both preventative and curative. It means that organisations can use wellness programmes to keep employees healthy and can identify solutions to treat ailments that individuals are suffering from. "As a result, the goal of implementing a wellness programme in an organisation is to raise awareness of wellness issues, facilitate personal change and health management, and promote a healthy and supportive workplace" (Sieberhagen et al., 2011, p. 2).

The nature of workplace wellness programmes

Understanding the nature and characteristics of workplace wellness programmes can help organisations and wellness practitioners understand what a wellness programme is and what components it focuses on. The design and implementation of a workplace wellness programme should fulfil the objective of an intervention used by organisations to improve employee performance and, as a result, the performance of the organisation. According to Robroek et al., (2009), "knowledge about programme characteristics that contribute to participation is required to increase the cost-effectiveness of the interventions, which may be crucial for companies implementing the programmes".

Employers see these programmes as a method to improve employees' health and well-being, increase employee productivity and morale, reduce employee absenteeism, and reduce total healthcare expenses (Hill-Mey, 2013, p. 155). The success of workplace wellness programmes should not be measured by the amount of money saved or the number of people who participate in the programmes (Pyrillis, 2016). According to the author, the success of wellness programmes "should be about productivity, business metrics, retention, and customer satisfaction" (p. 40). Furthermore, Pyrillis (2016), contends that the effectiveness of wellness programmes is "not about health benefits only, but about broader well-being, including social connectedness, financial security, emotional health, and job satisfaction" (p. 40). Programmes are designed to encourage employees to live a healthy lifestyle rather than to regulate their choices (Brennan, 1983).

Employees may only benefit from these programmes if they comprehend the value that participation in workplace wellness programmes adds to their lives. Emotional wellness is the ability to understand and manage personal feelings as well as the knowledge and abilities to do so. It means that employee psychological wellness relates to an individual's emotions and feelings (Sieberhagen et al., 2011). Hence, the researchers assume that emotions can be pleasant or bad, and they have an impact on how a person functions. Sharkey (2015), defines emotional health as the ability of the mind to separate itself from unpleasant thoughts in order to focus on creative and productive actions. Negative emotions such as distress, wrath, fear, and anxiety can reduce worker performance and productivity. Individuals who feel good emotions (i.e. "a high level of psychological wellbeing"), on the other hand, are successful learners and productive workers, (Hupert and So, 2009). They also have better social relationships with others and live healthier and longer lives. Good emotional stability is linked to an organisation's positive economic growth since it reduces organisational difficulties like absenteeism and poor performance in the workplace. Organisations also save money on health care and overcoming social problems such as alcoholism (Diener et al., 2009; Huppert, 2009 as quoted in Huppert and So, 2009). Emotional fitness can influence a person's success in many aspects of life (Sharkey, 1997).

Occupational wellness comprises all aspects of well-being related to job/career satisfaction. Social wellness includes all aspects of happiness that have to do with social ties, relationships, and self-expression. The tools in this section provide opportunities to improve your social wellness status, which can have a good impact on your overall health and wellness (Sharkey, 1997). Spiritual wellness comprises all aspects of well-being related to the search for meaning and purpose in life. This may include faith in a higher power, but spiritual well-being does not have to be religious in nature. The materials in this section provide opportunities to improve your spiritual well-being status, which can have a good impact on your overall health and wellness

(Sharkey, 1997). Intellectual wellness includes all aspects of well-being related to brain health and development through thought-provoking mental activity. The resources in this section provide opportunities to improve your intellectual wellness status, which can have a good impact on your overall health and wellness (Sharkey, 1997).

Environmental well-being includes all aspects of health that are related to the environment, as well as how the environment might affect human health. Eco-friendly considerations, active engagement in recycling and correct disposal of gadgets and medicine, energy, fuel, and water conservation, and the usage of sustainable products all contribute to environmental well-being. The resources in this section are aimed at improving your overall health and wellness in terms of natural resources and environmental protection (Sharkey, 1997). Financial wellness involves all areas of financial well-being, including knowledge and abilities in financial planning and spending management.

The tools in this section provide opportunities to improve your financial wellness status, which can have a good impact on your overall health and wellness. Nutrition, exercise, weight management, ergonomics, tobacco use, disease, disease prevention, and other physical components of health are all included in this dimension. Organisations will also save money on the costs of low productivity, health care, and absence due to chronic conditions.

Factors influencing the implementation of Wellness Programmes

Even though wellness programmes are designed to help people establish, work towards, and sustain healthy lifestyle choices, they occasionally fail. Several factors have been identified as influencing wellness programme implementation. The programme's success is heavily influenced by top management attitudes and corporate practices. Support from senior management for a wellness programme shows organisational backing and commitment to the programme; management participation gives employees with involved role models. According to Nzuve (2002), managers must do more than just offer lip service to ensure the programme's success. Employees should be encouraged to participate in these activities by managers who regularly remind them of the benefits to both the employee and the employer. Certain corporate practices can contribute to involvement by helping to build norms and a work environment favourable to healthy lives (Parker and Wolfe, 1994). Implementing nonsmoking policies, having nutritious foods available in cafeterias, and vending machines, sponsoring company-wide events such as health fairs and lunchtime seminars, providing employee and/or supervisor rewards for participation, and allowing flexible work hours are examples of such practises.

Employee wellness programmes, according to Klein (2009), may generate several legal difficulties and should be properly developed to comply with current legislation. Several Acts that may have an impact on wellness programmes necessitate special consideration, and employers should be aware that a programme that conforms with one regulation may be forbidden by another. According to Klein (2009), employee wellness programmes may violate state laws on reasonable accommodation, privacy, secrecy of personal health information, and protection of off-duty activity. Before presenting a wellness programme to employees, employers should have their legal counsel analyse it. Several laws influence the design of a wellness programme. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2007) stipulates that it is the responsibility of every employer to establish and, as needed, amend a written statement of general policy for the safety and health at work for his/her employees and organisation.

The availability of resources is a major determinant of programme performance (Dorr, 2010). According to Gibbs (1983), a crucial factor influencing the success of wellness programmes is the availability of enough finances. He believes that top-level management should be supportive and set aside allocated cash in the annual budget for this purpose. When implementing a wellness strategy, human resource professionals and

the wellness team must develop a budget that demonstrates value and return on investment. Top executives will also want to evaluate the expected benefits of offering wellness plans to the organisation.

The most common reason for not participating is a lack of time. By providing on-site programmes and flexible activity scheduling, time and travel barriers to participation are reduced. According to Parker and Wolfe (1994), wellness programmes delivered on company time and employer subsidies of programme fees enhance participation. Programmes that need employees to contribute financially are also impacted since an employee may determine that the programme is not important and hence plan his money differently. Incentives tied directly to programme outcomes, such as bonuses for cholesterol level decrease, have also contributed to improved participation and favourable behaviour changes, according to Parker and Wolfe (1994). Health competition, such as challenges between divisions, departments, or randomly assigned teams, has been shown to enhance programme recruitment, reduce attrition, and improve outcomes with more participants.

Prior to the advent of the wellness and health programme, successful worksite wellness programmes educated the employee population on the sorts of programmes available and their benefits. Programmes should be easily accessible so that employees can use them when they are needed. According to Parker and Wolfe (1994), relevant studies reveal a variety of reasons why employees resist worksite wellness programmes. For example, they are expensive, the programmes are offered at inconvenient times, the purpose of the programme is not clearly explained, childcare is not provided, the benefits to the company and how these directly affect the employees are not explained, lower-level management is unable to convey the benefits of the programme to the employees under their authority, employees are angry and distrustful of the employer, and wellness and health programmes are pushed up the priority list.

Human resource functions are organised to recruit people and strive to establish a pool of staff that will provide good service to the organisation for a prolonged length of time (Parker and Wolfe, 1994). Staff turnover is a big danger to competitive organisations and can have a detrimental impact on programmes designed to support and develop personnel. Employee wellness programmes may be too expensive for companies with significant turnover because employees do not stay in the organisation for long. According to Kramer (2004), employee wellness programmes are more likely to be found in organisations with low turnover since it makes sense to invest in the programmes if the employees stay long enough to recoup the organisation's investment. The primary goal of an employee wellness programme is to aid in the retention of healthy employees who will be able to work for the organisation for an extended period, hence increasing productivity.

Employee wellness programme adoption and success are influenced by programme availability (Kramer 2004). Every individual has distinct needs, and what satisfies one person may not satisfy another, highlighting the importance of having a variety of programmes available. Wellness programmes should fulfil the needs of all employees, regardless of their existing level of health, and should consider the needs, preferences, and attitudes of various groups of participants. Employees are dynamic and always evolving, necessitating a real-time understanding of their needs as well as a flexible wellness programme. A survey of employees is a fantastic approach to gathering vital data and feedback on the health concerns they face and the programmes they would like to see implemented. Participation varies according to the level of commitment required by programme components. This is a significant task for a company; programme planners should evaluate the major health hazards in the target population, the specific dangers within the specific group of workers, and the demands of the organisation. Interventions should be tailored to the recipients' qualities and requirements. This implies that many programmes at various levels must be available. Participation and commitment may be increased if a group of workers can address a specific modifiable risk factor of their choice. When introducing a new health promotion programme to staff, every effort must be made to communicate the benefits of the health promotion programme to the business and the individual.

Importance of having a healthy workforce

"You cannot develop economically unless you have a healthy workforce." And if you don't have a well-educated and healthy workforce, that's a major impediment to your growth"- (Bruce Wilkinson, 2017). This quotation simply emphasizes that an organisation's investment in a healthy staff equals economic and developmental gain. The benefits of health, however, do not stop with the organisation; they also extend to the employee. Envick, (2012) defines well-being as "the quality and state of being physically and mentally healthy." (p.21). Employee wellness is an asset to performance-driven organisations because bad health is likely to result in low production and, ultimately, unfavourable economic effects for a country (Envick, 2012).

To develop a healthy workforce, businesses should ensure that employees' physical and mental well-being is prioritised. Envick (2012) notes that research demonstrates that physical health plays a significant role in the overall individual, and it is a necessary antecedent to psychological well-being and consequently productivity. According to Wringt (2002), psychological well-being is a measure of the many parts of emotions and is related to the efficacy of a person's social and psychological functioning. Envick (2012) agrees with Sharkey (1997), on physical wellness, arguing that fitness and leading an active lifestyle promote both psychological and physical health. Envick (2012), studied how a positive change in physical fitness can alter emotions in the same literature. According to the findings, physical wellness transformation leads to improved emotional quality, and a happy employee is a productive employee.

The components of workplace wellness programmes

Workplace wellness programmes include a variety of activities. The activities included in the programmes deployed are identified through a requirements analysis process or by conducting wellness audits. According to a study conducted by Kolbe-Alexander et al., (2012), 66% of the organisations that participated in their study said that wellness programmes focused on HIV/AIDS education, screening, and counselling. Worksite health and wellbeing were also selected as key topics, with the goal of "reducing risk for cardiovascular disease, decreasing Body Mass Index, and improving nutrition" (Kolbe-Alexander et al., 2012, p. 4). They further claim that workers preferred "individual-based counselling and intervention programmes" over group-based programmes. According to the 2014 Willis Health and Productivity report, 90% of organisations presenting wellness programmes reported that their programme focused on the physical activity component, 86% reported that their programme included a nutrition component, 77% reported preventive care, 75% reported stress management, and 68% reported tobacco cessation. Mattke et al., (2013) cited that wellness screening and promotional activities for health are crucial elements of a workplace wellness programme.

Goals and implementation of workplace wellness programmes

The aims and objectives of a specific workplace wellness programme are decided by the results of a requirements analysis conducted before the programme's implementation for a given organisation (Joslin et al., 2006). However, the overall goals of workplace wellness programmes are to avoid mental and physical illnesses/diseases as well as to function as a therapy strategy. Even though workplace wellness programme components differ from one programme to the next, between and within countries, they usually share common goals such as raising awareness, emphasizing healthy activities, and assisting members in cultivating tools for changing their behaviour (Joslin et al., 2006). According to Kolbe-Alexander et al., (2012), while managers and employees wish to improve their health, they lack the knowledge and abilities to adapt to changes for a healthy lifestyle, lowering their risk of heart disease.

The primary goals of workplace intervention are to enhance the intensity of physical activity and to encourage

individuals to adopt healthy eating habits by increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables. Employees, in addition to the employer who implements the workplace wellness programme, play a vital part in the success of workplace wellness programmes. They and organisations can only gain and profit from the services provided by WWP if they actively participate in the activities. Participation in WWPs refers to employees who volunteer to actively participate in workplace wellness programmes. There is a major emphasis on the fact that this procedure is voluntary, which is supported by Baicker (2010), who states that participation in workplace wellness programmes is voluntary. Voluntary participation indicates that the employee is not forced or coerced to participate in any WWP activities.

Bright et al., (2012), studied employees' views toward participation in a work-site-based health and wellness clinic. Employees demonstrated a "desire" to engage in the health and wellness clinic, according to their findings (Bright et al., 2012, p. 530). Even though the above-mentioned data suggest that employees want to participate in wellness-related activities, low levels of involvement in workplace wellness programmes are seen. Because of these low participation rates, the cost efficiency of the workplace wellness programme is reduced (Robroek et al., 2009).

According to research conducted with firms employing more than fifty (50) individuals, these companies have at least one activity boosting health (Gebhardt & Crump, 1990). The latter indicates that a large number of firms provide wellness programmes and that some employees are interested in engaging in workplace health programmes. However, the question arises as to whether exhibiting interest in or the intention to participate in wellness programmes assures participation. A number of authors analysed rates of involvement in workplace wellness programmes and discovered that rates of engagement are unfavourable.

Factors that may impact employee participation

Previous research indicates that, while employees want to participate in WWPs, there are elements that may affect their decision to do so or not. These variables can be personal, organisational, or both. A detailed understanding of these elements may assist employee wellness practitioners in implementing effective workplace wellness programmes. Spence (2015) found the following characteristics that may influence employee engagement in workplace wellness in Australia. Several individual-level characteristics have been discovered to explain employee poor participation. These include service-needs misalignment, time and work pressures, access to resources, individual change preparedness, and personal locus of duty and/or views about the balance of responsibility for change. Spence (2015) identified the following organisational-level elements that could help explain participation rates: the changing structure of the human resources function, perceptions of corporate social control, organisational trust, and/or fundamental needs fulfilment.

Spence (2015) found that communication inside the workplace was more essential to employees than physical health in terms of job satisfaction in a study on wellness programmes (what type of support employees seek from the organisation). This means that critical information must be conveyed between employees and management in a timely and proper manner for this group to operate properly. Employees also noted that adequate working equipment and social relationships between employees and management can contribute to job happiness. According to Spence (2015), if "organisations want to successfully implement workplace wellness programmes and maximize the benefits that may be derived from them, then a variety of factors become important."

Employee receptivity or the degree to which employees are positively oriented toward a programme because of what it symbolizes for them and its perceived value for themselves or others, is the most fundamental of these characteristics. To put it another way, employee receptivity is a motivating prerequisite for (at best)

joining and participating in a programme or (at worst) advocating for it and encouraging others" (p.120). Spence (2015) discovered that some corporate wellness programmes do not serve the demands of employees. As a result, employees may not perceive the value of participating in wellness activities established by the department. When implementing workplace wellness programmes, the author proposes that the way employees receive the programme be taken into account.

An employee-received health programme may thus be a waste of costly resources that could be better used for other projects inside the organisation. As a result, before creating a workplace wellness programme, management and wellness practitioners must evaluate the needs of the employees.

Leadership role to engage employees in workplace wellness programmes

Any organisation's managers, supervisors, and leaders have a crucial role to play in encouraging workers to engage in activities that increase productivity (Carrington, 2014). This suggests that executives within the organisation who emphasize the value of participating in workplace wellness programmes will have the greatest impact on employee participation. Additionally, research suggests that employees may be inspired to participate in wellness programmes if supervisors and leaders support and engage in such programmes. As they realise the benefits for both the organisation and the individual, a rising number of businesses are investing in employee wellness. Organisations recognise that their people are their most significant assets, so they are taking steps to intervene as soon as possible to ensure their employees' well-being (Carrington, 2014). When an organisation efficiently adopts a wellness program, up to 80% boost in productivity is likely. Organisations that engage in their employees' health and demonstrate a commitment to employee health can also anticipate the benefit of flexible and confident personnel (Carrington, 2014).

More and more companies, according to Moeller-Roy (2005), are starting to recognise the intrinsic worth of healthy, content people and are beginning to regard employee health as human capital. There are personnel in many organisations that display, among other things, declining productivity, rising absenteeism, rising tardiness, violence, and substance addiction. Maeli as reported in Matlhape (2018) draws attention to the fact that the reasons behind these behaviours are frequently not recognised or looked into, which results in losses for both the employee and the employer. Therefore, employee wellness offers a chance to handle such issues in a way that will help retain skilled workers and enhance working relationships.

Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, there has been a significant shift from scientific management practices that treat employees as "machines" to "people-oriented" management practises that embrace consultation, participation, and staff retention as critical success factors in the development, maintenance, and retention of productive employees. The Ecological Model will help the public service recognise multiple levels of influence on health behaviours, including intrapersonal/individual factors, which influence behaviour such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and personalities of employees. The Ecological Model offers a holistic and systemic approach to wellness programme implementation. Organisations and institutions can design interventions that are more likely to be effective, sustainable, and supportive of positive health behaviours by taking into account the interplay of elements at many levels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research philosophy, design and approach

A research philosophy is a set of views or concepts that determine how a researcher approaches inquiries and investigations. It embodies the fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and the inquiry process. The research philosophy chosen by a researcher influences how they frame research

questions, gather and analyse data, and interpret findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This study was influenced by the Interpretivism research philosophy, which emphasises the importance of understanding and interpreting the meanings that individuals attach to their experiences rather than pursuing objective, universal facts. There is a realisation in interpretive research that reality is socially constructed, and that various persons or groups may interpret the same experience in different ways (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The three main key features of interpretivism that were employed in this qualitative research were as follows (Saunders et al., 2012) such as subjectivity, contextual understanding and qualitative approach.

Through subjectivity, the researcher and the participants, according to interpretivism, bring their subjective perspectives to the study. It acknowledges that individuals have distinct perspectives shaped by their cultural, historical, and social surroundings. Contextual Understanding is considered because the goal of interpretive research is to comprehend the context in which social phenomena occur. This idea is frequently used by researchers who perform in-depth, qualitative investigations to investigate the intricacies of human experiences in their natural contexts. Qualitative research methods such as interviews, participant observations, and content analysis are intimately related to interpretivism. These techniques enable researchers to collect rich, detailed data that captures the complexities and meanings implicit in human experiences.

The interpretivism research philosophy was used because it is consistent with the nature of human experiences, emphasising the relevance of subjective interpretations, cultural settings, and in-depth inquiry that may not be fully represented by more positivistic methodologies required in qualitative research. The study was carried out using a case study research design. This was regarded as the best option for the study because the study's purpose is exploratory in nature, seeking to gain an understanding of how employee wellness programmes are implemented as also further supported by Babbie & Mouton (2001) that exploratory research is used to gain a thorough understanding of a scenario, phenomena, or community when there is a lack of knowledge or information available on a particular topic. Case study design was appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to obtain tangible, contextual, in-depth knowledge about the topic. It enabled the researcher to investigate the case's essential qualities, meanings, and ramifications.

This paper involved interviewing participants in their natural settings and looked into the subjective reasons that could be the factors contributing to the poor implementation of wellness programmes and why most action plans are not implemented successfully. For this reason, a qualitative research approach was employed for this study. As also supported by Bless et al., (2013) the qualitative research approach entails using words or descriptions to record features of the world and it aims to understand behaviour in its natural environment. This was regarded as the best option for the study because the study's purpose is exploratory in nature, seeking to gain an understanding of how employee wellness programmes are implemented. According to Babbie & Mouton (2001) exploratory research is used to gain a thorough understanding of a scenario, phenomenon, or community when there is a lack of knowledge or information available on a particular topic.

The study's findings were based on 218 Office of the Auditor-General employees, ranging from those responsible for the implementation of workplace wellness policies and programmes to general office staff members who are on the receiving end of workplace wellness policies and programmes. It is time-consuming and expensive to interview the entire population, especially if the population size is huge as it is in the case of the public sector. The type of research that will be done affects the sample technique that is chosen. Non-probability sampling techniques were used because this is a qualitative study. The sample technique of convenience or accessibility was used. The convenience or availability sampling strategy, which enables the researcher to choose subjects depending on their availability (Bless et al., 2013), was highly helpful. The convenience sampling method was used to select initial participants for the semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions to identify and explore how people think and feel.

The researcher selected 20 participants for focus group discussions and individual interviews from the Office of the Auditor-General's employees from various sections under directorates. Three (3) people were selected from Human Resources, three (3) from Training and Development, three (3) Auditors, five (5) from Auxiliary Services, two (2) from Finance, and two (2) from Maintenance. Two (2) wellness officers were used as individual interview participants. This was beneficial to the study because it allowed the researcher to sample the research population based on the accessibility and proximity of information and participants to the researcher. The sample was then divided into three groups: general staff, senior staff, and management.

Research instrument

Semi-structured interviews and focus group allows the interviewer and participants to engage in formally planned conversations. It gives the interviewer the freedom to follow the interview guide and to veer off course as necessary. Questionnaires, focus group discussions, and a personal interview were used in the study. The questionnaire and focus group discussions were used to collect data on staff members' and implementers' perceptions and potential ideas for enhancing the implementation and evaluation of Employee Wellness policies and programmes. In the study, a personal interview was used to extract significant external knowledge and expectations on the subject matter and bring more information to the fore, as well as to gain more knowledge on specific perceptions of public sector workplace wellness implementation from the office that coordinates employee wellness implementation in the Public Service.

Focus Group 1: Employee Wellness Committee members. This focus group discussion session was attended by five (5) members of the Employee Wellness Committee of the Office of the Auditor-General. The Chairperson, who is the Director of the Cash-Based Directorate, took part in the focus group deliberations together with four (4) other committee members.

Focus Group 2: Senior-level employees. Five (5) senior-level staff members from the Office of the Auditor-General attended the second focus group discussion session. These senior staff members have leadership experience and have heard a few complaints from subordinates, most of which are connected to situations and variables that impede healthy working relationships and ultimately employee wellbeing. As a result, the deliberations of this focus group had an interest in extracting information that is at the heart of day-to-day supervisor-subordinate relations at the workplace.

Focus Group 3: General personnel. Ten (10) general staff members from the Office of the Auditor-General attended the most recent focus group session. These employees were important in bringing to light the overall expectations they have for employee wellness in the Office as well as the existing status of execution of employee wellness initiatives.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

First of all, the researcher presented the approval letter to conduct the research from the Namibia University of Science and Technology to the Deputy Auditor-General for authorization to conduct the study. The method utilized to collect first-hand information from people was a cross-sectional design. Semi-structured interviews were used in the data collection process. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to investigate people's individual stories, their opinions on how the wellness programmes are being implemented and their views on how the implementation could be improved. The latter gave the respondents the freedom to discuss their experiences without the interviewer's direction. The interviewers made appointments to personally meet the individuals. Some majorities of the participants were open to taking part without prior appointments. With the consent of the interview subjects, interviews were taped using a digital recorder for data analysis purposes.

Data analysis

The researchers assessed the data collected by using critical and consistent reasons to study each component of the data provided. According to Ngunjiri (2013), one of the most recommended methods of assessing qualitative research data is thematic data analysis, which was applied. Based on that, the researcher recorded the information gleaned from open interviews. The researchers reviewed the audio recordings and transcribed all focus group discussion recordings and personal interview recordings. Each transcript was analysed and a summarised interpretation was generated after transcribing the focus group discussion recordings and interview recordings.

The transcripts and interpretations were distributed to some of the participants for member review. All focus group and personal interview recordings were coded, and the researcher was able to make conclusions based on these codes. The agendas of focus group meetings, the questionnaire as well as the personal interview questions are presented as appendices to this thesis. This procedure was useful in supporting the researcher in examining and recording patterns within data following the study's objectives. Creswell (2014) defines themes as "patterns across data that are significant to the description of the phenomenon and are associated with specific questions." As a result, thematic content analysis was used to assess the data since it allowed for the evaluation of findings directly related to the study objectives.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher acquired a letter of authorization from the Namibia University of Science and Technology. This letter was used to request permission from the Deputy Auditor General to conduct the study, and the permission was utilised to interact with participants at interview intervals, questionnaire distribution sites, and focus group discussion meeting locations. The respondents were told that they were not required to participate and that their participation was entirely voluntary. Finally, the study's confidentiality was optimally preserved throughout its execution, from data collection to analysis and presentation.

RESULTS

Qualitative research yields data rich in information, thus the information presented and interpreted is based on data from 20 participants. The participant's interview transcripts were coded and analysed. Table 1 is a graphical representation of the participants' biodata. The biographical data of the participants included information such as age, gender, and number of years of work experience and occupation. For reasons of confidentiality, only the first three variables are presented, to depict the biographical data of the participants. The bio data depicts that the sample was comprised of thirteen (females) and seven (males). Most of the participants' ages ranged from the age of twenty-six (26) to thirty-five (35). Furthermore, five (5) of the participants ages were between thirty-six (36) and forty-five (45), with one participant aged between forty-six (46) and fifty-five (55). Participants' years of working experience in the public service ranged from two (2) years to nineteen (19) years.

Table 4. 1 Participants' biodata

Participant	Gender	Age range	Years of working Experience
P-1	Female	26-35	7

P-2	Female	26-35	9
P-3	Female	26-35	3
P-4	Male	26-35	5
P-5	Female	26-35	4
P-6	Female	26-35	5
P-7	Male	26-35	8
P-8	Male	26-35	9
P-9	Male	26-35	7
P-10	Female	26-35	6
P-11	Male	26-35	9
P-12	Female	36-45	10
P-13	Female	36-45	11
P-14	Female	36-45	12
P-15	Female	36-45	15
P-16	Female	36-45	16
P-17	Male	26-35	10
P-18	Male	26-35	8
P-19	Female	26-35	9
P-20	Female	46-55	19

The following data presentation and analysis will be presented using a thematic method of data analysis to identify themes and analyse them. Which made it possible for the researcher to explore the richness and complexity of the data.

The researcher's interest is to investigate the factors that are influencing the implementation of employee wellness programmes within the Office of the Auditor-General. Respondents were drawn from two wellness officers from the subsection; wellness in the division of Human Resources. They were interviewed. A Summary of their response is as follow:

“Aa-aa, well, attitude and support from the top management is a major factor. If the support is too low, success is difficult to attain regardless of how beneficial it was to those who were participating” (Participant 1)

“I think in addition to that, other factors are availability of funds because budget of the division cannot cater for all planned activities so as the unavailability of resources like gym equipment’s, time and hesitancy of staff members to attend as the turn up is mostly not good are among others”. (Participant 2)

Participants indicated that there is lack of support from management when it comes to wellness efforts, making it difficult for the subsection to successfully implement their planned activities. Participants have also indicated that one among the factors is a shortage of funding, as the division does not receive enough funds to carry out all activities, the budget that is allocated to the division cannot cater for all planned activities. According to the participants, time and the unavailability of resources are some of the factors that are affecting the implementation of the wellness programme. The hesitancy of staff members to attend wellness initiatives is one other the themes that was identified from the participant's responses as they have indicated that sometimes, staff members are reluctant to participate or attend wellness events. The intent behind a wellness policy or programme's adoption at any specific institution or organisation depends on the type and extent of the existing initiatives and programmes, which serve as the engine for its execution.

According to Thogerson-Ntoumani and Fox (2005, p. 50), employers are also interested in putting programmes into place since they understand that employee health and productivity at work are related. Therefore, it is still essential to investigate the types of programmes and activities that are included in a given wellness policy or programme to determine whether it meet the needs of the company and the employees; if it promotes physical activity and weight-related issues if it improves psychological and psychosocial wellbeing, as well as providing financial wellness. Two wellness Officers as part of the personal interview held with them, were asked to give the wellness activities that are currently in place, the number of times they were carried out and the number of participants. The responses are summarised in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4. 2 Categories of existing activities under the employee wellness programmes at OAG

Wellness activities in place at OAG	How many times activity was carried out	Number of participants	Wellness category
General health screaming	Once a year	22	Physical wellness
Financial literacy	Once a year	80	Financial wellness
Dissemination of condoms	5 packs every month	Around 50 employees in two weeks	Physical wellness
Healthy eating education	Once a year	70	Physical wellness
Managing post Covid-19 effects	Once a year	100	Psychological wellness

Blood donations	Three times a year	At least 10 employees	Physical wellness
World AIDS day	Once a year	On average 30 employees	Physical wellness

According to the activities provided by the participants of the personal interview, the Office is more focused on physical well-being. Most of the activities that were carried out are more in the wellness category of physical wellbeing. Only one activity talks about the financial well-being and one talks about psychological well-being. The number of staff members that turn up for both financial and psychological events is quite a lot as compared to physical activities. This implies that there are not enough programmes out there that have been shown to have enough components for financial wellness and psychological wellness. Therefore, it was determined that both financial and mental wellness activities were insufficient. The researchers were interested in finding out how much the Office leadership and management support employee wellness policies and programmes. The researchers aimed to comprehend the extent of support that employee wellbeing receives from the organisation, in terms of management involvement and organisational funding for employee wellness. According to the participants, they have indicated that the makeup of the Office of the Auditor-General Employee Wellness Committee comprises 15 wellness committee members, and only 2 members are from the management, which implies that the Office Employee Wellness Committee has a weak representation of management, even though very few people think that the management is involved.

Participants have also indicated that managers do not attend wellness events, which implies that managers do not give support to staff members, which gives a bad impression of the management’s commitment to workplace wellbeing. One of the numerous ways to determine how much an organisation supports an intervention, policy, or programme is by looking at the funding it provides for that goal or aspiration. The researchers focused on the employee perceptions on the state of organisational funding for Employee Wellness extracting information from the three focus group discussions. Participants of focus group one (EWC members) held the conviction that employee wellness in the Office of the Auditor-General is underfunded, citing that the money that is allocated is not sufficient to cater for all planned activities, so the lack of funds is to blame for this. Senior level staff members who participated in focus group two conformed to the same opinion, while general staff members who participated in focus group three also indicated the same opinion. Furthermore, some participants of focus group one held strongly to the perception that employee wellness in the Office is “well-funded, but its budget is under-spent”, mostly citing that the wellness budget is never depleted, hence the claim of under-funding does not hold waters.

Some participants claimed that the wellness budget is never overspent and is prone to surpluses that are eventually spent by other Divisions through the financial process of internal virementation, demonstrating that what is allocated is greater than what is spent on wellness activities and programmes. Also, some participants in focus group two shared the same opinion, primarily citing that employee wellness at the Office has the potential to be the foundation for and the implementation of a much wider programme, but that this potential has not been sufficiently explored for there to be a way to assess whether it is under, over, or well-funded. They stated that the current situation is that employee wellness is well-funded, but its budget is under-

spent because there aren't enough programmes in place that are compatible with the current budget allocation. This is because there isn't a comprehensive and progressive office employee wellness programme.

Employee perceptions can project how programme participants will view the effectiveness of the wellness programme in resolving their personal and professional issues, so an investigation into employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the existing employee wellness programmes or activities was deemed relevant to the study. The researchers were more interested in knowing whether the employees feel that the current wellness programme of the Office is considered successful or not and the reasons to support the answers. The wellness programme is considered successful because the wellness division has innovative staff who always have brilliant ideas when hosting wellness events. This indicated that at least some staff members held the opinion that employee wellness at OAG was exceptional, and the reasons they provided painted a picture that employee wellness at OAG has potential for success and that the basics are already in progress.

Responses of the reasons that respondents provided as to why they thought employee wellness at OAG was less successful were illustrated above. Amongst the reasons they gave, was the view that Staff members want to engage in wellness activities, but they are formalized and too official, they feel like meetings. They feel that it is demoralizing. They also indicated that there is no evaluation or auditing done on wellness division to ensure compliance of policies in place and there are no strategies in place to safeguard the implementation of wellness activities. Some participants also stressed that some of the activities do not really make an impact on ones live as they are done once off rather than continuously proving support. Wellness could include continuous programmes rather than just once off activities.

Participants explained that Management does not seem to care because they barely participate in wellness initiatives, nor they give any support to the division or wellness committee. They further indicated that it is only the operational staff that supports the wellness initiatives and attend. One amongst the reasons given was also that the wellness division does not have a calendar of planned activities which is causing low participation rates of staff members. Another participant that wellness activities are not planned on time, staff members are also not informed of the wellness activities that are taking place on time, sometimes staff members are charged for the services, sometimes it requires staff members to be seated for longer periods with no refreshments. Another reason that was stressed out was that the wellness division is trying however the budget that is allocated to the division is not always enough to carry out enough activities. Therefore, the issue of budged allocations remains a huge obstacle in the success of wellness programme at the Office of the Auditor-General. There is little doubt that the employee wellness programme at OAG was less successful in their opinion, as evidenced by the fact that a majority of the respondents feels that the wellness programme is less successful.

An investigation into the implementation of employee wellness at the Office of the Auditor-General was crucial to the researcher because evaluation is the primary method through which any organisation can perform checks and balances on the effectiveness of the programmes and create forecasts to achieve concrete goals. Evaluation is at the core of every policy or programme advancement and efficiency. Knowing how an organisation evaluates its policies and programmes, in this case the employee wellness policy and its programme at OAG, is crucial because it informs the study's examination of how those in charge of employee wellness management at the Office evaluate the programme's effectiveness and asks whether the formulas used to identify the programme's strengths and weaknesses can be improved.

As a result, the researcher investigated how the OAG's employee wellness programme is evaluated. The Office Employee Wellness Committee members who made up the focus group discussion (Focus Group 1) were asked if in their own opinion they think the current employee wellness programme is efficiently evaluated or not as well as to give proposed evaluation methods of choice to ensure effective evaluation. Participants were

asked to confirm if they have some evaluation methods in place and whether the current evaluation techniques that are currently in place are efficiently and effectively used. The responses are shown in Table 5 below.

Proposed evaluation method	Respondents	Is the current employee wellness programme efficiently evaluated?		Reason
		Yes	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness calendar • Report to OPM • Wellness activity implementation plan • Exit interviews • Customer satisfaction survey 	Participant 1	x		<i>“The wellness division conducts a customer satisfaction survey every year”</i>
	Participant 2		X	<i>“There are no proper evaluation techniques in place, with big failure coming from OPM the main custodian of policy formulations”</i>
	Participant 3		X	<i>“OPM does not do monitoring and evaluation, they only develop policies and guidelines however they do not emphasise on compliance”</i>
	Participant 4		X	<i>“The Office is only relying on the wellness division to carry out activities according to what they want, not including the wellness committee in decisions”</i>
	Participant 5		X	<i>“More evaluation techniques are needed and more planning”</i>

According to participants, the wellness division needs to have exit interviews distributed when employees are leaving the Office for feedback and they need to conduct a customer satisfaction survey every year. Out of five participants, only one respondent feels that the evaluation techniques that are in place are effective, reasoning that it is because the wellness division conducts a customer satisfaction survey every year. All four out of five participants indicated that more needs to be done to have an effective evaluation mechanism in place. The four participants indicated that the reasons for ineffective evaluation methods are such as; there is no proper evaluation techniques in place, with big failure coming from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

the main custodian of policy formulations, OPM does not monitor and evaluation, they only develop policies and guidelines, however they do not emphasize on compliance, The Office is only relying on the wellness division to carry out activities according to what they want, not including the wellness committee in decisions and that more evaluation techniques that they pinned out need to be implemented.

The findings revealed that there is a lack of support from the top management when it comes to wellness initiatives, managers do not prioritise attending wellness activities and their support in implementing wellness activities is minimal. According to Nzuwe (2002), the programme's success is heavily influenced by top management attitudes and corporate practices. Support from senior management for a wellness programme shows organisational backing and commitment to the programme; management participation gives employees with involved role models. Managers must do more than just offer lip service to ensure the programme's success. Employees should be encouraged to participate in these activities by managers who regularly remind them of the benefits to both the employee and the employer.

Availability of funds and resources are some of the factors that are affecting the implementation of wellness programmes at the Office of the Auditor-General. The budget that is allocated to the wellness subdivision is unfortunately not always sufficient to cater for all planned activities which leads to most of the planned activities to not be implemented. Also, unavailability of resources like insufficient gym equipment's to avail a fully furnished gym facilities to staff members.

The availability of resources is a major determinant of programme performance (Dorr, 2010). According to Gibbs (1983), a crucial factor influencing the success of wellness programmes is the availability of enough finances. He believes that top-level management should be supportive and set aside allocated cash in the annual budget for this purpose. When implementing a wellness strategy, human resource professionals and the wellness team must develop a budget that demonstrates value and return on investment. Time and staff members' reluctance to participate in health activities, are also some of the reasons that demotivate the division to hold wellness events because the turnout is not always adequate. The findings revealed that the staff members of the OAG do not really attend the wellness activities which makes it difficult for the wellness subdivision to host more activities.

According to Kolbe et al. (2012), staff members' time constraints and reluctance to engage or attend health events can have a substantial impact on the successful implementation of wellness programmes within an organisation. Employees may be less likely to participate in wellness programmes if they involve a considerable time commitment. Many employees have demanding work and personal schedules, and they may be unwilling to devote additional time to wellness activities. Because of personal reasons, a lack of interest, or scepticism about the benefits, some employees may be hesitant to participate in wellness programmes. This hesitation might lead to reduced levels of involvement and participation.

In order to address this challenge, organisations should actively address concerns, promote the benefits of wellness programmes, and create initiatives that are adaptable and take into account employees' time limits and preferences. Encouraging a culture of well-being and addressing the individual requirements of the workforce can help wellness efforts succeed. The study found out that the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) has no adequate organisational support for staff wellness. Two major areas of investigation have been undertaken: management engagement in employee wellness decision making and organisational funding for employee wellness activities.

According to the review of the themes that were identified in the study under this component, the composition of the Office Employee Wellness Committee, the body that directs the adoption and management of employee wellness in the Office, management engagement in employee health decision making at the OAG is negligible

because there is a poor representation of management in the Wellness Committee. Only two (2) of the 15 members of the Office Employee Wellness Committee (OEW). Clearly, there is a significant gap in the composition of the OEW's management.

The support and engagement of management in the operations of any programme or policy in any given organisation is always an indication of how much regard and willingness there is for effective, efficient, and suitable policy or programme implementation and management. The existing degree of involvement of senior and middle management indicates that the OAG's employee wellness programme is under-supported, and any ill implementation of the programme may be owed to it. The results revealed that most of the participants in focus group one, which consisted of members of the Office Employee Wellness Committee (OEW), believed that employee wellness in the OAG is "underfunded." Their argument was based on their claim that funds given for wellness activities should be spent on full-fledged programmes or activities that require more than what is allocated in the present budget. They blamed ineffective programme and activity implementation for the underfunding. Some top-level staff members from focus group two agreed with this viewpoint.

This group proposed that the existing employee wellness plan at the OAG has room for expansion and that more money than is now given would be required to develop a full-fledged or rather comprehensive employee wellness strategy. Some workers consider that the current programme is a skeleton without flesh, and that flesh is required to cover the skeleton. However, some participants of respondents in focus group 1 stated that staff wellness at the OAG is "well-funded, but underutilised." They reasoned that the employee wellness budget is never depleted, providing the viewpoint that a budget is well financed when it is constantly in surplus. They also created a new view that the employee wellness budget is underutilised. The minority of focus group two members agreed, indicating that the programme has the potential for greater establishment and execution, but that this potential is not being exploited.

The participants in focus group three, which consisted of general staff members, agreed, citing poor execution as a major barrier. This group comprises the bulk of participants in the focus group discussions, which attempted to address how OAG employees see organisational funding for employee health in the Office. This leads to the conclusion that the prevalent view among OAG staff members is that the Office's employee wellness programme is "well-funded but underspent." This speaks volumes about the OAG's and the broader public sector's implementation ingenuity, efficacy, and efficiency in developing, monitoring, and evaluating the wellness project.

Organisational support has drawn considerable attention in the management of employee wellness across organisations all over the world and has been seen as one of the key constructs that underline the application of social exchange theory in employment relationships (O'Connor, 2010). Employees develop "global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 2001). The traditional way to think of employee wellness has primarily focused on providing health-related employee benefits such as health insurance, and, more recently, a series of wellness programmes such as fitness classes and nutrition training. This narrow focus ignores an important aspect of health promotion – the interaction of behavioural and environmental factors (O'Donnell, 2009). Recognising the importance of environmental factors, some have argued that "supportive social and physical environments should be considered essential aspects of comprehensive worksite health promotion" (Della et al., 2008), and that all health promotion practices should work together to create supportive environments for employees to improve their health (Golaszewski et al., 2008). Health promotion activities aimed at improving employee health may result in higher productivity and lower labour costs (e.g., lower absenteeism), as well as help firms fulfil their social obligation to their employees. Employee health is pursued through a variety of organisational health support approaches across organisations. According to the research, employee health promotion techniques are composed of four dimensions. These include goal alignment practices like setting objectives

for employee health improvement, awareness improvement practices like sharing information with employees about the impact of employee health on overall business success, worksite health support practices like offering incentives for employees to live healthy lifestyles, and leadership support practices like leadership being committed to employee health promotion (Della et al., 2008; Hoert, 2008).

Employee wellbeing is thus critical for organisations for a variety of reasons, since it can have far-reaching positive implications on both employees and the whole business. Employees who are healthy and well-supported are more productive in general. Employees who are in good physical and mental health are more likely to be focused, enthusiastic, and engaged in their work. Wellness programmes can help reduce illness-related absence. Healthy personnel are less likely to miss work due to illness, resulting in higher overall attendance and continuity of work. When companies show a commitment to employee wellness, it sends a positive message to employees that their well-being is important. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and morale, which can contribute to a more favourable workplace culture. Employee wellness programmes can help to develop a sense of belonging and support in the workplace. Employee engagement may increase as a result of employees feeling a better connection to their colleagues and the organisation as a whole. While establishing wellness programmes may incur some initial costs, the long-term advantages can result in cost savings. Reduced healthcare expenditures, lower attrition rates, and higher productivity, for example, can all have a favourable impact on an organisation's bottom line.

Supporting employee health is not only a moral and ethical obligation, but also a smart business decision that can have a favourable impact on productivity, morale, and an organisation's overall profitability. The researchers classified the existing initiatives at the OAG into three categories: physical well-being, psychosocial wellness, and financial wellness. This was to develop the employee wellness categories under the OAG employee wellness programme and to examine if the programme covered all of the important areas of workplace wellbeing. The basic programmes/activities explored to be in existence under the Office of the Auditor-General's Employee Wellness policy were a general health screening, financial literacy, dissemination of condoms, health eating education, managing post Covid-19 effects, blood donations, world AIDS day.

A diverse range of wellness activities in a wellness programme is crucial for various reasons, according to Sieberhagen et al., (2011). A comprehensive and all-encompassing strategy to employee well-being can cover numerous elements of health and wellness while catering to the diverse requirements and preferences of individuals inside the organisation. Employees' health needs and preferences vary. A wide range of wellness activities allows individuals to select activities that match their unique interests, increasing the likelihood that they will actively participate in and benefit from the programme. Diversified wellness programmes can address various elements of well-being, such as physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. This all-encompassing strategy promotes total employee wellbeing and promotes a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Having a range of activities available keeps wellness programmes fresh and engaging. Employees are more likely to participate consistently when they have a variety of options to choose from, which prevents boredom and increases overall programme engagement. A diverse programme is more likely to provide beneficial results by addressing a wide range of wellness factors. This can include improved employee wellness, reduced absenteeism, better productivity, and a beneficial influence on the overall bottom line of the organisation (Sieberhagen et al., 2011).

Individualization, engagement, inclusion, and overall programme efficacy are all enhanced by a varied choice of wellness activities in a wellness programme. It demonstrates a recognition that employees are distinct individuals with diverse needs and interests, resulting in a more comprehensive and successful wellness strategy, therefore it is important for organisations to have a comprehensive wellness programme which includes activities on all aspects of health. Among the many reasons given by respondents as to why they

thought the OAG's employee wellness programme was less successful were the perceptions that it is not holistic or comprehensive in nature, that it is not measurable because the mechanisms in place are not used optimally to yield useful interpretations that could be instrumental in the programme's improvement based on end users' interests and needs, and that there is a lack of support from executive staff. According to Joslin et al. (2006), the effectiveness of an employee wellness programme may be measured using a variety of parameters, and its influence can vary depending on the programme's design, execution, and ongoing management.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that the primary elements influencing the implementation of an employee wellness programme at the OAG are the attitude and support of senior management. Managers in the Auditor-General's Office do not assist staff, particularly when it comes to wellness activities. Managers do not participate in wellness activities or initiatives. Other issues include a lack of cash; as a result of budget limits, the wellness division is unable to carry out all of the scheduled activities. The money assigned to the subsection is frequently insufficient, as is the availability of resources, such as gym equipment, which is insufficient to adequately operate the gym. Wellness activities are not always completed on schedule. Staff members are sometimes preoccupied with critical Office problems, making it impossible for them to attend. Furthermore, the plan is not being implemented successfully because staff members are afraid to participate in wellness activities. Therefore, Understanding and addressing these factors can help the Office of the Auditor General or any other organisation implement employee wellness programmes more successfully. For long-term success, regular assessments and adjustments based on employee feedback and changing organisational dynamics are essential.

The study found that the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has no adequate organisational support for staff wellness. Two major areas of investigation have been undertaken: management engagement in employee wellness initiatives and organisational funding for employee wellness activities. According to a review of the composition of the Office Employee Wellness Committee, the body that directs the adoption and management of employee wellness in the Office, management engagement in employee health decision-making at the OAG is negligible. Only two of the 15 members of the Office Employee Wellness Committee (OEW

Clearly, there is a significant gap in the composition of management and senior personnel. OEW members as well as general personnel. The Office Employee Wellness Committee is largely made up of general staff members, with a few exceptions. The support and engagement of management in the operations of any programme or policy in any given organisation is always an indication of how much regard and willingness there is for effective, efficient, and suitable policy or programme implementation and management. The existing amount of involvement of senior and middle management indicates that the OAG's employee wellness initiative is under-supported, and any poor implementation of the programme may be attributed to it.

A second investigation was conducted, exploring employee perceptions of management engagement in employee wellness activities. The majority of management-level staff members who participated in the study believed that employee wellness is not a difficult enough issue to warrant extensive management participation. They defended the system in which only two managers are members of the wellness committee, stating that the chairperson of the wellness committee represents management in that committee and, thus, large management involvement is irrelevant. They may be correct, however, at least 95 per cent of management support for wellness activities should reflect engagement and willingness to support the wellness programme.

Nonetheless, the idea that employee wellbeing is not difficult reflects their negative attitude towards wellness. While there were senior-level staff members who believed that wellness is not a difficult enough topic to warrant extensive management involvement in decision-making, a majority of them believed that management is not involved because only two managers are members of the Office Employee Wellness Committee.

The investigation into Office funding for employee wellness revealed yet another truth regarding employee wellness implementation and management at the OAG. An assessment of employee perceptions of the state of organisational funding for employee wellness was conducted, and the results revealed that most participants believed that employee wellness in the OAG is "underfunded." Their argument was based on their claim that funds given for wellness activities should be spent on full-fledged programmes or activities that require more than what is allocated in the present budget. They blamed ineffective programme and activity implementation for the underfunding. Some participants proposed that the existing employee wellness plan at the OAG has room for expansion and that more money than are now given would be required to develop a full-fledged or rather comprehensive employee wellness strategy. It is evident that some Office workers consider that the current programme is a skeleton without flesh, and that flesh is required to cover the skeleton.

A well-funded employee wellness programme is an investment in the workforce's general health and performance, with beneficial consequences for both employees and the organisation. It can help to create a healthier, happier, and more engaged staff, which can have an impact on the bottom line and overall profitability of the organisation. Even though the activities are supported by the employees, the findings shows that the organisation is not implementing activities that are address the needs of the employees, hence poor attendance sometimes, mental health is one of the most critical aspects of wellness that should be taken as a priority as well as the financial wellbeing. The Office is concentrated more on physical wellbeing; however, all wellness aspects need to be taken into consideration.

The Office need to include a lot of activities in the wellness programme such as activities on other life challenges, training on separating personal issues from work, pre-and post-natal depression awareness, stress management tactics, initiates on environmental health, breastfeeding and sick rooms, children's aftercare, exercise activities like workplace gyms, team-building exercises, education on alcohol and drug abuse, smoking cessation, interpersonal skills education, and retirement. The Office also need to have a sufficient budget to cater for all these activities, because most of the staff members indicated unwillingness to contribute enough money to meet the Office halfway. If the wellness activities could be made free, staff members would be motivated to attend and participate. Staff members also indicated that they would prefer an incentive to encourage them to participate in the wellness activities and have their efforts acknowledged.

The study revealed that even though some staff members feel that the employee wellness programme of the OAG is not effective and successful, some feel the opposite. The minority feels that the wellness programme is successful. The majority of employees feel that the wellness programme is not effective because the activities are too formalised and made like meetings instead of activities, no evaluation or auditing on the subsection is done for transparency and to ensure compliance with staff rules, and no strategies in place to effectively implement wellness activities, management does not seem to care about wellness initiatives activities are not planned on time and the issue of budget is the main obstacle. Based on the explanations presented by both parties, the employee wellness programme at OAG has the potential for success should the minor obstacles be addressed.

The study found out that even though there are few evaluation methods in place, they are not adequate to drive the wellness programme to success. There are no proper evaluation techniques in place, with a big failure

coming from OPM the main custodian of the policy formulations, as they only formulate and roll out policies, however, they do not follow up for feedback to evaluate and monitor compliance.

The Office is sorely relying on the wellness subsection for all the activities and not mostly including the wellness committee. The wellness plan is not always fully implemented or executed as most planned activities are not carried out. The wellness subdivision is not audited, and no report regarding wellness is sent to the Office of the Prime Minister. There is no wellness calendar in place to set as a reminder even to staff members, staff members must wait to be informed via circulars, which is not done on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

The literature has made an important contribution to the role of management, emphasising the importance of managers at all levels of the business supporting EWP initiatives. As a result, the researcher suggests that management consider including wellness concerns on the agenda during strategic planning and review sessions so that it remains a departmental priority and that it eventually be incorporated into line managers' operational plans. To ensure an effective and efficient programme outcome, the Office should encourage senior-level and management staff support for employee wellness to establish a system in which Office management members take full ownership of decision-making and employee wellness activities.

Employee wellbeing must first be understood by people at the helm of decision-making in the Office, so that there are fewer roadblocks to employee wellness programme execution, from policy analysis and strategy development to programme monitoring, evaluation, and control. This could be accomplished by instituting incentives to encourage involvement and support, as well as punitive measures in cases when employees fail to follow guidelines.

To tackle the problem of budget underutilisation, the activities implemented under the employee wellness programme must be suitable with the money provided for employee wellness. More innovation must be spent in the Office Employee Wellness Programme in order to create activities that match popular employee desires and are critical in resolving workplace-related and individual issues faced by the majority of employees. This might be accomplished by maintaining a suggestion box as well as a database of all staff members and their health records resulting from prior wellness screening activities, which would be subject to changes as time passes.

Furthermore, the Office needs to venture more into wellness activities that feature psycho-social and financial wellness components, to diversify the approach at securing employee wellbeing. It remains fundamental for the Office to design an evaluation strategy for the employee wellness programme in order to create the ease with which the strengths and weaknesses of the programme can be assessed, and measures aimed at rectifying faults and taking advantage of opportunities can be taken. Additionally, the OAG's employee wellness programme should take into account the objectives of the 2016 Public Service Employee Wellness, HIV and AIDS, Occupational Health and Safety Policy, which promotes occupational safety by integrating the disabled with the non-disabled and creating a conducive working environment that allows employees to function optimally.

To sustain and increase the performance of employee wellness programmes in the Office, the Office should concentrate on the most important variables that influence the programmes' successful implementation. According to the survey, the most influential elements include top management support, employee attitude and perception, support from trade union stewards, worker turnover, and resource availability. Because of the

benefits, top management should completely embrace employee wellness programmes and support the head of human functions by engaging in and funding wellness programmes. There is a need to build an employee wellness programme team to assist in the development, implementation, and advocacy for the programmes' success. This will be achievable by selecting persons who are aware of the benefits of the programmes and have a significant influence over them, as well as by encouraging trade union stewards to participate in these programmes and receiving backing from high management.

It is critical to educate employees about the importance of employee wellness programmes. There should be discussions on the benefits of these programmes and the importance of participating in them. Every line manager should educate and encourage their juniors to support and participate. The development and implementation of programmes should not be limited to the human resources department; it should encompass all departments, beginning with the directors who advocate for it.

This study advises that the Office of the Auditor-General and the entire Public Service modify their culture. Employees lack initiative in topics affecting them. Employees have a culture in which they will not do anything until they are forced to. A culture of self-initiation must thus be established in the Offices for its members to reason and act independently without the influence of anyone.

Finally, the study recommends that the public service should recognise that employees' preferences and needs vary, therefore they need to provide a choice of wellness activities to fit a wide range of interests and lifestyles, allowing employees to select what resonates with.

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