

The Relationship Between Employee Wellness Programs and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff of Colleges & Universities in the Maldives

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction among academic staff in Maldivian colleges and universities. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 336 academic staff through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and regression analyses. The findings identified a strong positive relationship between awareness of wellness programs and job satisfaction, while participation remained low due to barriers such as poor timing of the programs, limited inclusivity, and inadequate communication about the programs. The study highlighted the need for tailored, inclusive, and well-communicated wellness programs aligned with employees' personal wellness goals to enhance job satisfaction and organizational outcomes. Recommendations of this study include implementing flexible, needs-based wellness programs supported by strategic communication and inclusive practices to maximize their effectiveness in academic institutions.

Keywords: Employee Wellness Programs, Job Satisfaction, Academic Staff

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Employee wellness programs have been identified as crucial factors for employee job satisfaction and organizational success. In recent years, most organizations have recognized that a satisfied, healthy, and happy workforce leads to a higher level of productivity, increased engagement, reduced turnover, and sustainability of the organization. According to the International Federation of Employee Benefit Plans, globally, 84% of organizations offer some kind of wellness program to their employees. These wellness programs include regular health checkups, counselling sessions for mental health support, recreational activities, flexible work arrangements, and financial wellness packages.

Research indicated that well-structured employee wellness programs have a positive correlation with higher job satisfaction, improved productivity, and improved retention rate. Study by Wang (2023) suggested, that job satisfaction, retention, and employee engagement is notably impacted by wellbeing programs conducted by organizations. Similarly, it has been observed that health-related wellness programs and executive-level support have been found to influence organizational performance (Al-Fayaz, 2023). Research by Grawitch et al. (2021) shows that these wellness programs improve the holistic well-being of employees while contributing to organizational success. Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted by Donald et al. (2023) demonstrated a strong positive link between comprehensive wellness programs and employee satisfaction across various industries and organizations, highlighting the effectiveness of these programs.

Studies have shown that employee wellness programs play a mediating role between employee satisfaction and organizational success, where employees feel optimal mental, physical, and emotional health within their work environment. This aspect of well-being includes a balance between personal life and job satisfaction. According to Hidayath and Rahwana (2021), organizations that conduct employee wellness programs tend to experience increased employee motivation, reduced absenteeism, and improved work quality. In 2021, the Global Wellness Institute reported that organizations with well-integrated wellness programs report up to 25% higher employee satisfaction and 11% greater productivity.

However, despite the recognized benefits of these wellness programs, many fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Recent literature identifies several issues that undermine the effectiveness of these programs. Among these, three key issues are consistently highlighted:

1. Lack of awareness: Lack of awareness is identified as one of the major barriers to employee wellness. Research has identified that many employees are unaware of the benefits, availability of programs, and relevance of these programs, as highlighted by Smith and Cooper (2022). A lack of awareness and insufficient communication about the programs leads to their failure. Additionally, the Integrated Benefits Institute (2024) reported that most of the employees are unaware of their organization's wellness programs, limiting participation, benefits, and success of the program.
2. Low Engagement and Participation: The success of employee wellness programs largely depends on employee awareness, interest, and participation. Research has indicated that a strong link exists between greater participation and active involvement in these programs leads to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Anderson et al., 2022). However, despite the availability of wellness programs, the success of these programs is lower due to a low level of employee engagement and participation in them, maybe employees are unaware of them, or they might not see how they relate to their needs. Smith and Cooper (2022) highlighted that poor awareness, a lack of personalization, and insufficient involvement lead to unsuccessful employee wellness programs. This ultimately leads to minimizing the potential benefits of these programs, affecting the job satisfaction of employees.
3. Poor Alignment with Employee Needs: Another common issue is that the wellness programs don't match what employees need and want. These programs are often designed based on general frameworks, without seeking employee feedback, leading to a failure to address the specific concerns of employees. This is evident by the findings from Patel and Green (2023), which indicate that a one-size-fits-all approach reduces the relevance and effectiveness of wellness programs. To maximize the impact, it is necessary to design the wellness programs tailored to employees' specific needs.

Additionally, time management, Supportive leadership, and a positive work environment can enhance the effectiveness of these wellness programs, whereas poor management practices may negate their benefits. Studies highlight that leadership behavior, Organizational support, and thoughtful job design directly impact employee well-being and the success of wellness interventions (Iqbal et al., 2024; Financial Times, 2024).

Problem Statement

Despite growing recognition of the benefits of employee wellness programs in enhancing job satisfaction and organizational performance, numerous critical challenges continue to undermine their effectiveness in practice. These challenges not only limit the potential of these programs but also negatively affect the broader workplace dissatisfaction and reduce organizational efficiency. These include occupational stress, low engagement, and poor alignment with employee needs, and notably, time management issues that intersect each of these challenges.

One of the issues identified is a lack of awareness about the wellness programs; most employees are unaware of the benefits of these programs, the programs available or offered to them, or how to participate. This leads to lower engagement and limited impact on the programs.

A second major issue is the low level of employee engagement and participation in wellness programs. While organizations may provide various programs, many employees are unable to participate due to time constraints or scheduling conflicts with work demands. Time pressure limits their ability to access or benefit from wellness activities, even when they are well-intentioned and well-designed. Consequently, employees may perceive wellness programs as irrelevant or inaccessible, undermining their impact on satisfaction and retention.

A third challenge is the poor alignment of wellness programs with employee needs. Often, programs are developed without consulting employees or understanding their time limitations and workload patterns. As a result, wellness activities may not fit into employees' schedules, leading to frustration or disengagement. Without flexible, time-conscious design, even personalized programs may fail to resonate with employees or

meet their expectations.

Research Objectives

To explore the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction among academic staff of colleges and universities in the Maldives.

1. To identify the extent to which employee wellness program affects the lives of employees.
2. To examine the influence of employee wellness programs on job satisfaction.

Significance of the study

This research will address a knowledge gap by studying wellness programs in the Maldives context, where limited empirical evidence exists on this topic, while global studies highlight the benefits of wellness programs. The findings of this study provide insights into how the existing programs affect employees' overall health and job satisfaction. Additionally, the findings will support Maldivian organizations to design & improve their wellness programs. Additionally, this study will contribute to broader academic literature by offering evidence from the small island developing state context, informing policymakers, HR managers about the importance of holistic wellness programs to build a healthier and more engaged workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee wellness programs have been identified as a strong strategic priority for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational success. As highlighted above, these programs aim to foster a healthier workforce, improve employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction. Several studies have shown a positive correlation between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction, highlighting their role in improving motivation, performance, and organizational success. However, their effectiveness varies depending on factors such as participation levels, awareness about the programs, program alignment with employee needs, occupational stress, and time management. This literature review explores the existing research on the link between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction, identifies key influencing factors, and examines theoretical frameworks that support their integration in modern workplaces.

Employee well-being and wellness programs

Employee well-being is a crucial element of work productivity, organizational success, and employee retention rates. Numerous studies provide evidence that employee wellness programs enhance morale, satisfaction, and the overall success of organizations. According to Grant et al. (2021), employee well-being is recognized as a multidimensional concept, encompassing the physical, mental, and social aspects of work life. It acknowledges the impacts on employees' work, careers, health, and the community. This concept offers employees a holistic view, covering their overall mental, physical, financial, and social health (Brightmine, 2024). Furthermore, a study by Page & Vella-Brodrick (2020) suggests that employee well-being programs focused on happiness, motivation, and personal growth contribute to increased job satisfaction and organizational success. Employee well-being not only includes yoga, gym membership, or smoking cessation, but also the inclusion of a supportive, motivational, and happy work environment (Shore et al. 2022). Understandably, employee well-being is a continuous journey that requires ongoing efforts to address the general state of employees' mental, physical, emotional, and social health at work to improve their job satisfaction, work-life balance, and manage stress at work.

Job Satisfaction:

Pawar & Kunte (2022) defined job satisfaction as happiness and satisfaction in the workplace, the ability to perform crucial work tasks, improvement in mental condition, and reduction in physical health that may affect productivity at work. Spector (2020) views it as a pleasurable or positive emotional condition that arises from one's experience at the workplace. This positive emotion is identified as a key factor in organizational success and is related to several affirmative variables, such as job motivation, organizational culture, employee well-

being, and job performance (Kara, 2020). It is also identified as a positive emotional response from experiences related to work and the happiness a person derives from that work. For example, satisfaction comes from the earnings, along with the responsibilities, authority, and physical environment.

A link between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction

Employee wellness programs are policies and activities developed by organizations to promote employee well-being and cultivate a healthy work environment (WHO, 2020). The motivation, job satisfaction, and work productivity can be improved by wellness programs specifically designed to promote these behaviors (Richmond & Needham, 2020). Similarly, a study conducted by Meikanada Ganesh Kumar (2022) suggested that investing in employee wellness programs will lead to both long-term and immediate success, as these programs increase employee morale and satisfaction, resulting in the overall success of the organization. These programs also contribute to the development of a more productive and resourceful workforce (Ruth et al, 2021). Additionally, holistic wellness programs that include mental health, physical fitness, and financial benefits have been identified as particularly effective for employee job satisfaction, even if this doesn't directly affect the employees' basic job performance (Pawar & Kunte, 2025). Organizations that prioritize aligning their welfare initiatives with employee preferences typically experience enhanced productivity and higher job satisfaction. Moreover, employees who feel that their well-being is valued and cared for by the employer are recognized as more loyal, productive, and committed to their work (Hayat and Afshari, 2022). Research by Kosec et al. (2022) and Thielmann et al. (2022) further explores these two factors within specific industry contexts, revealing that employee well-being and job satisfaction are not universal and can be influenced by different characteristics.

Frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, and the PERMA model demonstrate the multidimensional effectiveness of employee well-being programs. Studies supporting these frameworks indicate that well-structured employee wellness programs can positively influence several aspects of employee well-being, which directly affects job satisfaction. Factors such as autonomy, growth opportunities, and support from leadership and coworkers play significant roles in determining productivity, retention, and employee engagement (Santoso, 2024). Thus, all of these factors contribute to job satisfaction. Additionally, participation in employee wellness programs positively impacts both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction among employees (Marshall, 2020).

Empirical evidence from a study conducted by Kihoro, Mungania, and Kiganjo (....) indicated that the employee wellness program affected the overall performance of the organization through preventive care, raising awareness, and emphasizing the importance of these wellness programs. This study also revealed that implementing employee wellness programs is essential for achieving employee satisfaction and enhancing organizational success.

Although the benefits of these programs are well recognized, they don't guarantee a consistent impact on job satisfaction and productivity. Their effectiveness varies significantly based on individual employee needs and circumstances (Jiang dkk., 2021). This is supported by The Guardian (2024), which stated that employee wellness programs alone may not increase job satisfaction unless core workplace stressors, such as excessive workload, tight deadlines, and limited job control, are addressed. The specific impact of employee well-being is also studied and considered in wellness programs. A study by Hamouche (2020) revealed that psychological well-being in the workplace is one of the primary factors contributing to employee well-being, job satisfaction, and turnover rates across organizations. Similarly, physical fitness programs enhance employee productivity by fostering a healthier workforce and cultivating a sense of gratitude. These programs also motivate employees to improve their physical health, resulting in increased overall productivity and capability during work (Kusemerewa & Nelson 2024). Other crucial factors like work-life balance, leadership behaviors, pay raises, and recognition also play a significant role in employee well-being and job satisfaction (Bregenzer et al., 2020).

Challenges in implementing employee wellness programs:

Even though wellness programs are considered beneficial for both employees and organizational productivity, concerns about costs and resource allocation prevent organizations from implementing these programs (Bilderback, 2024). Additionally, a low participation rate due to a lack of awareness and ineffective

communication approaches hinders the objectives and effectiveness of these programs, ultimately resulting in decreased participation (Smith, et al., 2023). The study also revealed employees' desire for more information about the wellness programs through various communication media. Similarly, high workloads and time constraints obstruct employee participation in wellness programs. A study on workplace physical activity found that 80% of participants indicated that a lack of time is a major obstacle to participating in wellness programs offered to them (Safi et al., 2022). Despite the availability of wellness programs, time constraints from high workloads and a demanding work environment leave employees too exhausted to engage in these initiatives. Quirk, H., Crank, H., Carter, A. et al (2020)

Literature gap

Although there is widespread global evidence between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction, there is very limited empirical evidence within the Maldivian context. Most of the existing literature primarily focuses on developed nations, overlooking how organizational dynamics in the Maldives shape the efficiency and relevance of wellness programs to their employees. Additionally, gaps remain in understanding how issues like limited awareness, low engagement, and misalignment with employee needs affect the success of the programs in small island nations. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring employee wellness programs and their impact on job satisfaction in the Maldivian context.

Chapter Summary

The studies of the last five years indicate that employee wellness programs are a fundamental factor in employees' job satisfaction, as well as the overall well-being of the workforce and the organization's success. According to People Insight 2025, only 65% of employees feel they receive adequate support at work for their well-being. Many frameworks and studies explain how wellness initiatives influence both job satisfaction and organizational success. However, the implementation of wellness programs is not without challenges (Misra, 2024). Barriers such as lack of awareness, ineffective communication, financial constraints, and high workloads hinder the installation and effectiveness of these programs (Goetsel et al. 2020). A holistic approach is necessary to address these barriers and ensure that wellness programs achieve their intended outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Introduction

This section outlines the methodology used to identify the relationship between employee wellness programs and Job Satisfaction of the academic staff of colleges and Universities in the Maldives. It includes research approach, research design, target population & Sampling techniques, data collection procedure, and data analysis methods.

Research Approach & Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach to analyze the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction in academic staff of colleges and universities in the Maldives. A causal research design was chosen to allow for an understanding of the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction.

Population & Sampling

The population of this study comprises 2,395 academic staff working in 14 universities across the Maldives (Statistics booklet, 2019-2023). The sample size of 331 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) method to ensure that the study results are statistically significant and representative of the entire population. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different age groups, job roles, departments, and genders within the academic institutes.

Research Instruments

The items in the questionnaire were derived from the existing literature from the past 5 years. It included closed-

ended questions using a 1-5 Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of two sections, covering the key issues identified in this study, including basic demographic data (Section A) and employee wellness and wellbeing programs, as well as job satisfaction (Section B).

Validity & Reliability

The validity of this study was ensured by using established questionnaire items aligned with research objectives. Reliability was ensured through the use of standardized instruments with proven consistency in previous studies.

Data Collection

Data is collected using a Google form (pre-approved standardized questionnaire adapted from previous studies). All the responses in the questionnaire were made compulsory, and the questionnaire was sent across the population and sent to individuals chosen using a random sampling technique to collect data.

After data collection, the Excel sheet was exported from Google Form responses, and the sheet was coded and imported into SPSS for data analysis.

Data analysis

Data from the survey questionnaire were entered into SPSS software for analysis. The two main questions will be addressed through this analysis. First, a descriptive analysis is conducted to determine the extent to which employee wellness programs contribute to job satisfaction. Second, Multiple regression analysis, to further explore the combined influence of occupational stress, employee engagement in wellness programs, and alignment on employee needs on job satisfaction, will be conducted.

Ethical Configuration

This study followed strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights of respondents. Participants were well informed about the purpose of the study and their role in the study. Participation in this study was voluntary, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point. Respondents of this study were anonymized, and data were stored securely.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the quantitative methodology used to examine the relationship between the two variables, detailing the research approach, design, sampling, data collection, analysis methods, and ethical considerations to ensure rigor and credibility of the study.

FINDINGS

Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study conducted among the academic staff of Colleges and Universities in the Maldives. The findings explore the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction, supported by 336 respondents.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis involves 336 participants in the study to understand the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction. The demographic profile is important as it provides context for interpreting the findings and assessing the representativeness of the sample.

Participants' ages were categorized into 5 groups: under 25, 25- 34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, and 55 years and above. Most participants represent the 35-44 years age group, with 154 participants. The second largest age group is 45-55, with 107 participants. 25 participants were involved at the age under 25 years, while over 55

years, there were 15 participants, and 25- 34 represented 37 participants. This age distribution indicates that the sample is skewed towards middle-aged employees, which might influence the overall insight of the participation in wellness programs and job satisfaction, as this age group will have more responsibilities and priorities in life compared to younger and older employees.

The data represents majority of the respondents are females, with 67.9% of the sample & Male represents only 31.3% of the sample. This indicates that approximately two-thirds of the participants were female. Regarding Job level, the sample is overwhelmingly dominated by mid- level staff, with 60% of respondents. Senior management represents 23% of the sample, while the Entry level (9.5%) & Executive level (6.5%) represent a relatively smaller portion of the sample.

The years of experience are distributed into 3 portions. The largest portion is equally distributed between those with 5-10 years of experience and those with 1-5 years of experience, each portion representing 38.4% of the participants. While those with less than 1 year represent a smaller portion of 3.0%, those with a decade of experience represent 19.3% of the participants. This suggests that the survey primarily captured insights from employees at the early to mid-stage of the carriers, with very few newcomers or the very experienced and long-term.

Research Question 1:

What is the extent to which employee wellness programs affect the lives of academic staff of colleges and universities in Male City?

With the growing recognition and effectiveness of wellness programs globally, Organizations in the Maldives are increasingly recognizing the value of these programs to boost employee morale and performance. These programs are being designed and implemented by different Organizations in the Maldives. Therefore, this research question aims to explore the extent to which these programs impact the lives of academic staff in colleges and Universities in the Maldives, where employee well-being is identified as a crucial factor for organizational success. Understanding the extent to which these programs affect the lives of academic employees in the higher education sector will provide insight into how effective these programs are for employee wellbeing and job satisfaction, thereby enhancing the suggested areas for improvement in the programs.

Item No	Items	Total agreement		Total disagreement		Mean	Std Deviation
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
1	I am aware of the wellness programs offered by my institute.	153	45.6	85	25.3	3.35	1.046
2	I often participate in the wellness programs offered by my workplace.	82	24.4	176	52.4	2.47	1.138
3	I have received enough information about the wellness programs at my workplace.	40	11.9	232	69	2.19	1.186
4	I agree that the current wellness programs at my workplace align with my personal wellness goals.	114	33.9	35	10.4	2.52	1.074
5	I agree that the current wellness programs at my workplace contribute to a more productive workplace.	211	62.8	35	10.4	2.46	1.019
6	I am satisfied with the timing and periodicity of the current	46	13.7	221	65.8	2.20	1.245

	wellness programs						
7	I agree that the current wellness programs implemented by the company consider all diverse needs that exist among the employees.	52	15.5	162	48.2	2.61	1.110
8	I like to recommend the wellness programs to my other colleagues	183	54.4	96	28.5	3.39	1.246

This study surveyed 336 academic staff from Colleges and Universities in the Maldives to understand the extent to which employee wellness programs affect the lives of academic staff.

When comparing responses across 12 items, participants showed a high level of satisfaction with 3 items: awareness, contribution to productivity, and willingness to recommend the programs to other colleges. Similarly, 2 items fall into the moderate range: participation in the programs and relevance to personal wellness goals. Three items fall into the lower range: inclusivity and diversity of the programs, timing of the programs, and access to information about the programs.

Overall, the data suggest that despite the availability of wellness programs at the institutions, participation is currently low due to factors such as the timing of the programs, lack of inclusivity, and communication and information dissemination about the programs. However, awareness of the programs is moderate; most of the staff are aware of them, and the impact on their lives is considered fair.

Assumption Testing for Normality of Data (Research Question 1)

Linearity

The P-P Plot is used to assess whether the standardized residuals of a regression model are normally distributed. The plotted points show that it follows the diagonal line. However, there is a minor deviation at both tails, which is generally considered acceptable. The central part aligns with the line, showing that most residuals are normally distributed, suggesting that the assumption of linearity is met.

Figure 2- Normality Assessment- P-P Plot

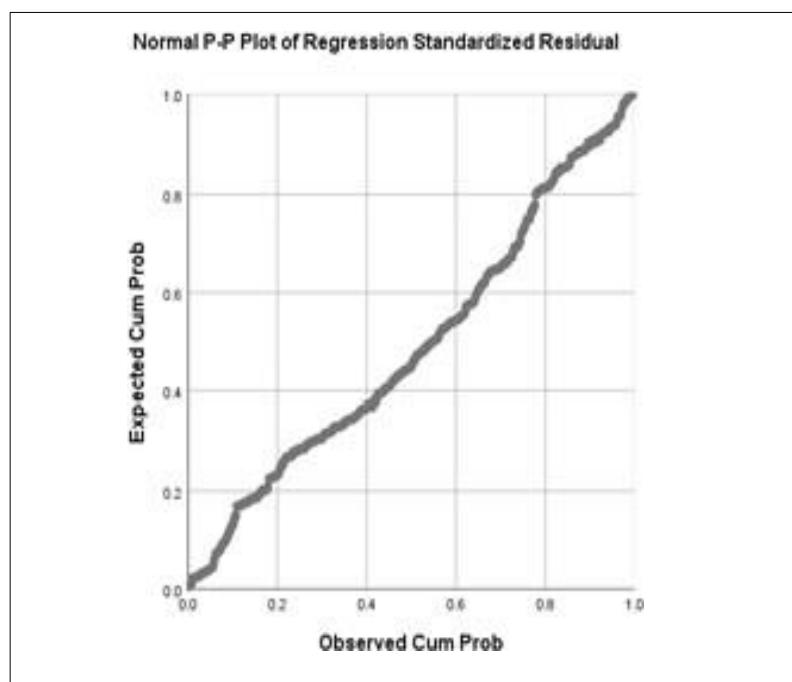
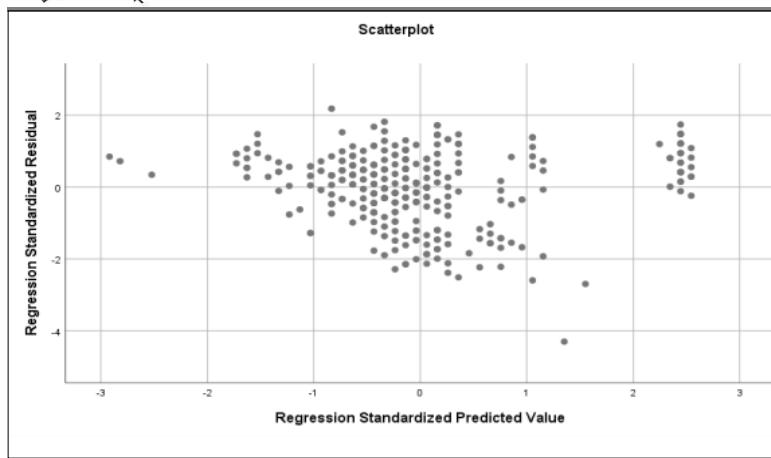


Figure 3: Normality Assessment-Scatter Plot



The Regression Standardized Residual versus Predicted Value is used to assess the assumption of linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of errors in regression analysis. The above figure of a scatterplot is randomly scattered, mostly around zero, without a clear curve or funnel suggesting reasonable acceptance of linearity; however, some clustering and uneven spread suggest model misfit, or potential missing variables.

Normality of Residuals

The Shapiro-Wilk test determines whether the sample data is normally distributed. If the P is > 0.05 , it indicates that the data is normally distributed, & if the P is < 0.05 , the data is not normally distributed.

Tests of Normality ^{c,d}							
Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a					Shapiro-Wilk		
	wellness programs	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
job satisfaction	1.38	.292	3	.	.923	3	.463
	1.50	.260	4	.	.827	4	.161
	1.63	.318	5	.111	.780	5	.055
	1.75	.248	6	.200*	.845	6	.142
	1.88	.161	13	.200*	.887	13	.089
	2.00	.142	19	.200*	.919	19	.107
	2.13	.099	32	.200*	.978	32	.734
	2.25	.140	18	.200*	.938	18	.270
	2.38	.215	32	.001	.882	32	.002
	2.50	.150	39	.027	.940	39	.039
	2.63	.199	29	.005	.935	29	.072
	2.75	.192	27	.012	.926	27	.056
	2.88	.189	12	.200*	.961	12	.791
	3.00	.140	17	.200*	.939	17	.306
	3.13	.197	14	.148	.870	14	.042

3.25	.105	8	.200*	.996	8	1.000
3.38	.234	4	.	.970	4	.841
3.50	.275	9	.048	.780	9	.012
3.63	.221	6	.200*	.855	6	.171
3.75	.260	2	.			
4.00	.	2	.			
4.13	.175	3	.	1.000	3	1.000
4.25	.	2	.			
4.38	.435	7	.000	.600	7	.000
4.50	.231	5	.200*	.881	5	.314
4.63	.372	5	.022	.828	5	.135
4.75	.473	5	.001	.552	5	.000
4.88	.	3	.	.	3	.

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

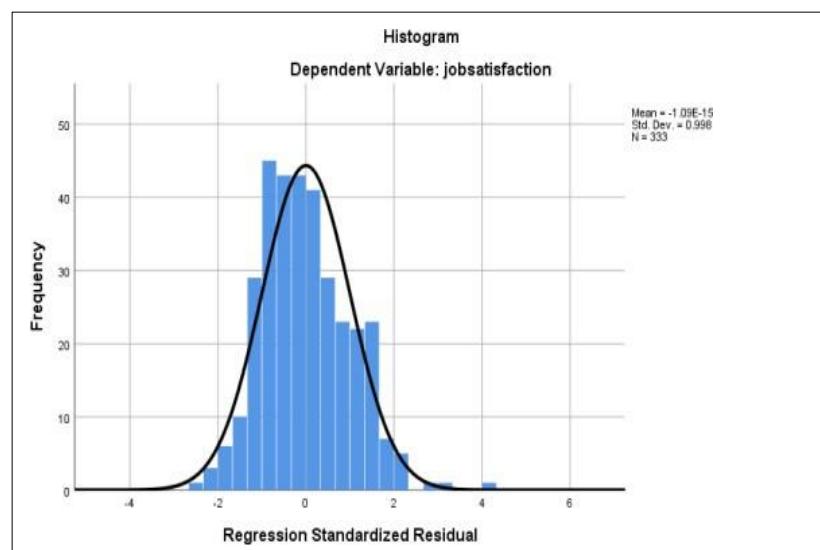
c. jobsatisfaction is constant when wellnessprogrames = 3.88. It has been omitted.

d. jobsatisfaction is constant when wellnessprogrames = 5.00. It has been omitted.

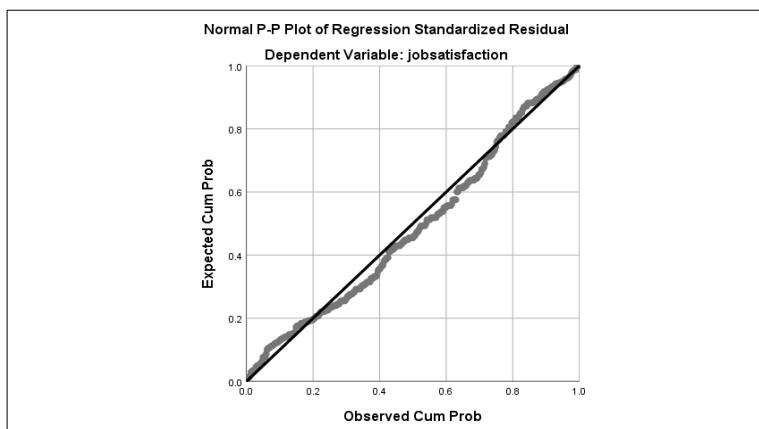
The table shows that, for most of the levels, the data appears to be normally distributed, as the P- value is greater than 0.05 from both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk tests. However, some levels. The test indicates that the data was not normally distributed, as the P-value is less than 0.05. Since most of the level fits the normal threshold, which means the data is distribution does not violate normality.

Homoscedasticity

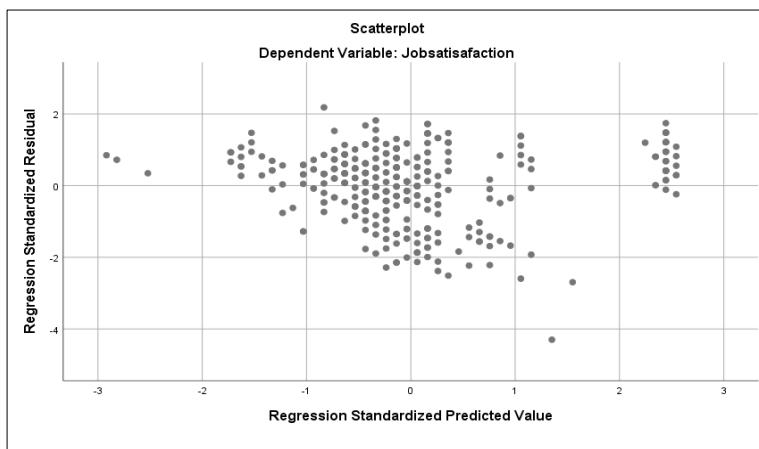
Figure 5- the histogram of the regression



The histogram of the regression standardized residual appears normally distributed. It generally follows the normal bell-shaped curve quite well. The highest frequency is around the mean (0), and the frequencies on both sides are symmetrical.



The P-P Plot of regression standardized residuals shows closeness to the diagonal line, indicating most of the residuals are normally distributed.



The Scatterplot of standardized residuals versus the regression Standardized Predicted value of this figure generally supports the assumption of homoscedasticity and linearity. The points are randomly scattered around the horizontal line at 0, with no clear pattern, shape, or curvature. This suggests that the assumption of homoscedasticity is likely met and appropriate for the data.

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values. According to standard guidelines, if VIF values are below 10 and tolerance values are above 0.001, the model achieves multicollinearity. In this model, All the VIF values are below 10 (ranging from 1.027 to 9.616), and all the tolerance values are above 0.001 (ranging from 0.162 to 0.973). Therefore, the assumption of no multicollinearity is considered satisfied in this model.

Coefficients ^a		Correlations									Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Tolerance	VIF	
		B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part			
1	(Constant)	1.428	.114		12.562	.000						

	1.1.1 How aware are you of wellness programs offered by your institute	.096	.030	.140	3.163	.002	.427	.173	.103	.539	1.855
	1.1.2 do you participate in the wellness programs at your work place	.047	.030	.075	1.588	.113	.456	.088	.052	.475	2.103
	1.1.3 How often do you participate in wellness programs offered by your workplace	.067	.041	.101	1.642	.102	.699	.091	.053	.280	3.565
	1.1.4 Have you received enough information to participate in the wellness activities offered by your workplace	.074	.049	.121	1.504	.134	.733	.083	.049	.162	6.162
	1.1.5 Do you feel that the current wellness programs align with your personal wellness goals	.158	.049	.235	3.239	.001	.704	.177	.105	.200	5.010
	1.1.6 Do you believe the current wellness programs contribute to a more productive workplace	.292	.071	.414	4.106	.000	.770	.222	.133	.104	9.616
	1.1.7 Do you agree that the current wellness programs implemented by the company consider all diverse needs that exist among the employees	-.077	.050	-.119	-1.535	.126	.654	-.085	-.050	.176	5.668
	1.1.8 How likely are you to recommend participation in wellness programs to your colleagues	.014	.019	.025	.745	.457	-.064	.041	.024	.973	1.027
a. Dependent Variable: jobsatisfaction											

Independence of errors:

The Durbin-Watson statistics are used to assess the independence of residuals. The range below

1.5 or above 2.5 indicates possible autocorrelation. In this model, the Durbin-Watson value of 1.805 falls within the acceptable range, which indicates the assumption of independence of errors is met.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.785 ^a	.617	.616	.44576	.617	533.095	1	331	.000	1.805

a. Predictors: (Constant), wellnessprogrames

b. Dependent Variable: jobsatisfaction

Research Question 2:

What is the influence of employee wellness programs on job satisfaction?

Job satisfaction is often referred to as the employees' overall feeling about their job. It's about their overall well-being and happiness in performing their job and in their working environment. Employee wellness programs such as mental health support, health screening, fitness programs, and stress management programs have been identified as positively related to their job satisfaction. It is important to understand how employee wellness programs influence their job satisfaction. This research question investigates the relationship between employee wellness programs and job satisfaction.

Assumption Testing and Model Diagnostics for Research Question 2.

Model Summary and Fit

The regression model shows a strong and significant result, as the P-value is <0.001, indicating the predictors as a group significantly predict job satisfaction. The R value is 0.811, showing a correlation coefficient between the observed and predicted values, indicating a strong positive linear relationship between the two variables.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.811 ^a	.658	.650	.42563	.658	77.973	8	324	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), 1.1.8 How likely are you to recommend participation in wellness programs to your colleagues, 1.1.2 Do you participate in the wellness programs at your work place, 1.1.5 Do you feel that the current wellness programs align with your personal wellness goals,

1.1.1 How aware are you of wellness programs offered by your institute, 1.1.3 How often do you participate in wellness programs offered by your workplace, 1.1.4 Have you received enough information to participate in the wellness activities offered by your workplace, 1.1.7 Do you agree that the current wellness programs implemented by the company consider all diverse needs that exist among the employees, 1.1.6 Do you believe the current wellness programs contribute to a more productive workplace

b. Dependent Variable: jobsatisfaction

ANOVA Summary

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) revealed a strong, statistically significant relationship between the employee wellness program and job satisfaction. The very high F-value (533.095) and very small p-value (0.000) indicate a very strong result. It also supports the study sample and indicates it's a good representation of the population.

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	105.928	1	105.928	533.095	.000 ^b
	Residual	65.771	331	.199		
	Total	171.699	332			
a. Dependent Variable: jobsatisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), wellnessprogrames						

Regression Coefficient

The Coefficient table includes 7 predictors: awareness, participation, access to information, alignment with personal goals, contribution to productivity, needs of employees, and recommendation. Among these, most of the predictors (Awareness, participation, access to information, alignment with personal goals, contribution to productivity) show statistically significant influence on job satisfaction; the P-value of these predictors is less than 0.01.

However, Participation & Recommendation are not statistically significant in this model.

Coefficients^a						
Unstandardized Coefficients				Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.428	.114		12.562	.000
	How aware are you of wellness programs offered by your institute	.096	.030	.140	3.163	.002
	do you participate in the wellness programs at your workplace	.047	.030	.075	1.588	.013
	Have you received enough information to participate in the wellness activities offered by your workplace	.074	.049	.121	1.504	.034
	Do you feel that the current wellness programs align with your personal wellness goals	.158	.049	.235	3.239	.001
	Do you believe the current wellness programs contribute to a more productive workplace	.292	.071	.414	4.106	.000

	Do you agree that the current wellness programs implemented by the company consider all diverse needs that exist among the employees	-.077	.050	-.119	-1.535	.026
	How likely are you to recommend participation in wellness programs to your colleagues	.014	.019	.025	.745	.457
a. Dependent Variable: jobsatisfaction						

Summary of findings

Based on the analysis, it suggests that wellness programs generally contribute to job satisfaction. It indicated that most of the staff are aware of wellness programs and recognize their impact on work productivity; however, the participation in these programs remains low, possibly due to timing, communication, and lack of inclusivity. Linearity and homoscedasticity are suitable for the model. Normality of residuals, assessed using Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, is mostly met, with a few deviations noted. No multicollinearity was detected, and the independence of errors was confirmed as acceptable. The regression analysis indicated a strong and significant relationship between the two variables.

Therefore, the findings suggest that employee wellness programs generally contribute to job satisfaction in the academic staff of colleges and universities in the Maldives.

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE STUDIES

Discussion

This study found a strong link between academic staff who were well aware of employee wellness programs and perceived that these initiatives improved their work productivity, resulting in higher job satisfaction. This finding aligns with the existing literature, especially a recent study by Martinez & Penzenstadler (2025), which identified that comprehensive wellness programs lead to measurable gains in both employee satisfaction and work productivity. This finding also strongly supports research by Kwasu et al. 2024, suggesting that comprehensive wellness programs positively influence employee wellbeing at work, their job satisfaction, and productivity. Furthermore, an extensive review of employee wellness initiatives constantly demonstrates that such programs, particularly those that address both mental and physical needs of employees, contribute to a more engaged, satisfied, and productive workforce (Ishag, 2023).

According to the findings, despite awareness about the programs, the actual participation was limited among the academic staff, with only around 24% engaging in these programs regularly (mean \approx 2.47). Additionally, a significant portion of respondents reported limited information about these programs (mean \approx 2.19). Critically, these factors still have a significant impact on employee job satisfaction, highlighting that awareness doesn't guarantee higher engagement in these programs. This finding aligns with recent research, showing that employees' intention to participate, availability, and clarity of program information are more reliable predictors of job satisfaction than frequency of their participation (Tran 2023; Kosec et al., 2022). This highlights that prioritizing program clarity and perceived organizational support (Pena et al, 2024; Tran, 2023), as these factors are key to improving employee satisfaction, morale, and engagement.

A significant finding of this study is that the academic staff whose personal wellness goals aligned with the available program offers experienced significantly higher job satisfaction ($P=.001$). this finding is well supported by recent research, which indicated that the greatest employee wellbeing is achieved when wellness initiation is tailored to employees' diverse needs, rather than a one-size- fits-all (Janseen et al., 2022; Reupert et al., 2023). This highlights how personalized wellness programs are crucial, as they lead to deeper employee engagement and better outcomes, achieving personal and job satisfaction (Grawitch & Ledford, 2023).

This study observed that decrease in job satisfaction when employees felt wellness programs failed to address the diverse needs of employees ($P=.026$). According to Gonsalves et al. (2024), perceived exclusion in the work environment, including employee wellness programs, can substantially impact on employee morale, engagement, and retention rate. This indicates, equity, inclusivity, and diversity must be included in wellness programs to ensure their success and impact on employee wellbeing and job satisfaction (Shore et al., 2023).

This study revealed that the willingness of academic staff of colleges and universities in the Maldives to recommend wellness programs in their institutes did not correlate with their job satisfaction. This suggests that the recommendation of these programs may not always be a true indicator of felt benefit. This observation aligns with a recent study by Nielsen & Noblet (2023), which indicated that the mere endorsement of programs often fails to assure measurable personal or organizational outcomes.

A recent study suggests that the organizational features, such as flexible work arrangements, reduced workloads, and supportive leadership, often have a stronger link to employee wellbeing than standalone wellness benefits (Janssen et al., 2022; Reupert et al., 2023). This study's findings reinforce this perspective, indicating that employee wellness programs contribute most effectively to job satisfaction when they are implemented within, and are an integral part of holistic supportive workplace (Ishag, 2023).

Recommendations

Based on the findings and results of this study, the following recommendations are offered to improve the effectiveness of current wellness programs offered by colleges and universities in the Maldives.

1. A comprehensive and centralized communication strategy should be established for wellness programs, which could include routine email updates, utilizing a high-visibility noticeboard in the staff area, and integrating wellness program details into the staff onboarding process. Additionally, utilizing digital platforms (eg, learning management systems) to promote wellness resources would be beneficial.
2. To maximize the effectiveness of these programs and maximize the impact, the implementation of an annual wellness needs assessment is crucial, through surveys or focus group discussions, to accurately identify the dynamic needs of employees.
3. flexible wellness options, such as diverse stress management workshops, convenient mental health check-ins, and work-life balance management strategies that directly meet individual preferences.
4. To ensure equitable and impactful wellness outcomes, wellness programs should consider the diverse needs of all employees, including gender, age, disability, and cultural background.
5. Introduce impact-based evaluation metrics, such as measuring improvements in employee well-being, reductions in stress levels, improvements in mental and physical health concerns, and lower absenteeism rates.
6. Implementing a strong feedback mechanism will enhance program refinement and improvement.
7. Pair the wellness programs with broader organizational reforms, such as flexible work policies, fair workload distribution, and supportive leadership practices.
8. Implement digital wellness programs, such as tele-counselling, online fitness sessions, and mindfulness apps.
9. Provide flexible timing to accommodate varied academic schedules.

Implications:

To maximize the impact of wellness programs in academic institutions, this study provides several crucial insights. To start, the observed positive link between awareness of wellness programs and job satisfaction indicates that institutions should invest in effective communication strategies and program visibility for their wellness programs. This approach is well supported by recent research, which highlights how perceived

organizational support, especially in communications regarding wellness programs, significantly enhances job satisfaction (Shimazu et al., 2020; Saka et al., 2021).

Second, this study identified that the job satisfaction rate is higher when wellness programs align with employees' personal wellness goals. This finding supports previous literature by Grawitch et al. (2020); Zhang et al. (2021), suggesting the need for tailored and inclusive wellness programs to foster stronger commitment and participation. The study also found that despite awareness about the programs, the participation rate is low due to program accessibility, timings, and cultural relevance. The inclusive perceptions of wellness programs directly impact job satisfaction and have profound implications for organizational equity and culture. When wellness programs are not perceived as inclusive or diverse, they might unintentionally reinforce exclusion or hierarchy (Roberts et al., 2021). Therefore, inclusiveness is a non-negotiable element in both wellness program designs and implementation. The recommendation of wellness programs to colleagues has minimal power over job satisfaction. This suggests that the endorsement isn't a reliable indicator to measure meaningful engagement and satisfaction.

Overall, this study reveals that the way to boost employee job satisfaction among academic staff is to adopt a holistic, inclusive, and strategically aligned framework for employee wellness programs. Organizations that overlook wellness programs may risk lower engagement and high turnover. And a reduction in their overall productivity. By recognizing the value of these programs and improving their effectiveness, academic institutions can enhance their employees' well-being and their competitive edge in the industry. Moreover, employee wellness programs provide stability and assurance of well-being and satisfaction.

Moving forward, institutions should consider intensifying and refining their wellness programs to meet the specific needs of their employees by tailoring the programs that align with employee needs, demands, employee demographics, and institutional culture to ensure more effective and successful wellness programs.

Future studies

The results of this study may not apply to all sectors because of differences in organizational characteristics. Therefore, future research should be conducted across diverse industries, preferably through comparative studies among various sectors. Additionally, future studies should explore different variables that influence the relationship between wellness programs and job satisfaction, such as organizational culture, leadership support, and perceived employee workload, which could further clarify the factors that improve or hinder the program's effectiveness. Furthermore, future research should include other methods like interviews and focus group discussions to deepen the understanding of employee perceptions, motivations, and challenges related to wellness programs.

Also, future research should incorporate additional variables such as leadership support, organizational culture, or workload flexibility could provide deeper insight into factors influencing wellness program participation. Furthermore, future research may benefit from mixed-methods approaches to capture richer employee perspectives.

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