

Benefits of Employee Wellness Programmes from a Mining Perspective: Views from a Mining Company in Zvishavane

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ABSTRACT

The paper explored benefits of EWPs among mine employees. The study was grounded on qualitative methodology and adopt a semi structured interviews, as data soliciting technique. The researcher used semi-structured interview guide. Purposive, simple random and convenience sampling was used in the study. The findings indicated that the mining employees are of middle aged group who are productive and males are than females. Managers poorly participated in the study which could mirror their participation in the EWPs. Participants who had more years with the mine participated more. The overall objective of EWPs is healthy and productive workforce. EWPs were found to be are part of a mining company's organisational strategy. EWPs is housed under Medical Services Department. Work performance and productivity were found to be the overall benefits of EWPs through healthy employees and reduce time loss due to injury or sickness. The findings showed increased awareness on unhealthy practices such as excessive drinking alcohol, smoking and lack of regular exercises among mine employees. health outcomes such as weight loss to EWPs were found to be the driven force behind EWPs. incentives were seen as a motivator to attract employees to EWPs.

Key words: Employee Wellness Programme, Employee Benefits, Employee Health and Wellness.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines wellness as the ideal condition of wellbeing both physically such as (healthy body and mentally) such as (healthy mind) (Radler, Marcus, Griehs & Touger-Decker, 2014). The World Health Organisation fact sheet statistics indicate that in 2016, over 1.9 billion people who are older than 18 years of age were overweight and 650 million where obese worldwide (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/>). The World Health Report (2002) highlights that, "over one billion adults are overweight and at least 300 million are clinically obese in poor countries and about half a million people in North America and Western Europe die from obesity related diseases every year. This implies that the number of overweight and obese people worldwide has increased. Wellness is described as "a holistic integration of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing, fuelling the body, engaging the mind and nurturing the spirit" (Stoewen, 2017, p.1). Organisations worldwide invest a great deal of resources such as time and money into the design and implementation of workplace wellness programmes. In addition, Altwajri et al., (2019) defined wellness as a holistic, precautionary lifestyle chosen by individuals to take care of their health and minimise the chances of developing an illness, as well as to enhance the quality of life. Wellness in the mining sector is very important to all stakeholders such as employees, dependents and the community as it helps in providing healthy workforce for increased performance and productivity. This study sought to understand the benefits of employee wellness programme at mining company in Zvishavane, Zimbabwe.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Future of Wellness at work report produced in 2016 by the Global Wellness Institute indicated that around 3.2 billion employees across the globe are in poor health and not well (GWI, 2016). Wellness programs are becoming more prevalent in society as healthcare providers try to lower costs of chronic diseases, employers strive for a healthy workforce, and individuals become motivated to take control of their own health through

technological advances that quantify wellness. Every employer wants healthy and happy employees. Organisations require employees who are both mentally and physically balanced in terms of their health status to perform and survive the constant changes taking place in the 21st-century world of work (Ferreira, 2012).

The concept of wellness was developed post-World War II after employers realised that unhealthy and poor working conditions harmed employee's well-being and their performance (Kunte, 2016). Employee wellness programmes were first formed from fitness programme for senior managers and later progressed after World War II to offering types of assistance for all employees (Sparling, 2010; Khoury, 2014). By the 1970s, many employers focused on developing worksite health programmes (Khoury, 2014). From the start, wellness focused on physical activities, promoting healthy behaviours and weight management, but now wellness focuses on many initiatives within the wellness scope (Otenyo & Smith, 2017). Of late, wellness initiatives include financial wellness technology such as Finwelltech, which provides financial education to employees in countries such as South Africa (Moran, 2019).

Mayol et al. (2017) defined wellness as a holistic and self-driven process comprising of multi-dimensions of well-being. Furthermore, Baldwin et al., (2017) has been described wellness as a multidimensional phenomenon. Wellness is more than being free from illness, it involves a dynamic process of change and growth and a good or satisfactory condition of existence - a state characterised by health, happiness, prosperity and welfare (www.globalwellnessday.com).

According to Joubert, Grobler, and van Niekerk (2014), employee wellness is significantly impacted by how the environment and their capacities influence individuals. Employee wellness is "life satisfaction" (Bumhira et al., 2017, p. 223). Employee wellness reflects the degree to which an employee authentically, experiences connection with others and the world, and finds meaning in life and work (Johri and Misra, 2014). One particular concept which is very important to employee wellness is life satisfaction among workers. The main realms that have the greatest impact on life satisfaction of an employee are their job, daily activities, social contacts and family, health and income (Abolghasemi and Varaniyab, 2010). Job-related matters intrude into their non-work lives (Dockery, 2003; Sonnentag et al., 2013) as in most cases, employees do not leave all their workplace issues and work experiences at work.

Employee Wellness Programmes (EWP) has been defined as management-initiated wellness interventions to help employees cope with wellness challenges and improve their wellness to deliver on key performance areas (Schneck, 2016). In addition to that, Halloran (2017) describes EWP as employer-focused programmes intending to teach and train employees on correct healthy behaviours, nutritional choices, wellness coping mechanisms, and organisational policies to enhance employee wellness and performance in the organisation. Furthermore, employee wellness depends on organisational factors and individual capacity to respond to workplace situations. EWP is the responsibility of both the employee and the employer as they strive to achieve employee wellness and performance in the workplace (Schneck (2016) and Halloran (2017). In South Africa, EWPs began as safety initiatives in the mining industry and later the programme was revised to include the promotion of health, wellness, and productivity (Conradie et al. (2016).

Huang et al. (2016) indicates that EWP's consist of limited screening intervention and prevention-focused programmes. They focus on providing services related to physical activities and weight management, health risk assessments, and disease prevention approaches (Huang et al., 2016; McGrady et al., 2012). Griggs (2017) further articulated the approaches such as nutrition education, smoking cessation programmes, and stress management talks. The elements of wellness programmes vary from company to company and by geographical location (Ngeno & Sma, 2014, 34). Sieberhagen, Pienaar and Els (2011) outline that; EWPs are intervention strategies that the employer establishes to promote and inspire the wellbeing of employees in the work environment.

Problem Statement

According to Hoque and Dawad (2016), employee health is a priority in this competitive environment, both at a local as well as an international level. Organisations are still facing employee wellness related issues (Sabharwa et al., 2019). Organisations are currently becoming more aware of issues related to employee

wellness or well-being (Hooper, 2004) as the 2013 Workforce Report in South Africa revealed that there has been a global increase in organisational wellness programmes (Wein, 2015). According to Ott-Holland et al., (2017), there are limited studies that focus on how EWP's are linked to other organisational scorecard measures. With the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases in the working age population, employers are concerned about the cost of employer through health insurance, sponsored health coverage, productivity and there is increased public interest in integrating wellness activities with employers' responsibilities (Hillier, Fewell, Cann & Shephard, 2005). The mining company has started implementing wellness programmes long ago, the wellness programmes included various activities which were intended to benefit mine workers. Participation for the programme was free to all employees. However, there is a great need to explore whether the EWP positively impacts on employee wellness and performance. As indicated by Mattke et al. (2012), that there is lack of evidence linking employee wellness programmes with their expected benefits in many mining organisations. Zula (2014), further corroborates that in most cases, organisations do not have sufficient mechanisms internally to assess the impact of EWP. A lot of questions have been asked by stakeholders, particularly workers concerning workplace wellness programs, its benefits, importance to both the employees and employers. Therefore, the paper explored the benefits of EWPs at mining company in Zvishavane.

Objective Of The Paper

To explore the benefits of employee wellness (EWPs) at mining company in Zimbabwe

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the National wellness institute wellness model. The National Wellness Institute developed a wellness model at University setting focusing on a notion that wellness is interdependent and that there is more than one wellness dimension. These are physical, spiritual, occupational, social, emotional, and environmental (NWI, 2018; Oliver et al., 2018). According to Milner et al., (2015), the growing worldwide incidence of chronic diseases which affect employees, further prompted the emergence of EWP as a health-promoting intervention in the workplace. Buxton et al. (2020) further emphasised that EWP are both a matter of business and social change strategy.

Figure 1: Six Wellness Dimensions (NWI, 2018)



Source: Adapted from the National Institute of Wellness (2018, p. 2)

The dimensions of employee wellness programmes, according to NWI (2018) and Oliver et al., (2018) are as follows:

Social wellness – deals with how employees interact with other employees. It encourages employees to contribute to other people's lives and the environment positively rather than being selfish. The social dimension encourages employees to contribute to the human and physical environment for the common welfare of the community (Hoffmann, Farrell, Lilford, Ellis, & Cant, 2007).

- **Occupational wellness** – It encourages individuals to choose careers, which are in line with their values, rather than to choose jobs that are salary driven while still maintaining work-life balance.
- **Spiritual wellness** – This dimension encourages individuals to search for purpose and meaning in life, including faith and hope, and commitment to one’s beliefs that give a sense of meaning and purpose. In addition, it is the ability to establish peace and harmony in the workplace, to develop congruency between values and actions and to realise a common purpose that binds people together.
- **Intellectual wellness** – This dimension encourages individuals to be creative and stretch their minds to be more productive, for example, developing critical and innovative thinking skills. Employees’ intellectual wellness is enhanced by learning new concepts, improving skills and seeking challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning.
- **Emotional wellness** - This dimension encourages individuals to be aware and accept their emotions as well as feelings, rather than ignoring them.
- **Physical wellness** – This dimension encourages individuals to opt for nutritional meals and physical exercises that improve health, rather than compromising it (National Institute of Wellness, 2018).

National Wellness Institute (NWI) model is one of the many wellness models that comprehensively looks at the most critical parts of wellness in any sector. The model is also crucial as it helped the researcher gain insight on the benefits of the EWP among mine employees. The NWI model is an evidence-based model which provides insight into relative factors that are well utilised in an organisational setting like the mining sector.

METHODOLOGY

The chapter brought out the analytical framework of the research to light. The research design, the study area, the population and data collection methods were discussed. The study was grounded on qualitative methodology and adopt a semi-structured interview, as data soliciting technique. The choice of qualitative methodology was influenced by the nature of the study, which was explorative in nature and this also enabled the study to capture the perspectives of the participants on the benefits of EWPs at a mining company in Zvishavane.

The study population included all mine employees. The target population was 50 (fifty) employees from various departments within a mining company. The researcher used semi-structured interview guide to collect data from the mine employees using simple random and convenience sampling.

Figure 2: Map of Zvishavane



RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

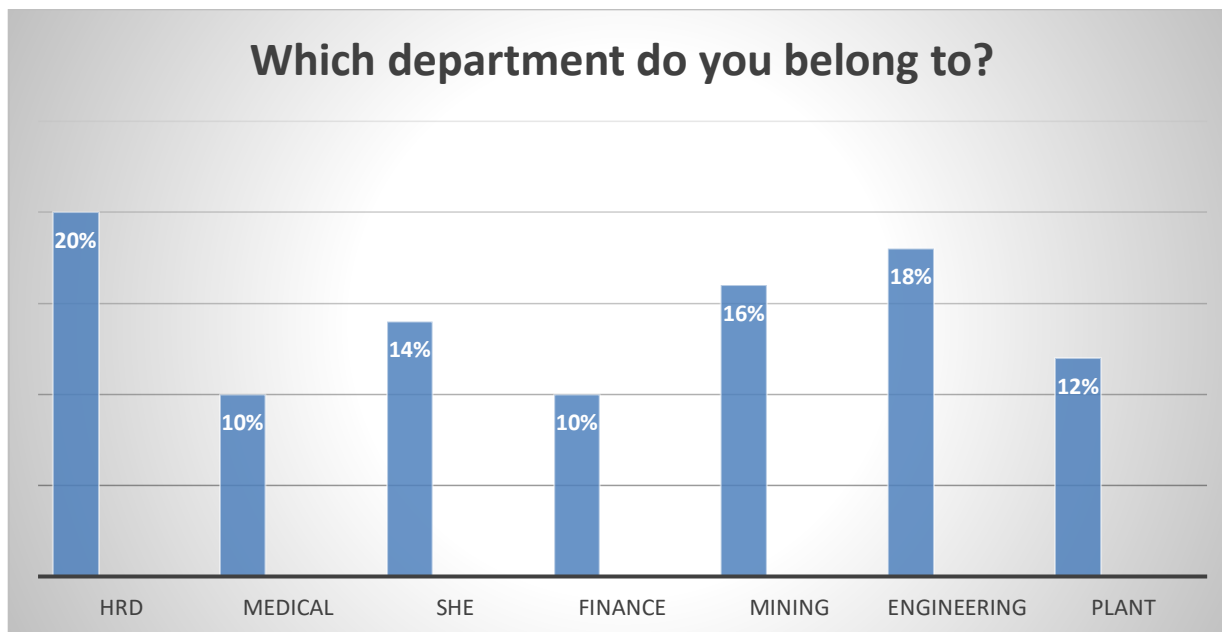
Table 1: Age and Gender of the participants.

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-25 years	15	30%
26 -49 years	30	60%
50 years &above	5	10%
Sex		
Male	40	80%
Female	10	20%

The above table describes the age and the sex of the participants. The results showed that 60% of the participants were between the ages of 31-49 years. It was followed by 30% of the participants who were between the ages of 18-30 years. Lastly, 10% of the participants were 50 years and above. On the gender of the participants, 80% were males whilst 20% were females.

Which department do you belong to?

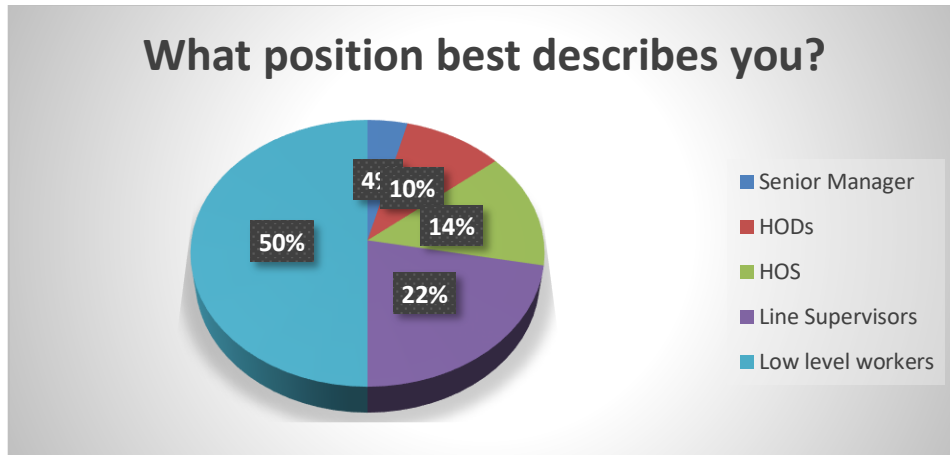
Figure 1: Which department do you belong to?



The above figure indicates the department which the participants belongs to. The results showed that HRD had 20% of the participants. It was followed by Engineering which had 18%. The mining department had 16%. SHE had 14%. Plant had 12 % of the participants. Lastly, Medical and Finance had 10% of the participants each.

What position best describes you?

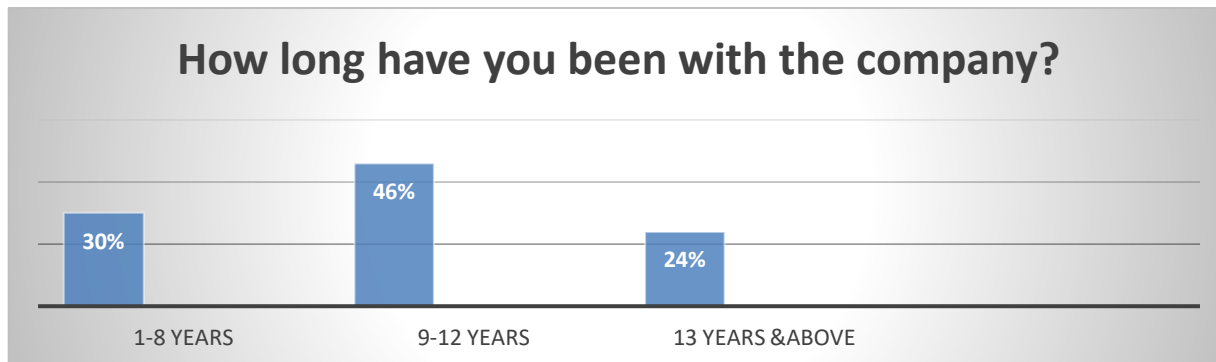
Figure 2: What position best describes you?



The figure above indicates the positions of the participants who took part in the study. The results showed that low level workers who participated in the study were 50%. It was followed by 22% which constituted line supervisors. 14% of the participants were HOS. HODs who participated in the study were 10%. Lastly, 4% of the participants were senior managers.

How long have you been with the company?

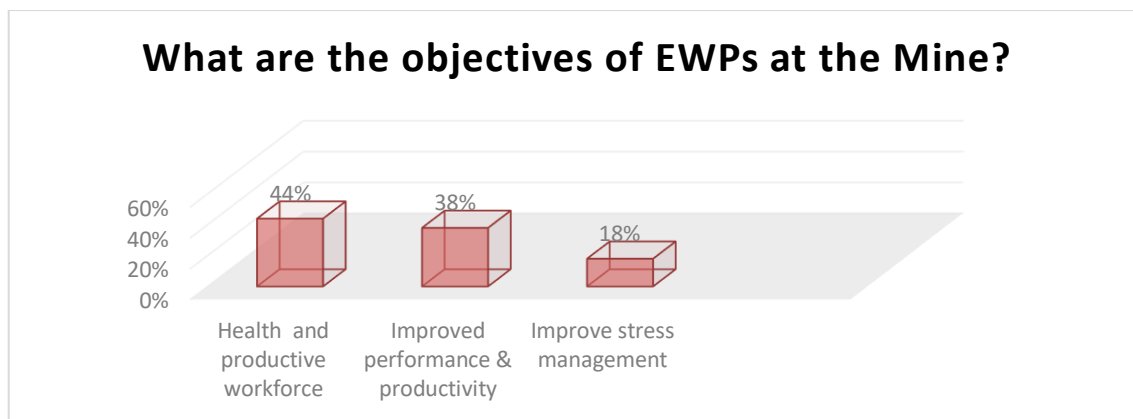
Fig 3: How long have you been with the company?



The above figure indicates how long the participants have been with the company. The results showed that 46% have been with the company for 9-12 years. It was followed by 30% of the participants who have been with the company for 1-8 years. Lastly 24% of the participants have been with the Mining House for 13 years and above.

Objectives of EWPs at the mining company?

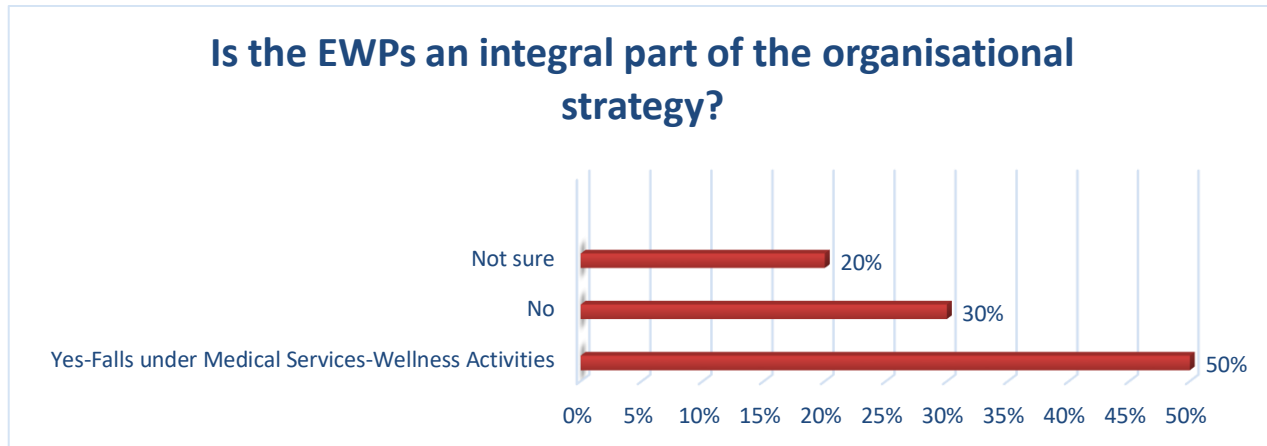
Figure 4: Objectives of EWPs at the mining company?



The figure above indicates the objectives of EWPs at mine. The results showed that 44% of the participants indicated that health and productive workforce was behind the EWPs. It was followed by 38% of participants who indicated that EWPs are for improved performance and productivity at the mine. Lastly 18% attributed it to improved stress management among the workers.

Is the EWP an integral part of the organisational strategy?

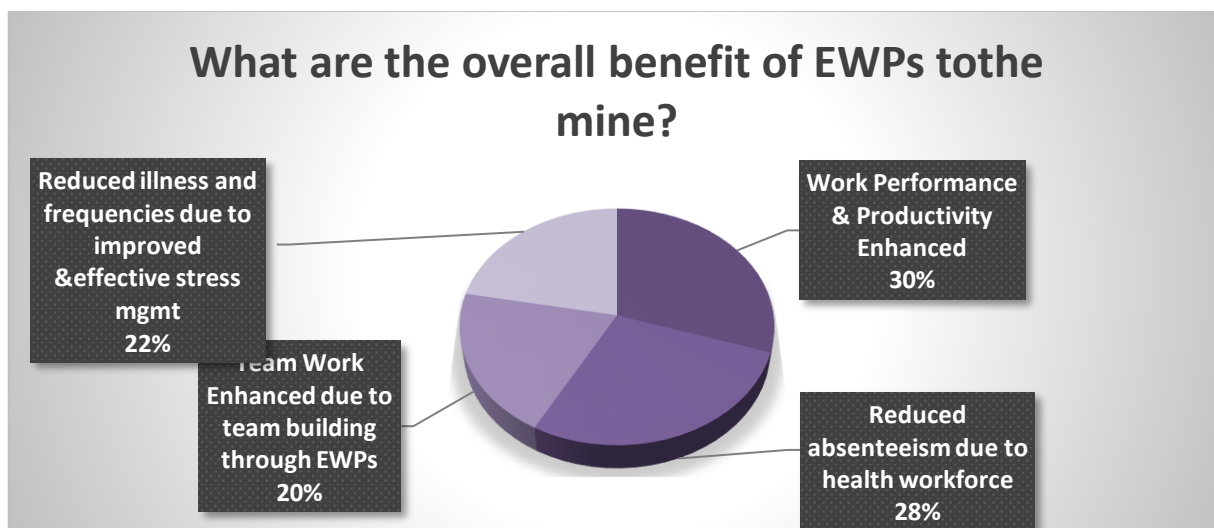
Figure 5: Is the EWP an integral part of the mines organisational strategy?



The above figure indicated whether the EWP are part of mine’s organisational strategy. The results showed that 50% of the participants were aware that wellness is part and parcel of the company strategy as they have the wellness section under Medical Services Department. Then 30% of the participants denied that EWP were part of the company’s policy. Lastly,20% were not sure whether EWP were part of the company’s strategy or not.

What are the overall benefits of EWP to the mine?

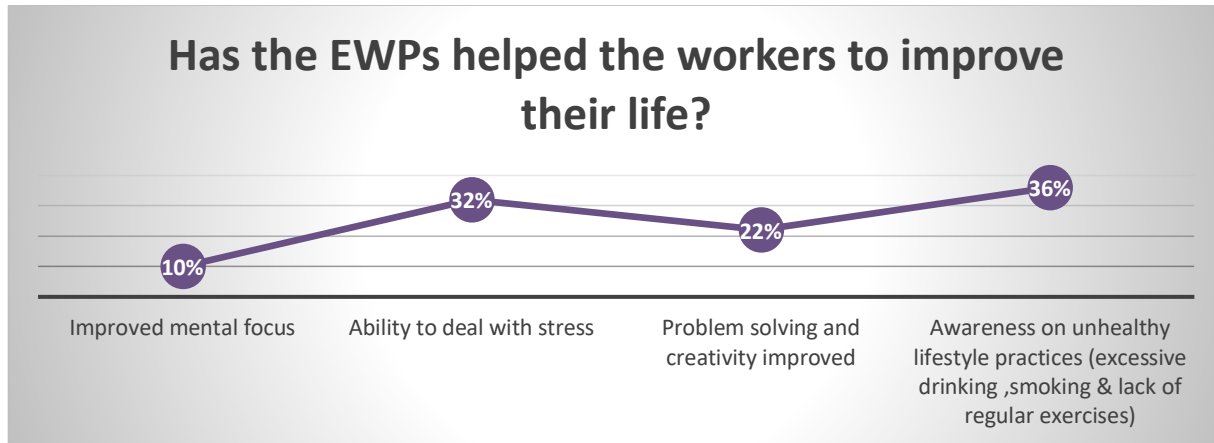
Figure 6: What are the overall benefits of EWP to the mine?



The above figure indicated the overall benefits of EWP to the mine. The results showed that 30% of the participants indicated that work performance and productivity enhanced through EWP at the mine. It was followed by 28% of the participants who indicated that EWP helped in reducing absenteeism due to a health workforce gained through EWP. Then 22% of the participants indicated that EWP helped in reducing illness and illnesses frequencies among the workers due to improved and effective stress management. Lastly,20% of the participants indicated that team work was enhanced through team building gained by EWP.

Has the EWP helped the workers to improve their life?

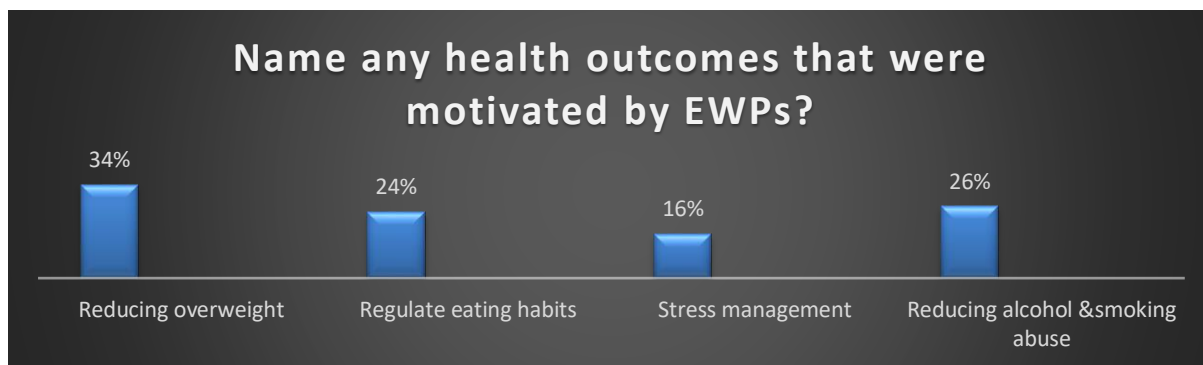
Figure 7: Has the EWP helped you improve their life?



The above figure indicated how EWPs has helped workers to improve life. The results showed that 36 % has increased awareness on unhealthy practices such as excessive drinking alcohol, smoking and lack of regular exercises. It was followed by 32% of the participants who improved their ability to deal with stresses. The other 22% of the participants benefited through improved problem solving and creativity. Lastly, 10% of the participants indicated that EWPs helped workers to improve their mental focus.

Name any health outcomes that were motivated by EWPs?

Figure 8: Name any health outcomes that were motivated by EWPs?

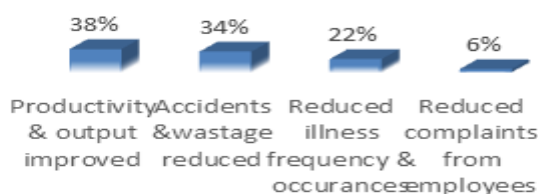


The figure above indicated health outcomes which were motivated by EWPs. The results showed that 34% of the participants attributed weight loss to EWPs. It was followed by 26% of the participants who attributed reduction in alcohol consumption and smoking to EWPs. Then 24% of the participants managed to regulate their eating habits. Lastly, 16% of the participants attributed EWPs to improved stress management.

How does EWPs help workers increase their work motivation?

Figure 9: How does EWPs help workers increase their work motivation?

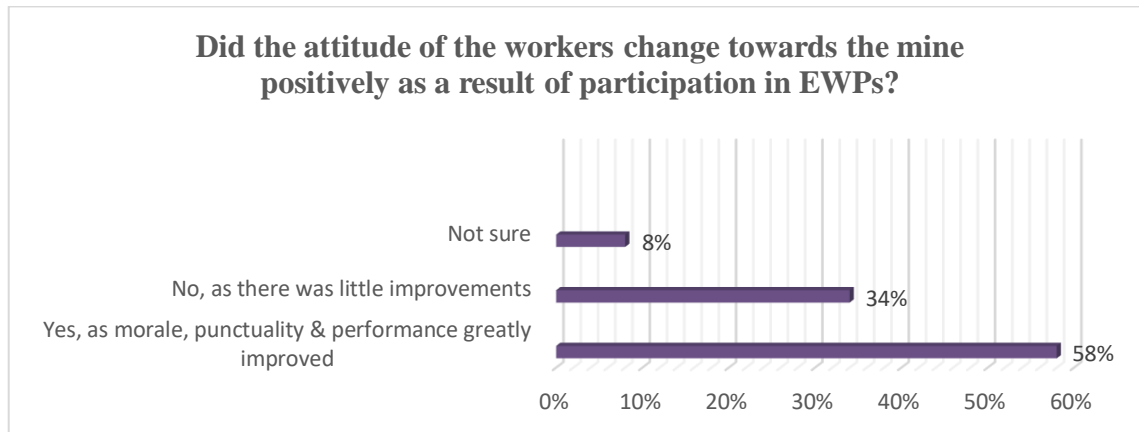
How does EWPs help workers increase their motivation?



The figure above indicates how EWPs help workers to increase their motivation at the mine. The results showed that 38% of the participants attributed productivity and output improved as a motivator. It was followed by 34% of the participants who attributed to accidents and wastage reduction as a result of EWPs. Then 22% of the participants indicated that reduced illness frequency and occurrences also acted as a motivator among the workers. Lastly, 6% of the participants indicated that there was reduced complaints of any nature from the employees.

Did the attitude of the workers change towards the mine positively as a result of participation in EWPs?

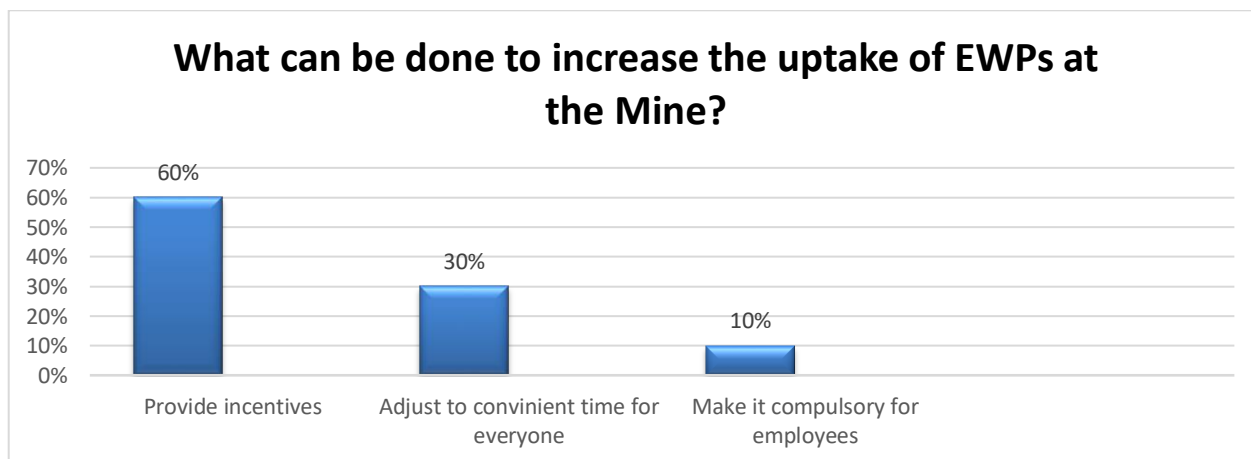
Figure 10: Did the attitude of the workers change towards the mine positively as a result of participation in EWPs?



The above figure indicated whether the attitudes of the workers change towards positively as a result of EWPs. The results showed that 58% agreed that the attitudes of the workers change towards the mine positively as a result of the EWPs as morale, punctuality and performance greatly improved. It was followed by 34% of the participants disagreed that the attitude changes positively as they notice little improvements. Lastly, 8 % of the participants were not sure whether it changed positively or negatively.

What can be done to increase uptake of EWPs at the mine

Figure 11. What can be done to increase the uptake of EWPs at the mine?



The figure above indicates what can be done to increase the uptake of EWPs at the mine. The results showed that 60% of the participants advocated for provision of incentives among the mine employees in order to attract them to the wellness programme. It was followed by 30% of the participants who indicated that adjusting to convenience time which encompass every employee will be beneficial. Lastly, 10% of the participants indicated that by making wellness compulsory, it will definitely increase the uptake of the programme.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the study show that more participants were middle aged who are more productive in the mining sector. Findings from the study were cemented by Powell (2014), who indicated that it is crucial for organizations to understand how best the characteristics of employees such as age, gender, and educational background influence the decisions about the uptake of the wellness services and the perceptions they have about the programme. In addition to that Carlson (2014) recommended examining the workforce of the company to determine certain factors, such as age and physical location, and then making a decision that takes those factors into consideration before setting up EWPs. Furthermore, the findings matched to the findings of Franz and Rene (2012) who argued that employee cooperation and teamwork is dependent on their ages. Moreover, Magoshi and Chang (2009) and Sakuda (2011) also argue that the diversity of employee ages affects the quality of relationship which might affect team work and the effects of EWPs. Some researches show that younger workers are more likely to participate in wellness programs.

The males were more than the females by a bigger margin. The gender inequality from the mining sector was greatly exhibited from the findings of the study as indicated by females' participants that were low. The findings also indicate that cultural and gender beliefs represent a significant challenge in the effective management of an EWP in different organisations. Different cultural and gender perception are believed to exist, which makes some employees uncomfortable to participate and freely share information which impacts on their wellness. Findings from a study conducted by Gee (2017) & Sood et al., (2019) recommend that gender and cultural issues should be considered when designing and promoting EWPs to meet everybody's wellness needs in the workplace. The findings of this study were in contrast to findings from Namibian study by (Maletzky 2017) who indicated that workplace wellness programmes in the public service is mostly attended by females.

The findings from the study indicated that all departments were represented though the HRD had more participants. Similarly, Swanepoel, et al., (2005) further argues that people management is no longer the sole responsibility of HR specialists, but rather a dual responsibility of the HR specialists and all other line managers. The sample therefore comprised of diverse departments which could contribute to a variety of experiences of the participants on EWPs. The more diverse the participants, the more valuable ideas generated for the wellness programme at the mine. However, the sample was sufficiently representative to gain insight into the experiences of mining sector employees in Zvishavane.

The findings reveal that low level workers participated more than other categories such as senior managers, HODs, HOS and line supervisors. The senior managers were the least represented participants in the study. Wu et al. (2017) argued that employee wellness is a competitive strategy that is normally ignored by management. The findings from this study were supported by Madikologa (2014), in a study in Gauteng revealed that line managers were not willing to participate nor support the EWP due to miscommunication and failure to consult with relevant stakeholders. The findings were further supported by Maletzky (2017) who indicated that it is a challenge to get full participation from management and supervisors as wellness activities are mostly attended by employees in non-management positions. Cascio (2006) further argues the important role of management in dealing with EWPs, that managers across all levels of the organisation need to support EWP interventions as the absence of such could lead to programme failure. Furthermore, (Maletzky 2017 & Hill-Mey et al. (2013) encourage attendance by managers in all wellness programmes encourages other employees to regularly participate in EWPs.

The findings showed that more workers had been with the mine for a long time (46%) which is 9-12 years. The research findings support the notion that the participants had sufficient experience to participate in the study. Thus, the sample was representative of a more mature workforce and was sufficiently representative in the number of years' categories to interpret the meanings behind their experiences. Moreover, the findings were supported by Martin & Barnard, (2013) who indicated that diversity factors such as race, gender, years in service and position in the organisation often influence the way in which participants relate to experiences. Findings of this study is further supported by Mabasa and Chelule (2019) who reported that those who participated in EWP in the mining industry had a favourable perception of the programme.

The findings indicated that health and productive workforce was behind the EWP's. Other participants (38%) mentioned improved performance, productivity and stress management. Healthy employees are progressively profitable, give a higher work yield, and adapt better to requests to work harder. Dube (2020) further stated that, when employees are not well enough, they fail to deliver the best of their ability's work performance. Simultaneously, Abe et al., (2016) indicated that performance of any organisation depends on how well its employees perform. In addition, Ferreira & Groenewald (2016) propounded that a healthy workforce is a happier and more productive workforce. The research findings were further supported by Wilding (2017) who indicated that unhealthy and unhappy workplaces can affect employees' wellness, which could lead to job burnout, fatigue and depression. Ioannou et al., (2015) further corroborates that when employees are experiencing ill health, they are less likely to perform well at work or experience job satisfaction.

Productivity, in most cases increase due to employees being highly motivated through the EWP's. The findings of this study were supported by Assiri, (2016); Okoye & Ezejiofor, (2013) who indicated that poor employee performance impacts negatively on productivity, service delivery, and profit in the organisation. Additionally, (Mungania et al., 2016) further corroborates that EWP's are driving performance in the long-term in many organisations.

Findings from the study indicated that half of the of the participants (50%) were aware that wellness is part and parcel of the company strategy and is housed under Medical Services Department as a section. Then a few (20%) were not sure whether EWP's were part of the company's strategy or not. The findings were supported by Mungania et al., (2016); Sieberhagen, Pienaar & Els, (2011), Radler et al., (2015); & Griggs, (2017), who indicated that by having an EWP strategy in place could assist the organisations to manage employee wellness and performance. As such, employee performance is supported by various organisational strategies and initiatives (Mungania et al., 2016). More importantly, organisations are obliged to design and implement interventions to improve employee wellness (Bophela & Govender, 2015) and enhance employee performance (Sangachin & Cavuoto, 2018). lastly, Mazur & Mazur-Małek, (2018) indicated that EWP should be a main concern and strategic item for every sector and company.

Findings from the study indicated the overall benefits of EWP's to the mine. More participants attributed work performance and productivity that is enhanced through EWP's at the mine. The findings were supported by Otuonye (2014) who indicated that participating in EWP's yielded positive results and improved employee wellness, which, in turn, leads to improved employee performance. It was further supported by the research conducted by Churchill et al., (2014), Gubler et al., (2018) and Koruda, (2016) who revealed that EWP's plays a significant role in enhancing employee wellness and performance. In addition to that, the findings from this study were supported by Tuwai et al. (2015) who conducted a study in the commercial banking sector in Kenya on EWP's, the results showed a positive relationship between employee wellness and performance. Kruger & Jacobs (2019), Madison (2016) supported further the EWP benefits such as lowering employer healthcare bills, improving retention, managing absenteeism, and improving employee wellness and performance. Furthermore, literature shows that EWP is especially useful in improving employee wellness and performance (Churchill et al., 2014; Gubler et al., 2018; Koruda, 2016). Finally, several studies have indicated that EWP's can be advantageous and valuable for both the employer and the employee (Hasijani & Sabale, 2018; Kocakulah & Powers, 2015; Soldano, 2016).

The findings from the study showed that EWP's has helped workers to improve their life as a result of increased awareness on unhealthy practices such as excessive alcohol drinking, smoking and lack of regular exercises. The CDC (2012) has identified four adjustable health risk behaviours, that is, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, excessive alcohol consumption and tobacco use. These behaviours thereby cause most the disease and early death linked to chronic illnesses. In a study in America, EWP's managed to improve employee wellness by reducing the smoking rate to 6%, which was 13% lower than the US average of 19% in 2013 (Griggs, 2017). The findings of this study were supported by Kunte (2016) who described EWP's as the company's health-related initiatives to reduce employee's health risk behaviours and encourage healthy behaviours. Additionally, Maletzky (2017), Mungania et al. (2016) and Sieberhagen et al. (2011) corroborated that many organisations introduce EWP's to contribute to a culture that is supportive of all employees and their well-being.

The findings from the study indicated that health outcomes motivated participating in EWP, the findings showed that many participants attributed weight loss to EWP. According to a report by the ILO on workplace stress, 38% of workers worldwide suffer from excessive pressure on the job and 24% are actively disengaged at work. In a study conducted in the City of Houston, it was found that EWP added value through weight loss and improved participation in physical activities (Wright, 2017). The findings of this study were supported by Radler et al. (2015) in a twelve-week study conducted at a university on EWP on body mass index. It was reported that about 66% of employees improved on weight loss.

The findings from the study showed that many (58%) participants agreed that the attitudes of the workers change towards the mine positively as a result of the EWP as morale, punctuality and performance greatly improved. Wellness programmes can change the way individuals feel about their workplace (attitudinal) and can also change the way individuals behave outside work (social) (Swayze & Burke, 2013). Likewise, the findings were similar to what Swarnalatha and Prasanna (2012) noted that employees participating in EWP hold a positive attitude about the organisation and its values. In addition, the findings were supported by Panepento (2004), as cited by du Preez (2010: 75), who indicated that companies find that the focus on employee wellness makes employees feel better and this result in higher morale.

The findings showed that (60%) of the participants advocated for provision of incentives among the mine employees in order to attract them to the wellness programme. Rewards are used to motivate employees to participate in the EWP. These findings concur with Powel (2014), who stated that the use of incentives to motivate employees to take part in wellness programmes has become a common trend world-wide. In addition to that, the findings were supported by Baicker et al., (2013) who noted that it is crucial to introduce an incentive to the programme so as to maintain the culture of EWP. Lastly, Liu et al. (2012), supports the findings by indicating that companies can make its employees feel appreciated by designing benefits that will increase their well-being and improving their own lives.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE MINE

Recommendations for the mine in terms of the effectiveness of its employee wellness programme:

- Rewards programme: Lastly, the mine should consider implementing rewards to EWP participants, such as branded mine regalia.
- Marketing and visibility: The findings of the study revealed that, though the respondents are aware of the existence of the EWP, the majority do not participate. The mine needs to implement another strategy of attracting and increasing visibility of EWP among mine workers.
- Needs assessment: Results also indicated that many of respondents did not benefit from the current EWP. It is therefore the researcher's recommendation that the mine conduct a needs assessment that will help them design a programme to address the needs of employees, thereby benefitting them.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the study showed the importance of EWP in the mining sector as this study address the benefits of EWP to both the employer and employee. EWP has several benefits among the participants from healthy benefits (improved employee wellness) to company benefits such as improved productivity and performance, as alluded on by Mungania et al. (2016) who found that EWP has a positive influence on employee wellness and performance. Senior managers were found to be relaxed to participate in the study which would improve EWP at the mine. The qualitative nature of this study assisted the researcher to explore EWP lived experiences among participants. In addition, it was certain that the focus of EWP is to provide employee support and counselling and advice to employees in all matters which impact on employee wellness, including work, family and financial problems. It is evident that the programme faces a few challenges such as fear of being judged, victimised and stigmatised; lack of trust with regards to the confidential handling of personal information; and finally. Makgato (2016) further highlights that one of the focus areas of EWP is to manage stress, which promotes quality of life and contributes to work-life balance. The findings are supported by Wein

(2015) and Mazur-Malek (2017) who argued that EWP improves employee wellness, morale, health status, and job-related stress.

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