

A Study Of Employee Engagement And Its Perceived Benefits With Respect To Health And Wellness In The IT Sector.

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ABSTRACT

Employee Wellness Programs play a very noteworthy role in the complete growth of an employee. And to go ahead with the research, the study mainly focuses on the wellness of the employees in the IT sector and how it helps the employee to be more engaged towards work. To speak about employee issues through wellness programs, a complete orderly review of literature has been done in order to fulfil the gap of linking employee engagement with the wellness program offered to the IT sector employees. It is found out that more wellness programs are required for the employees in order to be engaged and it motivates them to work more for the organisation as well and helps the employee live the best life possible – emotionally, enthusiastically, and professionally.

Keywords: Employee engagement, wellness, IT sector

AREA OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Area of Research/Problem Statement

Assessment of health and wellness programs for employee engagement and its perceived benefits from the employee's point of view in the IT sector.

Research Objective

Employee engagement is a concept that describes the level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job. An engaged employee cares about his/her work and feels responsible for the performance of the company. Such employees are a critical part of a company's success as they are in the organisation not just for the monetary benefits or their personal goals but also work very hard to achieve the goals set up by the leadership and the organisation.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To study employee engagement and its perceived benefits in the IT sector.
2. To understand the various wellness programs being offered by the IT companies

Research Gap

While there are numerous studies that link factors like culture, organisation environment, leadership, performance appraisal, and empowerment etc. to employee engagement resulting in employee productivity, very limited studies have done that help us understand the role of wellness and health programs as an important factor of employee engagement thereby improving employee productivity. This study was conducted with the aim of filling this research gap.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

What is Data Collection and methods of data collection?

Data collection is the method of collecting and gathering information, then measuring and analysing that information on variables of interest, in a systematic manner. The insights thus collected, are generally used for research studies. This step is common in all fields of study. While the data collection methods may vary, the importance of ensuring accurate and honest data collection remains the same.

Methods of Data Collection used in the research are-:

- Primary Data
- Secondary Data

For this research, the researchers have used primary data in which the data have been collected through questionnaires conducted in the form of Survey which was done using a closed ended questionnaire and using a 5 point Likert Scale.

The secondary data was collected from:

1. Related research papers
2. Books
3. Websites
4. Journals

A total of 103 responses have been recorded. Further to that, an analysis has been done to understand the data received

Primary Research Data

[Primary Responses](#), [Interactive Dashboard](#)

Data Collection Tool

The link for the data collection tool used in the study is as follows:

[Google Form Link](#)

Please Note: The responses obtained till 24th August, 2022 have been considered for analysis.

1.	Do you feel active participation in fitness activities helps in improving efficiency at the workplace?
2.	Do you feel your current job scenario allows you enough time to pursue your fitness goals?
3.	Do you feel your contribution matters in your team and does your team make you feel valued?
4.	Does your current job scenario match with your professional and financial goals?
5.	Do you feel you are able to manage the work stress effectively?
6.	Does your current routine let you maintain proper work life balance?
7.	Does your organisation conduct activities that helps you maintain/improve your mental and physical well-being?

PROFILE OF THE ORGANISATION

The researchers chose the IT industry as a whole to understand the wellness and health of employees as a factor of employee engagement as well as its benefits as perceived by the employees.

Information Technology or IT industry as we call it is a vast industry comprising different services like consulting, technology services as well as outsourcing. IT has put India on top of the global charts. It has transformed India from a bureaucratic economy to an innovative and entrepreneurial economy. In the FY 2021, there were about 2.8 million employees in the IT sector but as a whole the IT-BPM industry employed 4.5 million employees. It accounted for about 8% of India's GDP in 2020.

Some of the most notable companies in the Indian IT industry are TCS, Wipro, Infosys, Oracle, Cognizant, Accenture, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Mindtree etc. The researchers' have gathered the primary data by getting a questionnaire filled by some of the employees working in the above mentioned companies.

The attrition rate in the IT industry is quite high due to many reasons, some of them being lack of growth prospects, changing work dynamics, inadequate compensation, lack of work-life balance, high demand for qualified professionals etc. As of June 2022, the attrition rate in the Indian IT industry has been around 25%. The companies are struggling to retain talent and doing their best to find out ways to handle the attrition rate. Introducing people centric HR policies, career growth opportunities, providing a flexible work environment, improved pay packages, focusing on employee wellness and health both physical and mental etc.

According to a report by NASSCOM, there are over 50 Lakh employees working in the IT sector. The IT sector is undergoing the highest rate of attrition and layoffs post COVID-19 pandemic and global economic slowdown. To quote Mr. Pravin Rao (Infosys), "*people are still not emotionally connected with the company*". This may be one of the major reasons for higher attrition rate.

According to a business case in SHRM, it was discussed that employee engagement significantly affects employee retention, productivity, and loyalty.

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF KEY CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE PROBLEM

Employee engagement means how actively are the employees engaged in the organisation not just physically but mentally too. A highly engaged employee is passionate, enthusiastic, involved and motivated towards his work. Such employees identify with the goals of the organisation and work in tandem to achieve those goals. Employee engagement is critical to a company's success since it has an impact on satisfaction, productivity and morale of the employee. According to an article in *Economic Times* (Feb 17,2021) by Brinda Sarkar, Indian

employees recorded the world's second highest level of engagement, with one in five (20%) saying they felt fully engaged at work against a global average of 14%. The results feature in the Global workplace study 2020 by the ADP Research Institute which surveyed over 26,000 workers in 25 countries, to research the impact of COVID 19 on employee engagement and workplace resilience.

The concept of employee engagement was first introduced in 1990 by Dr. William Kahn. According to him people are involved at work at three levels physically, cognitively and emotionally. Employee engagement as a concept has become increasingly popular as organisations struggle to keep their employees engaged. With the onset of COVID 19 the workplace dynamics have changed drastically. People are working either from the office or home or in hybrid mode. These kinds of scenarios have raised challenges for the HR as well as leadership to engage employees in different setups. Now the question to ask here is what are the factors that influence employee engagement? Many studies and researches have been conducted by HR professionals and researchers in this regard to help understand the factors that influence it as well as finding its correlation with employee productivity and job satisfaction. One such study by Arti et al. (2016) lists down various factors that affect employee engagement at macro level that is, at organisation level and micro level that is, at individual level. According to them these variations in factors may arise due to differences in individual and job characteristics, gender diversity, ethnic diversity etc.

Here are some of the factors that affect employee engagement:

1. The workplace culture
2. Organisation environment
3. Performance Appraisal Systems
4. Health and Wellness Initiatives
5. Leadership of the organisation
6. Technology -the digital workplace experience
7. Career Development Opportunities

While there have been numerous studies linking most of the factors of employee engagement to employee productivity, very few researchers have focussed on Health and Wellness initiatives and the role they play. Post the pandemic wellness and health of the employees has become an extremely important factor which can lead to employee productivity.

According to the study by Shuck and Reio (2013), the factors that are related with the work have impact on physiological workplace climate because of the employee engagement, if the engagement is more than the employee would feel positive and engaged but if the

engagement is not what is required then it leads to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation.

According to Britto and Rajarathinam(2018),physical, mental and spiritual well-being is the secret to success but employees in their quest for glory and money fail to maintain a balance between the three. Wellness should be considered to be the way of life as physical, mental and well-being of an employee is the secret to success for any organisation to achieve the goals.

According to an article about workplace well-being, it says that when employees feel that their employers care about the well-being of their employees they feel more energetic towards work and are more likely to recommend the same to other friends and employees won't mind going the extra mile for the organisation.

According to the article, it says that to have a positive impact on the work environment,one should promote positive employee engagement ,workplace satisfaction and personal well-being so that the employees feel more engaged towards their work life and indirectly it will help the organisation to achieve the goals.

Employee engagement can be affected by similarity, feeling supported by a supervisor, common goals and visions, and communication. Higher the employee engagement the employee productivity increases.

According to the article published by Press Trust of India on 30th Jan, 2022, employee engagement and retention are the most affected aspects of the IT sector post COVID 19 pandemic. As per their survey, 89% leaders admitted that these two aspects were the hardest to achieve during and after pandemic.

It also states that, organisations are facing challenges in achieving active employee engagement such as lack of sense of association, reduced inter connectedness, team collaboration, and work- life balance, which in return is resulting in a high attrition rate.

The COVID crisis has highlighted the need of focussing on mental and physical well-being of employees.

This study also highlights how employers can keep their employees engaged and motivated, through salary corrections, monetary benefits.

The article in the Education Times dated 29th June, 2022 stated that according to the survey across 250 industries, the importance of employee engagement, hybrid work culture has become a new norm.

Nearly 25% of the organisations are conducting employee engagement activities on a quarterly basis. But monthly activities are still a far -fetched aspect , because only 8% are following the trend in the present scenario.

Employees are invaluable assets of any organisation and by ensuring their excellent mental and physical health, helps them to perform well. Therefore health and wellness of the employees usually have a direct impact on the productivity and profits of a company. Employee wellness programs are programs undertaken by an employer or an organisation with the motive to improve employee's physical and mental health. This may also help employees in overcoming particular health issues. These programs can be offered in various ways -

- Employer offering compulsory employee training or seminars
- Working with a third-party vendor offering a variety of wellness programs.

Benefits of Employee Wellness Programs

Even though the benefits of an employee wellness program may be hard to see at first instance, digging down on the topic will depict the advantages that an employee wellness programs can accrue. Physical and mental well-being has a direct impact on the productivity of employees. Poor health behaviours are usually linked to high levels of unproductivity and ultimately lead to higher health risks. These programs also make employees feel valued and admired. This will boost the employee morale. This will ultimately lead to more enthusiastic employees at work. This may also help in reducing absenteeism.

There are many ways that employers can incorporate wellness into their workplace and their employee's lives. Some of the popular employee wellness programs that have been incorporated in various organisations and have actually worked well have been listed below -

- Healthy lunch and snacks – Healthy snacking options are being provided at the cafeterias so as to promote the habit of healthy eating. Some of the organisations have also made the arrangements to provide the home made lunch available to the employees from different vendors.
- Fitness and recreational activities – Fitness centres in the office buildings also promote a healthy lifestyle among the employees.
- Employee assistance program – Wellness not only means taking care of the body but the mind as well. Some companies are providing confidential support for issues like stress, substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. Companies are also providing financial assistance to employees if they seek to take help outside the organisation. Employees are also rewarded for setting wellness goals and accomplishing them.
- Naps – Small Naps after lunch can actually rejuvenate a person. Companies are providing specialised nap rooms where employees can take a brief nap after lunch. Furthering to that they can return to their projects with renewed energy. Naps have been clinically proven to provide benefits in productivity.
- Financial Education - Stressing about money happens to everyone at some point. Financial stress is a burden that can impact every area of life, including the job. Providing financial education to your employees can help in handling this stress while teaching them a key life skill - employees may appreciate it. The employees will

benefit from learning how to budget, how investing works, and how to best plan for retirement.

- Providing work life balance - Employees with little to no work-life balance are traditionally among the unhappiest and least engaged members of your team. Instead, making work-life balance a priority will go a long way for employee wellness. Some companies are even making it mandatory for their staff to take time off.
- Parent Coaching - Parenting is hard. Working parents face unique challenges, especially in the digital age where work is following employees everywhere. Employees with a happy home life are naturally more engaged and motivated while on the job

DATA ANALYSIS

Given the literature review, it is concluded that there are very few studies done on the matter, so the null hypothesis (H0) and alternate Hypothesis (H1) can be framed as

H0: The wellness program does not have any correlation with the employee engagement aspect.

H1: Wellness programs are correlated with employee engagement aspect.

The data analysis is done using a combination of graphical presentations, pivot tables and studying the correlation matrix. Primary data was collected using a random survey questionnaire and a total of 103 responses were obtained.

The objective of the survey was to assess the need of wellness programs or benefits from employees' point of view.

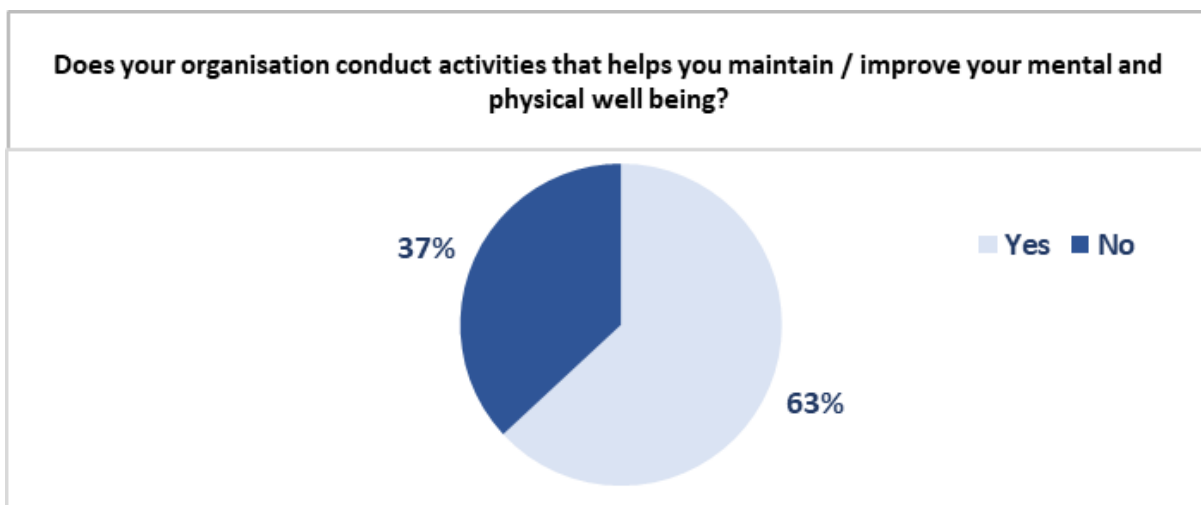


Figure 1

Out of the 103 participants, 63% confirmed that their respective organisations conduct activities for employee wellness, while 37% still remain deprived of the facility.



Figure 2

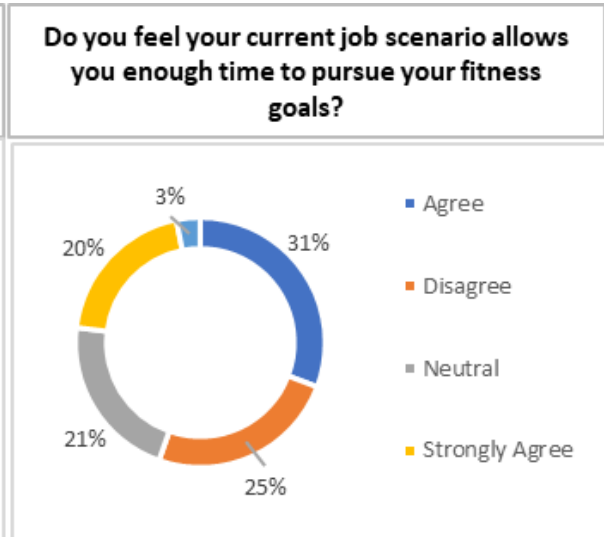


Figure 3

For those who already have the wellness programs or facility by the organisation, 77% agree on the importance of participation in fitness activities. They agree to the fact that their active participation in fitness activities improves their work efficiency. However, in the same scenario, only 51% feel that they have sufficient time to pursue their fitness goals.

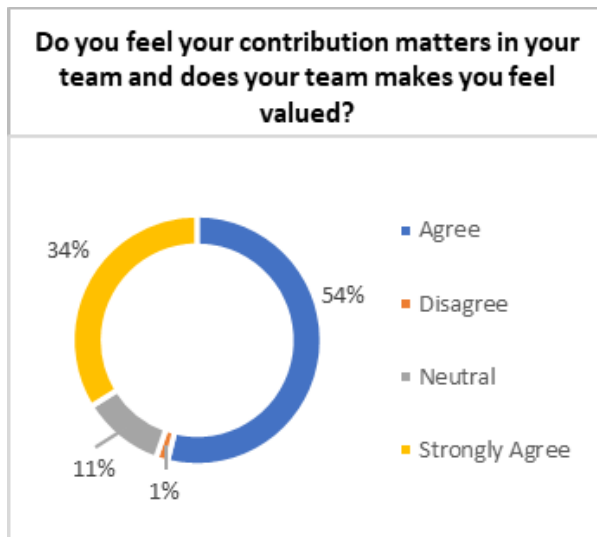


Figure 4

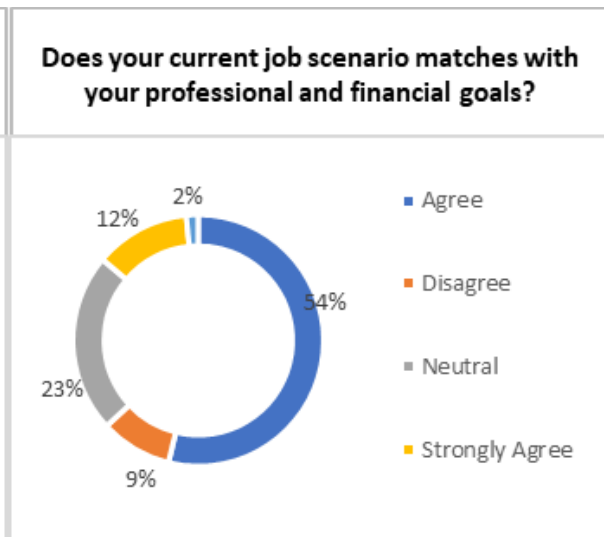


Figure 5

88% of the employees feel that they are valuable assets to the team, suggesting that at some point the employees are feeling engaged in the team, and have good bonding. And 66% of employees feel that their financial and professional goals meet.

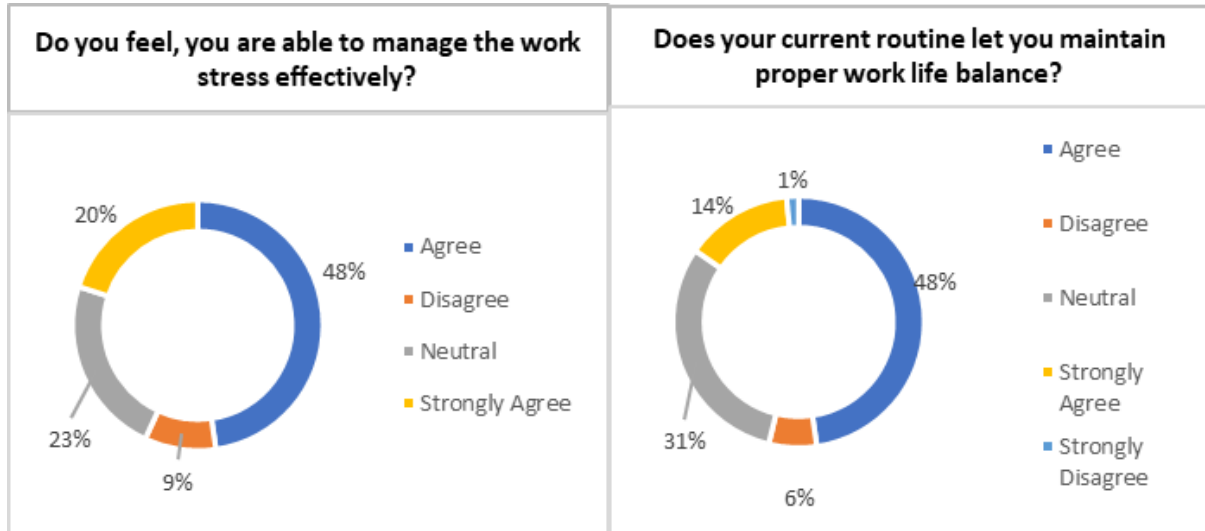


Figure 6

Figure 7

68% respondents feel that they can handle work stress effectively, however only 49% of the respondents who have the benefits of wellness programs, have managed to maintain their work- life balance effectively.

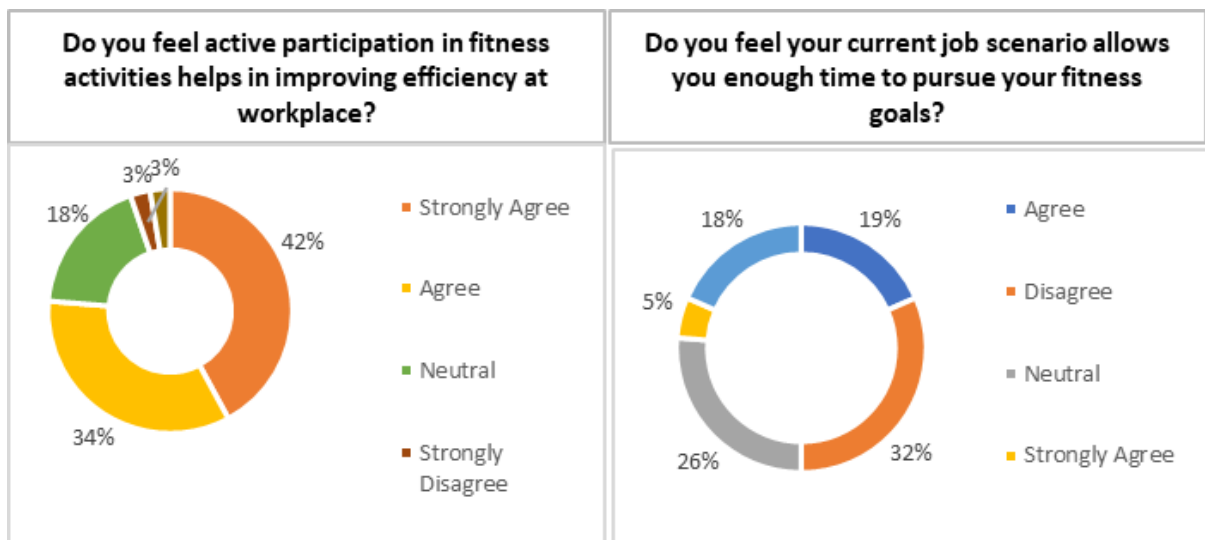


Figure 8

Figure 9

On the other hand, the employees who are deprived of the wellness programs, though the majority (76%) agree on the statement that their active involvement in the fitness activities only 22% are positive on availability of sufficient time to pursue their fitness goals.

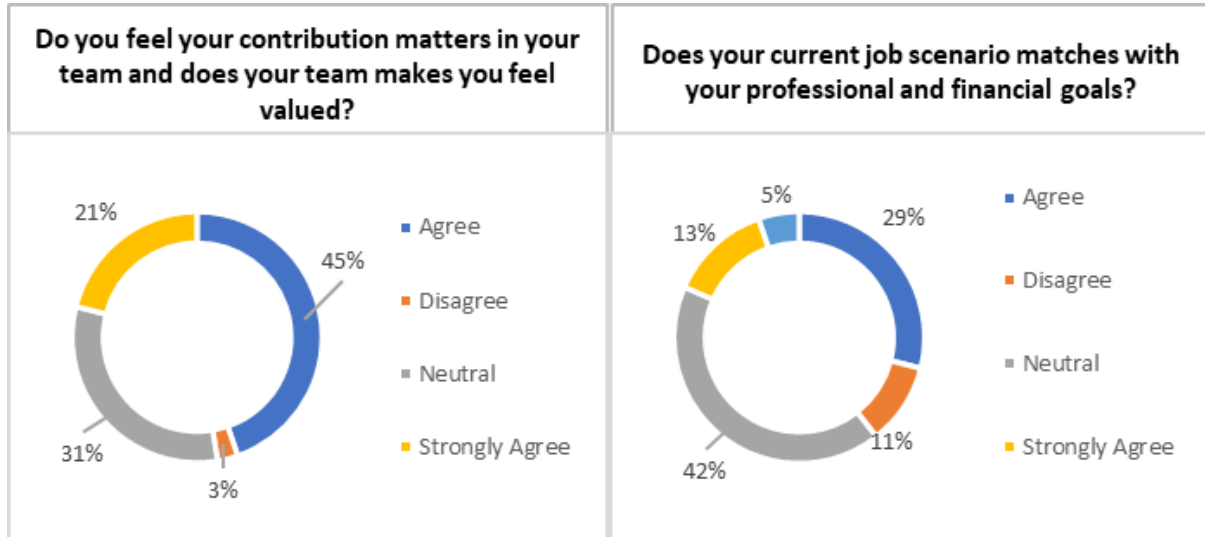


Figure 10

Figure 11

66% of the employees feel that they are part of the team. The figure is almost 20% less than those who have the wellness benefits. Only 42% can commit sufficient time to pursue their fitness goals.

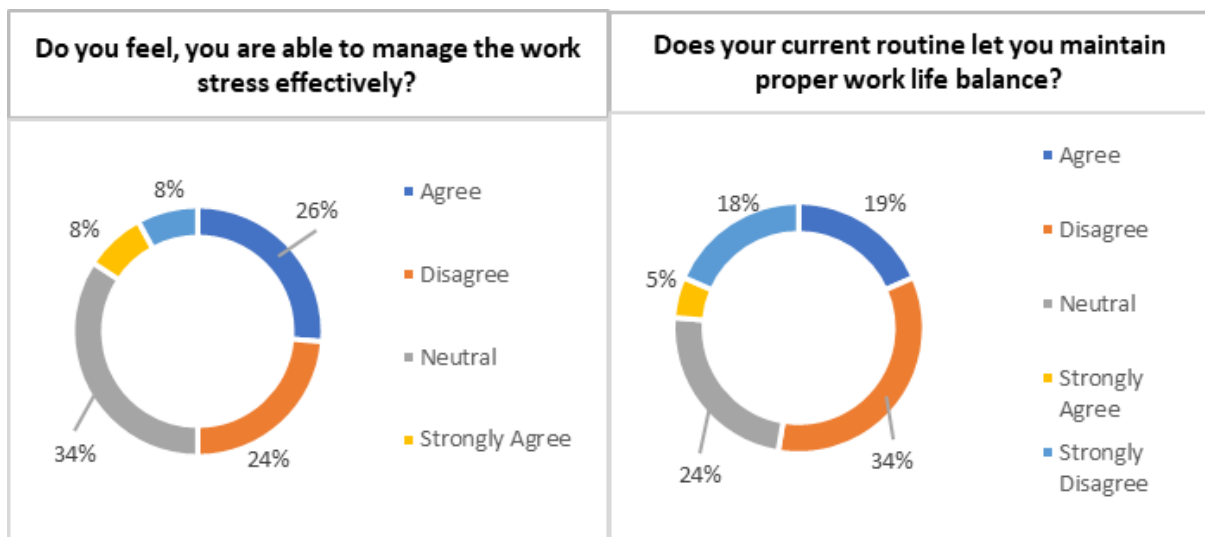


Figure 12

Figure 13

66% of the employees who have said that their organisation does not have any wellness programs initiated and are not able to manage their work stress efficiently and 76% are not able to maintain their work-life balance.

If the results between two respondent groups -those organisations who provide the wellness facilities, and the other those who don't have any wellness initiatives, are compared, we can easily arrive at the conclusion that the percentage of the resulting parameter is decreasing alarmingly.

Even among the organisations who have the employee wellness initiatives, the responses show that there is some research gap that should be conducted to have root cause analysis. Special attention has to be attracted on the factor of work life balance and work stress, since the overall count of the category is less.

Top initiatives for program for physical activities expected by the employees are - Yoga, aerobic and gym, zumba, indoor and outdoor games, fitness drives. The responses include initiatives for regular yoga sessions, monetary concessions for gym membership, or gym facilities in the office premises, badminton, carrom in the office rest area, fitness drives such as walkathon, CSR activities, running, sports tournament etc.

Top initiatives expected for emotional/mental wellness are - meditation sessions, employee team building activities, counselling sessions, small celebrations. The responses include conducting awareness drives, regular meditation sessions, counselling help, any activities

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Q1	1					
Q2	-0.76	1				
Q3	0.71	-0.20	1			
Q4	0.28	0.23	0.80	1		
Q5	-0.11	0.69	0.55	0.84	1	
Q6	-0.76	0.97	-0.31	0.05	0.57	1

which encourages team bonding such as weekly team connect, fun fridays, team outing etc, Hybrid work culture which includes saturday, sunday offs, no call fridays, flexible office timing, helplines for counselling session, discussion breaks, etc.

Correlation Matrices

Figure 14

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Q1	1					
Q2	0.65	1				
Q3	0.96	0.63	1			
Q4	0.69	0.75	0.83	1		
Q5	0.81	0.80	0.90	0.97	1	
Q6	0.65	0.72	0.78	0.97	0.96	1

From the correlation table we can conclude that, in a scenario, where the employees are deprived of wellness programs, the employees negatively correlated with the availability of time to pursue their fitness goals, with the management of work stress effectively as well as with work life balance.

Figure 15

The correlation matrix indicates that when employees are facilitated with wellness programs initiated by the organisations, there is a positive correlation between professional, financial goals, team affability, and work- life balance and management of stress. As the presence of wellness programs affects the employee and the related parameters of engagement, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis can be rejected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Primary survey implies importance of employee wellness programs and majority of the organisations have also accepted and implemented the wellness initiatives. However, focus should be made on the organisations who are yet to implement these.

From the research, the researchers understand that, in any organisation whether they provide the wellness facilities or not, the percentage of people being able to manage their work life balance and work stress is less. So an awareness session, or some activities have to be started according to the employee needs.

According to the survey, employees do not expect any financial/ monetary benefits for health and wellness, but what they are expecting is some stress buster sessions, team bonding activities to improve the environment of their corporate world.

If not completely, we can adopt a few techniques like hybrid work culture, appreciation, small celebrations, getting employees involved.

According to the research conducted, researchers are of the view that more emphasis should be laid upon the realising for the need of including the wellness programme for the employees because the organisation those who have started the initiative, their employees are being more engaged and productive and where the wellness programme is not taken up then the employees are facing lot of stress in managing the productivity.

According to the survey conducted, the employees need more freedom when it comes to work and to maintain work life balance. It will come automatically when employees feel that employers care for them and it will only happen when the employer will create more wellness programmes.

It is significant that HR personnel plays an important role in achieving active employee engagement and is responsible for creating a work environment which helps employees be satisfied and dedicated leading to lower attrition rate and improving organisational success.

HR can focus on improving work ethics and standards. Hence employee engagement should be considered as a high priority business strategy.

Engaged employees are assets for all organisations, therefore the concerned authorities and HR personnel should set aside a dedicated time, budget and resources in order to build a strategy for employee engagement.

In the work from home scenario, communication is the topmost priority to keep employees engaged through creating online events which helps in improving peer-peer bonding.

We do have examples from the existing industries some of them are:

TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) is recognised for having one of the best employee engagement strategies like encouraging their employees to maintain work life balance by blocking leaves followed by healthy professional competitions and productive team bonding sessions. It has also introduced the initiative TCS Cares. It promotes awareness, understanding and acceptance around mental health and provides support through qualified counsellors and self help resources.

Capgemini has introduced rewards and recognition programmes which helps the employee nurturing and pursuing challenging tasks.

Wipro has introduced yoga and meditation sessions along with quarterly appraisals, promotions to keep employees motivated.

CONCLUSION

Engaging employees is a long term process and cannot be accomplished in a day. Hence, the HR personnel and the leadership should think of it as a long term investment and strategically plan to implement health and wellness programs in their organisations.

The research shows that health and wellness is indeed a very important factor for employee engagement. From the employee's perspective, the above research highlights that employees themselves feel that active participation in fitness activities increases their efficiency but at the same time they feel that their current job scenario does not allow them enough time to pursue their fitness goals. The employees also feel that there are not enough wellness programs in the organisations currently and hence they are not able to manage their stress effectively or even maintain a work life balance.

Based on the above findings from the research it was suggested that employees should be empowered to make their decisions, there should be a work life balance that needs to be followed as a part of the company culture and the decision makers should think of introducing more wellness programs for creating a workforce that is fully engaged and productive. Employee team building exercises, personal counselling sessions, self awareness programs, meditation sessions should be conducted frequently to take care of the mental wellness of the employees. The research also highlights the fact that employees are not

looking at wellness from the monetary perspective but instead they are happy if they have more fun outings, no call Fridays, small celebrations, flexible work timings etc.

SUMMARY

The research began with the objective of assessing employee health and wellness as an important factor of employee engagement in the IT sector. A need to study the employee wellness aspect was identified since there aren't enough studies that focussed on this important factor. After establishing the need for the study, the primary and secondary data were collected. A closed ended questionnaire was prepared in the form of a survey and the responses were analysed using a 5 point Likert scale. The responses were then captured and analysed using percentage analysis and has been showcased using graphical representations. Based on the data analysed, solutions and recommendations were suggested and conclusions were drawn.

LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in a short period of time. The sampling was done in a convenient sampling method to have the respondents participate in the survey that is why the reach of respondents is limited. The future researchers can target and focus on any of the parameters and conduct a root cause analysis to study the various factors of employee engagement and wellness.

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