Understanding Employee Wellness for Improved Performance and Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3

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Abstract

The study examines the need, importance, and advantages of wellness that organisations should consider for their employees' general well-being. It is imperative to note that employee wellness is also linked to sustainable development goal 3 that deals with healthy living and wellness and expects organisations to abide to the goals and targets within their organisational context. The study is grounded in qualitative desktop research. The data is gathered through iterature and document reviews. The data was analysed through document and conceptual analysis. The findings explore the implementation gaps in employee wellness programmes, that also affect the effective realisation of SDG 3. In South Africa, societal issues such as health care, health sector financing, disease control and prevention pose a significant challenge to organisations and their ability to operate at peak performance. This is due to the main contributing factor, which is employee performance. The study suggests that this is imperative in every sector to sustain the physical, emotional, psychological, and health wellness of individual professionals, at every level, that has a positive impact on sustaining performance of the organisations. Effective wellness programmes may decrease stress levels and assist professionals to perform better.

Keywords: *Employee Wellness, Performance, Qualitative, South Africa, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), SDG 3.*

INTRODUCTION

The modern work environment is characterised by high levels of stress and pressure due to the demands of globalisation, the need to achieve key performance areas (KPAs), and performance-related competition. Long-term effects on wellbeing are negative, even though working in such an environment can result in success in the short term. The competitive nature of employees can result in conflicts at work in addition to personal stress and burnout. This could be, assumably, due to ego clashes. Employers can sustain high performance levels and a positive attitude by supporting employee wellness programmes that have a lot of advantages. The benefits may include enhanced team dynamics, reduced absenteeism, higher employee engagement, improved retention of top talent, hence less staff turnover, and increased productivity. Ultimately, putting a strong emphasis on employee wellness can help organisations create a happy work environment. The study's primary goal is to maintain organisational and individual performance while advancing workplace wellness. Employee wellness is one of the most crucial elements in developing a productive workforce. Wellness programmes aim to ensure the physical, mental, emotional, social, economic, and even spiritual well-being of employees. This study covers workplace topics that highlight employee wellness because it contributes significantly to an organisation's success in addition to enhancing employees' health and happiness.

To ensure that employees are content in their roles, employers should promote workplace wellness. Enhancing employees' mental, emotional, and physical health promotes higher levels of productivity at the individual and organisational levels. Employees want human relations and behaviour strategies to be considered at work. Without these approaches, performance might lead to employees behaving like robots and only achieving KPAs could eventually be detrimental to their well-being. Additionally, negative emotions are detrimental to both businesses and employees because they can have an adverse effect on performance and well-being if they are ignored. Organisations need to therefore create employee wellness programmes (EWPs) to promote a work environment that assists employees in de-stressing and de-cluttering negative emotions. Team-building activities, meditation classes, and consultation opportunities are a few possible inclusions in these programmes. Organisations may host workshops to address wellness-related topics to foster community spirit among staff

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members and help them realise they are not alone. Workers who voluntarily share their life stories may feel less alone and more a part of the group. Concerning staff members' inquiries about how to work more efficiently, the employee wellness officer may also invite health and wellness coaches to deliver guest lectures. These elements are a part of employee wellness, that is supported by Liza on QuestionPro (2024), emphasising the idea that happy, healthy employees are also productive employees. Organisations therefore need to invest in EWPs to support and benefit their employees.

Numerous factors, such as work demands, pressure and stress, illnesses, health problems, emotional states, and family issues, can lead to employee burnout. This might result in subpar performance at work. Therefore, SDG 3 offers opportunities to advance workplace health and well-being. This study aims to investigate the facets of employee well-being, linking the concept to the demands of SDG 3 (wellness and health) within the framework of South Africa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022:266 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2020), the year 2015 marked the start of the SDGs' implementation in the national contexts of the countries that had ratified the UN. With their bold commitment to finishing what has been started, initially as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs tackle some of the most pressing problems that the modern world faces. Because all the goals are interconnected, achieving one affects achieving the other 17 goals (Kate 2015:30, in Malesa 2023:21). By establishing global sustainable development priorities and aspirations for 2030, these 17 SDGs seek to channel international efforts toward a common set of goals and targets. Global action is required by the SDGs to end poverty and provide everyone with a life of dignity and opportunity. This action is demanded by governments, corporations, and civil society (SDG Compass 2015, cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2021:2; further cited in Malesa 2023:21). It is required that globally, all 17 SDGs need to be successfully achieved by 2030 and implemented with positive outcomes. According to Ogbeiwi (2018:2, in Mbatha 2024:3), the SDGs are comparable to the foundation of a house, which is composed of different types of blocks and cement mud to support the structure. Likewise, the SDGs are essential tools for national management and provide a solid foundation for organisational stability. The SDGs speed up the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. This study focuses on SDG3, that deals with good health and wellness.

According to Ban and Tomescu (2008: 239) and Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal (2014: 268), further cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad (2023:91), the state of having one's mental, physical, and spiritual aspects in ideal balance, leading to a sense of general well-being, is commonly referred to as 'wellness'. It's critical to uphold and encourage healthy lifestyles on a worldwide scale. It is a widely held belief in modern society that access to reasonably priced healthcare should come first.

Wellness should be prioritised because chronic illnesses are becoming extremely common worldwide and are causing serious problems for corporations, organisations, and businesses. People's performance is affected, for instance, by the rising prevalence of diabetes in South Africa. This statement is substantiated by the studies conducted by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) (2024) that highlights that there are 48 nations, including South Africa, that make up the IDF African region. There are presently 537 million diabetics worldwide and 24 million in the AFR Region. The number of diabetics in the AFR Region could increase to about 55 million by 2045 if conditions are left unchecked and there is no emphasis placed on health and wellness (refer to IDF 2024). It is therefore important to link employee wellness to SDG3. One of the key components of developing a successful and productive work environment is the strengthened relationship between employee performance and wellness (SDG 3). It is reasonable to state that employees who are in good physical, mental, and emotional health are likely to be more productive at work, as opined by Wein (2015:35). When employees are in good health, they are more likely to give their best work and contribute to organisations' success.

However, occasionally, it is noticed that some employees show up for work feeling ill because of an excessive workload or unfinished projects with deadlines. Workplace presenteeism is the term used to describe the condition in which employees attend work but are not well and functioning. Long periods of time spent sitting

still, with lack of movements, can also make some employees feel physically sick because it can negatively impact posture and cause aches and spasms in their muscles. Due to these circumstances, employees find it difficult to complete their regular tasks and lag behind in finishing their professional obligations, which has an impact on their performance. In a study conducted by de Beer (2014), it was found that the number of presenteeism-related health issues that an employee experience has a direct correlation to their level of work performance. The knowledge deduced from the study is that health issues related to presenteeism undoubtedly affect how engaged employees are at work. Despite being unfit to work, employees compelled themselves to show up for work. Their performance levels are still low, though. It has a detrimental effect on organisational productivity, which can influence the achievement of strategic goals and financial gains. Consequently, presenteeism is a human risk factor that negatively affects employee and organisational performance, which prevents the achievement of organisational goals (refer to de Beer 2014). This situation was further supported by a successful company who believes in employee wellness, stressing that performance is impacted when workers' well-being is compromised, and they are unable to perform as intended. Thus, it can be said that employee performance may suffer because of both presenteeism and absenteeism. Employee productivity decreases when they are not at work (absenteeism), and it also decreases when they are at work but are not performing well (presenteeism). While human resource policies enable organisations to track absenteeism, monitoring presenteeism is a more difficult task (refer to Insights by Adcorp 2022). It is further deduced from the information provided by Robertsoncooper (2024) that it is customary for workers to demonstrate their dedication and commitment to their jobs by staying at work while ill. Being present when ill was interpreted as a genuine commitment to the job. Additionally, it was believed that showing up for work indicated that one was not absent. But the truth is that when workers are ill, they are unable to work because their physical and emotional well-being need time to recover. Organisations cannot profit from this because it lowers productivity. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that issues with wellness are not solely caused by stress at work. A lack of work-life balance can occasionally also be a contributing factor in forced attendance at work to avoid family conflicts or to divert attention from difficulties in life by being among work colleagues. However, this kind of presenteeism has no positive effect on productivity at work. A study conducted by Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal (2014:269) also highlights the fact that there is a lot of stress among South Africans. The human resources effectiveness group's Eriksson (2012, in Vyas-Doorgapersad & Surujlal 2014:269), views can be used to support this concern. Eriksson emphasises that South Africans experience disproportionately high levels of workplace stress when compared to South Americans. Stress is caused by many different things. The reasons for them could be personal (family issues, divorce) or professional (high standards, work-related demands), and they could have negative effects like suicidal thoughts, verbal abuse, absenteeism, depression, low self-esteem, and decreased productivity (in Vyas-Doorgapersad & Surujlal 2014:269). Henceforth, employee wellness may be crucial in addressing behavioral issues and/or interpersonal relationships of this nature. It is deduced from the recommendation offered by Persona (2023) that employees should prioritise work-life balance. According to the reasoning, maintaining balance allows one to easily manage both work and family obligations. As a result, stress is reduced. A stress-free work environment is created by the balance, which also enables employees to concentrate on their tasks. The wellness of employees is generally improved by work-life balance. It was also suggested by Meilselman (2016:101) that a healthy work-life balance is another aspect of promoting employee wellness. Employee burnout is reduced, and they arrive at work with greater energy when they have time for leisure, personal pursuits, and relaxation. With reference to suggestions provided by Persona (2023) it can be deduced that added that maintaining a work-life balance necessitates taking a balanced approach to happily fulfilling family-related obligations and easily fulfilling professional obligations. This indicates that duties related to both the personal and professional spheres are fulfilled. Achieving this balance could lead to reduced work-related stress, anxiety, and worry about family matters, which in turn could improve performance and increase productivity. Employees and organisations may gain from this balance in terms of increased productivity and performance. It can also be considered through the opinions of Ajala (2013: 3, in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2017:144) that Job satisfaction may also be influenced by productivity and performance. Increased collegiality and positive working relationships with coworkers are also advantages of job satisfaction. The impact of wellness programmes on employees, organisations and performance can be summed up as follows, refer to table 1.

Tabel 1: Impact Of Wellness Programmes

Benefits	Impact
Decline in health care expenses, costs related from injury on duty	Reduced incidents
Enhance health and resilience of employees	Healthier employees, decline in absenteeism ad increase in productivity
Employees remain in the organisations for longer periods of employment	Retain institutional knowledge
Healthier employees are likely to have higher morale, reduced stress levels and enhanced liveliness and energy	More productive employees
Employee wellness programmes can assist employees in maintaining desired levels of work engagement and productivity as they age	Engaged employees
Employee wellness programmes may increase an institution's ability to attract employees	Workplace becoming an employer of choice

Source: Adapted from Vermeulen (2016), in Badul 2018:104.

The benefits and impacts of employee wellness are recorded in various research works. Literature review therefore reveals that EWP can be beneficial and valuable for both the employer and the employee, according to few studies (refer to Hasijani & Sabale, 2018; Kocakulah & Powers, 2015; Soldano, 2016, in Makhanya 2021:29). Additionally, it is significant to consider that organisations can gain from the EWP in several ways. As was previously mentioned, workers may exhibit increased performance and productivity. As the well-being of employees is attended to, there might be a reduction in absenteeism. Additionally, it might protect organisations from needless expenses related to medical bills. In general, EWPs may provide organisations with financial wellness as well as the physical, emotional, and mental wellness of their employees. (refer to GWI, 2016; Madison, 2016; Mello, 2014; Ngeno & Muathe, 2014; Wein, 2015, in Makhanya 2021:29).

participation were found to have higher performance ratings, higher job satisfaction, higher intention to

stay, and lower turnover.

LeCheminant, Merrill and Masterson (2015:5) and Von Thiele Schwarz and Hasson (2011:32) also through their research works, explored the relationship between employee wellness and performance, and the significance of EWPs in realising this relationship. The health and performance of an employee may be directly impacted by EWP. LeCheminant et.al (2015) believed that a productive workforce with a positive work attitude may produce productive professional results, which is important for both employers and employees. The literature review emphasises that the organisational leadership and management may have a significant role to play in ensuring the implementation of EWPs and hence achieving employee wellness goals (refer to Churchill et al., 2014; Marschke & Mujtaba, 2014; Wein, 2015, in Makhanya 2021:35). It can be deduced from the opinions of Von Thiele Schwarz and Hasson (2011) that management may choose to shorten office hours and involve staff in stress-relieving activities through HR interventions. Team-building exercises aimed at fostering better work relationships and enhancing productivity could be among the additional activities. Higher returns on performance and productivity may result from small investments in leisure activities. The literature review also explores that line managers' support and involvement in the EWPs are essential for determining the programme's efficacy (refer to Passey et al., 2018, in Makhanya 2021:35).

Based on the literature review, it is deduced that an employee's degree of engagement at work and overall productivity are both increased by positive well-being. This is because they might feel more motivated and inspired, which could lead to better performance. Additionally, when employees feel valued and supported by their employer, they are more likely to go above and beyond in their work, opined Aslam (2023). Consequently, it is considered that employee performance and wellness are related. Employees cannot function at their maximum capacity unless they are happy, healthy, and confident in themselves; conversely, sick, or depressed workers may perform poorly and frequently make unnecessary mistakes. Employee well-being can enhance their lifestyle and assist them in fulfilling their organisational responsibilities when it is guided by the SDG-3 goals.

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The study uses a qualitative methodology. The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend phenomena in context-specific settings through phenomenological inquiry (cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2017:145; also refer to Chiware & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021:318). The utilisation of qualitative research is an effective approach to

answering the provided research questions, especially considering the comprehensions of exploratory and descriptive research that suggested the study's need for contextual depth (Soga 2022:37, in Mothabi 2023:9). The current study utilised exploratory research design, that according to Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel and Kotze (2003:28 cited in Auriacombe 2018:35, in Maile 2023:), is a preliminary investigation carried out to define and make sense of the research problem by offering suggestions for how it might be approached. It is imperative to acknowledge that exploratory research can be beneficial in situations where a researcher has limited experience or knowledge regarding a research issue, as suggested by Manerikar & Manerikar (2014:1 cited in Mutenga 2020:16; Maile 2023:11). Data was gathered using a literature review, which examines books, academic papers, and any other sources pertinent to a specific topic, field of study, or theory. In doing so, it offers a description, synopsis, and critical assessment of these works in connection to the research topic under investigation, opined by Labaree (2009, cited in Ncamphalala 2019:16-17, in Masibigiri 2023:11). Document review was also considered as a secondary source of information. According to Mogalakwe (2006:221, in Mutandwa 2023:41), an examination of documents that provide details about the phenomenon being studied is called a document review. Information was analysed using both document and conceptual analysis. Vyas-Doorgapersad and Nyikadzino (2020:236, in Mothabi 2023:10) cite that reviewing and analysing a significant volume of written content is part of document analysis. Frey (2018:1, in Mutandwa 2023:49-50) posits that document analysis is a qualitative research method that uses a methodical process to examine documentary evidence and provide answers to specific research questions. Comparable to other analytic techniques in qualitative research, document analysis involves scrutinising and interpreting the data and necessitates multiple reviews to acquire empirical understanding and significance regarding the construct being studied.

RESULT

There are various challenges that hamper the effective implementation of employee wellness programmes and hence the non-realisation of SDG 3. These challenges are discussed here.

To accomplish the SDGs, a significant financial investment is needed. To finance the programming required to meet the SDGs, many countries—especially developing ones like South Africa—need more funding. Additionally, comprehensive skills training and capacity building in a range of sustainable development domains are also essential to the effective implementation of SDGs' responsibilities, as suggested by Mutangadura (n.d.:64). This challenge was also identified in the 2019 South Africa Voluntary National Review which states that South Africa's key challenges include increasing funding; improving access to healthcare (particularly in poor areas); and improving mental health (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) 2024). This statement was supported by a study conducted by Dukas (2021:44) stating that, financial costs sometimes as environmental and social sustainability disciplines have often been seen as an unnecessary expense and handbrake with regards to developmental progress. These are some financial and capacity-building challenges facing South Africa regarding successfully implementing the SDGs. Numerous issues that South Africa has been dealing with have hindered the nation's efforts to fulfill numerous development goals. The issues range from social unrest and economic downgrading to poverty and unemployment, environmental issues like floods and droughts, political unpredictability, COVID-19-related job losses and business closures, and high crime rates. The achievement of SDG3 in particular and the SDGs in general may be hampered by these issues (refer to Statistics SA 2023:3).

The South African Government has established a National Development Plan (NDP) to realise development goals with appropriate policies with detailed understanding of issues, challenges and required solutions. This task is stated in the report of the Statistics SA (2023:92), stating that to accomplish SDG 3, the nation has created several policies and plans. The targets of SDG 3 have been synchronized by the government with its range of medium- and long-term planning tools, including the Department of Defense's Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the National Development Plan (NDP), departmental strategic plans, and annual performance plans. Beyond the general strategy it presented, the NDP did not, however, provide a thorough and detailed implementation plan. This remained the case even though the 2011 Commission's Diagnostic Report evaluated the nation's accomplishments and shortcomings since 1994 and found, at the time, that the primary causes of South Africa's delayed development were a lack of public policy implementation and wide

partnerships, as per the information deduced form the documents of the National Planning Commission (NPC n.d.:5).

Therefore, it is believed that there are several factors that make it difficult to achieve SDG3, including a lack of technological, financial, and human resources; these factors are linked to the concepts of cost effectiveness (financial), communication (HR), skills and capacity (talent management), and integration of procedures and processes (ICT). As a result, strategic interventions are needed. It follows that a lack of insight on these factors may lead to an inability to recognise the significance of this objective (wellness), which in turn causes difficulties with implementation, which results in a lack of progress toward achieving the SDG 3 targets. Additionally, according to Huang, Mattke, Batorsky, Miles, Liu and Taylor (2016:32) inadequate health education and awareness initiatives are impeding the implementation of SDG 3. Many people are unaware of the significance of routine checkups, illness management, and preventive measures. To improve physical and mental wellness, it is crucial that organisations schedule wellness sessions and inform staff members of the importance of participating in these programmes. This lack of understanding may also undermine the effectiveness of wellness programmes.

Note that the challenge to provide coordination is a management task. This is a challenge that may supplement with lack of commitment as well. This statement is substantiated by the opinions posted on a company's webpage called BetterYou (2023) stressing that to implement a wellness programme requires organisational support and commitment from the management level. However, obtaining this support may prove challenging. Some organisations may lack awareness regarding the potential benefits of wellness programmes or may not prioritise employee well-being as a strategic objective. Resistance to change from employees, especially if wellness initiatives disrupt established routines and practices, can hinder successful implementation. Moreover, aligning wellness programmes with existing company culture and values presents an additional organisational challenge that needs to be addressed. Views shared by Liza on QuestionPro (2024) suggest that acquiring backing from higher/strategic management and significant stakeholders in the company is crucial. Obtaining funding, adequate HR resources, and employee involvement all depend on the support of the leadership. Also, to consider that the advantages of a wellness programme should be made clear, along with any potential effects on morale, output, and general employee wellbeing to relevant leadership portfolios, stakeholders, and employees for active participation. It is important to ensure that the programme's objectives reflect the mission and values of the organisation and be included in the strategic frameworks for implementation.

It is crucial for organisations to implement wellness strategies aligning with employees' needs requiring consideration in the workforce. These strategies may include offering health and fitness programmes through establishing office gyms, mental health support through inviting health couches, stress management workshops through workshops offered by wellness coaches, flexible work arrangements through HR interventions, financial wellness initiatives through sessions with financial consultants, to state a few.

DISCUSSION

The following suggestions can be implemented by organisations to ensure the accomplishment of wellness initiatives.

It is crucial to allocate funds to EWPs. The organisational finance unit must take this into account when creating budgets. The items for which EWPs need financial support might differ from one organisation to the next. A few typical items might be the appointment of counselors, guest lectures by consultant, health and wellness coaches, and employee wellness activities that include refreshments, as suggested by BetterYou (2023). Through these activities, employees can also be engaged in providing feedback regarding their wellness expectations and outcomes of such wellness programmes. One excellent method to learn about the impact of efforts and get firsthand knowledge is through employee feedback surveys. This idea was supported by Aslam (2023) adding that there are several ways to gauge the well-being of employees. Employers can effectively learn about their employees' satisfaction and well-being through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Furthermore, organisational data that can help organisations make data-driven decisions includes absenteeism rates, employee turnover, and productivity. These metrics can offer valuable insights into the well-being of employees.

Employee wellness enhances lives in organisations, but there are currently no workable, useful, and applicable solutions that successfully raise worker productivity and, consequently, organisational effectiveness. The obstacles draw attention to the necessity of original and useful strategies for putting employee wellness policies and programmes into action, stressing that these approaches are workable, realistic, and appropriate in actual workplaces. Literature review shows that many academics point out that an organisation's success is largely dependent on the relationship that exists between employee performance and wellness.

The difficulties highlight the fact that many wellness initiatives fall short of providing workable, realistic solutions for raising employee performance and, consequently, increasing organisational effectiveness. Examining the challenges in starting wellness programmes is essential to solving this problem, especially considering South Africa's high rate of illness and healthcare costs. Conducting research on practical methods and approaches to improve the likelihood of success for these kinds of projects is also crucial. SDG 3 aims to advance everyone's well-being and healthy lifestyles, and it serves as a crucial basis for organisational wellness programmes. It highlights how important it is to lead a healthy lifestyle and cultivate wellbeing, in line with the objectives of employee wellness initiatives. Since governments and organisations are urged to follow the SDGs, it is imperative that SDG 3 be incorporated into wellness programmes.

Research has demonstrated that workplace wellness initiatives offer numerous benefits to both employers and employees. Workers who participate in various workplace wellness initiatives have improved knowledge about stress management and overall health. As a result, they can operate as happy, healthy, and contented professionals and improve organisational outputs. Workplace wellness initiatives have many financial advantages for employers as well. In addition to employee health outcomes, cost savings, and absences, these programmes can occasionally remain nebulous and ineffective in accomplishing the intended goals. Given this, it is likely that incentives are ineffectual.

To ensure the employee wellness, the following model (Figure 1) is proposed for the study.

Figure 1: Workplace wellness model

Source: Hartshorne 2023 (refer to WellWise 2023)

Stress has a detrimental effect on workers in the company. As a result, an employee's tasks and responsibilities within the organisation may have an impact on their mental health. It is imperative for all organisations to ensure that their employees are in good health to provide effective and high-quality services to the community. This means that to help employees adopt healthy lifestyle habits, organisations must plan wellness sessions. Staff members may be less adaptable and have lower levels of self-determination if they are mentally and emotionally unwell. To improve teamwork, organisations must ensure that their employees have positive working relationships with one another. Employees may benefit from avoiding pointless arguments and disparaging remarks about their co-workers. To achieve this, organisations must cultivate a positive culture where the values of inspiration, support, encouragement, gratitude, and camaraderie are established and shared. In reference to the topic of work-life balance, an employee's everyday existence is significantly impacted by their work. Employee burnout can be a difficult problem that necessitates self-care. This calls for exceptionally skilled managers who can successfully apply behavioral approaches, human relations, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the workplace. Enough break time must be given to the staff members. Employees may see this as a sign that their employers value them. Establishing peer groups, taking quick rest periods, and having tea breaks can all contribute to the development of an energising environment. It is necessary to plan year-end events to showcase employee successes. Employee job satisfaction and a feeling of community will result from this extrinsic motivation.

CONCLUSION

At a macro-level it is considered that in South Africa, the EWPs are regulated by various legislative frameworks, such as the Constitution of Republic of South Africa (1996) (the supreme binding document and other frameworks are emanated from the constitution); Childcare Amendment Act (No. 86 of 1991); Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (No. 130 of 1993); Occupational Health and Safety Act (No. 85 of 1993); Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995); Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997); Skills Development (Amended) Act (No. 97 of 1998); Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Amendment Act (No. 14 of 1999); and Public Service Regulations (1999). Organisations need to ensure the implementation of these frameworks with adequate reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The study considers that the identified challenges related to lack of communication, coordination, awareness regarding importance of wellness programmes may be experienced in many organisations at a micro level. At a macro level, as per the report of the Statistics SA (2023:3), high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment are undoubtedly the root cause and consequences of South Africa's ongoing development challenges. In addition, the nation is not doing as well as it could in terms of generating fresh and current data that could be utilised to monitor the SDGs' progress. South Africa must expand important systemic interventions if it is to meet SDG 3. To speed up progress, new models for the delivery of healthcare must be introduced and adopted. Overcoming systemic bottlenecks and providing much-needed leadership are essential to achieving the necessary innovation. South Africa must show increases in the standard of healthcare services supported by evidence-based clinical practice. The health system needs to increase its operational effectiveness and human resource utilisation, with the help of suitable recruitment, retention, and human resource forecasting strategies, suggests Statistics SA (2023:44).

At a micro-level it is suggested that organisations that participate in employee wellness programmes must be open to learning about the needs of their workforce. Afterward, different wellness levels will be considered in the programmes. Workplace support and wellness programmes are necessary for employees to discuss and resolve a range of life challenges that they may encounter. Based on their skill and experience, employees are appointed. Emotional and psychological stress, on the other hand, can overshadow an employee's strengths and have a detrimental effect on their ability to perform at work. Through consultations and counseling, wellness platforms can help employees de-stress, and they can also help them find workable solutions that will benefit the organisation and their fellow employees. Organisations may face difficulties, too, including financial (lack of funding), talent management (lack of HR procedures to implement employee wellness interventions), IT (integration of wellness programmes with HR procedures), monitoring and evaluation (to determine the efficacy of wellness programmes), and frameworks (lack of knowledge and adherence to employee wellness policies). The effective implementation of wellness programmes may be hampered by these issues.

Organisations must recognise the obstacles in their environment and adjust their strategies accordingly. Employees must also take part in wellness initiatives and offer suggestions for improvement.

SDG 3 calls for everyone to have good health and well-being, that they deserve to be productive at work and to have a happy personal life as a husband, brother, or son and to build a happy home. Overall prosperity and well-being are indicated by good health. Governments, organisations, communities, and people must work together to improve healthcare systems, guarantee access to high-quality healthcare, and encourage healthier lifestyles to advance SDG 3. By implementing the above-stated strategies, organisations can mitigate the challenges associated with implementing wellness programmes and empower employees to enhance their personal and organisational well-being.

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