

**TYPE-A BEHAVIOUR PERSONALITY, JOB DEMAND, AND WORK-RELATED
OUTCOMES (JOB SATISFACTION AND JOB STRESS): THE EFFECTS OF
CORPORATE WELLNESS PROGRAMS**

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ABSTRAK

Tren dalam pelaksanaan program kesejahteraan pekerja telah berkembang dengan pantasnya di serata dunia, bahkan di negara-negara maju ataupun di negara yang sedang membangun seperti Malaysia. Peningkatan kos perbelanjaan untuk kesihatan di tempat kerja merupakan sebab utama yang telah memajukan program kesejahteraan di tempat kerja. Kajian ini akan mengkaji kesan-kesan dan peranan program kesejahteraan pekerja dengan pemilihan pekerja yang telah menyertai program kesejahteraan tempat kerja tersebut, kemudian mengkaji kesan-kesannya terhadap perhubungan sikap personaliti jenis-A dengan keperluan kerja, terhadap kepuasan kerja dan stres kerja. Walaupun ada kajian yang telah dilaksanakan dalam program kesejahteraan pekerja, kebanyakannya telah dijalankan di Negara Barat, dan terdapat sedikit sahaja kajian yang telah dilaksanakan di Malaysia. Konsisten dengan kajian lepas, keputusan kajian ini telah menonjolkan kebaikan bersama dengan impak positif program kesejahteraan pekerja. Kajian ini telah menggunakan soal-selidik sebagai instrumen. Seramai 152 orang yang pernah menyertai program kesejahteraan pekerja telah melengkapkan soal-selidik ini. Perisian SPSS telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang didapati dari soal-selidik dan pengujian hipotesis telah dijalankan. Dengan penyertaan dalam program kesejahteraan pekerja, kepuasan kerja yang lebih tinggi dan stres kerja yang lebih rendah telah dilaporkan. Selain itu, sesiapa yang memiliki personaliti jenis-A dan dengan keperluan kerja yang tinggi juga boleh menikmati kepuasan kerja yang lebih baik dan stres kerja yang lebih rendah dalam tempat kerja. Keputusan yang diperolehi telah membuktikan manfaat dan impak positif yang signifikan terhadap kesan kesihatan pekerja.

ABSTRACT

The trend of implementing corporate wellness programs has grown quickly throughout the world, both in the developed countries and developing nations such as Malaysia. Mounting health care costs have been the major reason that boosted the wellness movement at the workplace. This research will study the effects of corporate wellness programs by pre-selecting those who are participants of such programs at work and study its effects on the relationship between type-A behaviour personality and job demand, towards work-related outcomes of job satisfaction and job stress. Although study on corporate wellness programs has been done, it is mostly conducted in the West, and there are limited studies conducted in Malaysia. Consistent with prior studies, our results revealed the goodness and positive impacts of corporate wellness programs. This research used questionnaire as the main research instrument. 152 respondents with participation of corporate wellness programs completed the questionnaire. The SPSS software was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire and to test the entire hypothesis that were put forward. Test of differences and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Respondents perceived higher job satisfaction and lower job stress due to work condition along with the extent of their corporate wellness participation. Those who are Type A with importance attributed to speed also enjoyed better job satisfaction and lower job stress due to work conditions as a result of corporate wellness participations. The result confirmed that corporate wellness programs will give good effects on employee outcomes.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Every one of us has contributed a large part of our lives to work. The single activity that occupy most of our waking hours is work. Pressures, strains and stress within the workplace have been identified as being a potentially important health factor. Consequently, with the multi-factorial background of diseases, work can in fact serve as a direct cause of illness, as a contributing factor, or as an aggravating factor.

Health is priceless. Almost anyone would pay anything just to get well. Sixteenth-century English scholar and vicar at Oxford University Robert Burton put it aptly:” Restore a man to his health, and his purse lies open to thee.”

As such, it is easy to see why maintaining a healthy work-life balance is becoming increasingly important. Corporate wellness programs are important tools to establish this balance. Corporate wellness programs are sponsored organizational activities which attempt to promote good health, or to identify and correct potential health related problems. (Hellriegel, Slocum, & Woodman, 1998; Wolfe, Parker, & Napier, 1994). Corporate wellness programs that emphasize the benefits of a healthy lifestyle can be implemented in a variety of ways. However, they all share a common goal – to promote the wellbeing of their employees, employers and organization.

Increasingly, as forward-thinking employers are realizing that the health of their employees directly impacts the health of their business; employee health is being viewed as an important investment, rather than as an unrelated expense. Healthy employees consume

fewer corporate resources in the form of benefit payments for medical care, short and long-term disability, and workers compensation. There is strong and mounting evidence supporting the cost-effectiveness of investing in employee health management strategies. A meta-review of 42 published studies of worksite health promotion programs showed on average a 28% reduction in sick leave absenteeism, a 26% reduction in health costs, and a 30% reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claim costs. (LS Chapman, 2003)

Workplace factors have been found to have direct effects on stress and job satisfaction (Kirkcaldy et al, 1999, Leong et al, 1996, Lyne et al, 2000). Workplace stress has significant economic implications for the organizations through employee dissatisfaction, lowered productivity and lowered emotional and physical health of the employees. (Matteson, M.T. et al, 1987). There are also evidences that both general stress and work-related stress lead to poor physical health, poor emotional or mental health, absenteeism, low morale, and job dissatisfaction. Poor physical health consequences have been observed in particular to cardiovascular disease, cancer, headache, gastrointestinal diseases and infections. While in terms of emotional health, more anxiety disorders, negative effect and psychological distress were found by researchers (Jagdish K. D, 1994).

On the other hand, it is well known that Type-A Personality behavior are more prone to coronary disease. In their meta-analysis, Booth-Kewley and Freidman (1987) showed that the competitive nature of Type-A behavior pattern is predictive of heart and vascular disease. Type-As were also found to have more stress symptoms, anxiety, including somatic complaints when confronted with a heavy work load (Kushnir & Melamed, 1991). There is research evidence that this is due to Type A personalities overload themselves with work, resulting in poorer subjective well-being. Furthermore, they tend to perceive their tasks as

more demanding or make them more demanding than Type Bs. (P.T. vandenBerg, 1997). However, Type A individuals were found to cope better with overload, even though they feel more overloaded than Type B individuals. This is due to their tendency to challenge and deal with overload more willingly than Type Bs, even when the jobs become too excessive. (N. Iwata et al, 1992)

In view that corporate wellness programs were believed to promote job satisfaction and reduce job stress, while Type-A personality and job demand were found to exert effects on the opposite direction, I will be examining the relationship between Type-A behavior pattern & job demand to job stress and satisfaction with the mediating effects of corporate wellness programs.

1.2 Problem Statement

With many of us spending more and more time at work, along with the development of technology devices, advancement in telecommunications, globalization, where some workers are even required to work odd hours or shift work, keeping production and communication channels open 24/7 is no longer uncommon, in order to keep up with business competition. Workplace has become more complicated and stressful.

It is not surprising then, to find many workers coping with increasing job stress levels, work-life imbalances or even job dissatisfaction as an antecedent of burnout (Ayse K. et al, 2007). Individuals with Type-A behavior personality, have been found more susceptible to stress symptoms of both psychological and physical distress. (Bryne, D.G. and Reinhart, M. I. 1990). At the same time, high levels of work stress are associated with low levels of job satisfaction (Landsbergis, 1988; Terry et al., 1993).

Although there are many researches on Type-A behavior personality, job demand and job stress, most of these studies are conducted in the West. Even though there are researches conducted in Malaysia on job stress, they tend to focus on certain groups eg managers, academicians, accountants (S Kumaresan et al, 2005, Manshor A.T., et al, 2003, Ahsan N., 2009, Md. Ali A., 1992). Hence, there are limitations of generalizing the findings to other job positions or other sectors. In addition, the propensity is more in identifying the stressors, while intervention variables from organizational point of view to decrease stress or increase job satisfaction were not examined.

The intent of corporate wellness programs is to assist and support employees in establishing healthier lifestyles. With healthy and high functioning employees, it will be a win-win situation and create benefits for all. However, even though employees who participated in wellness programs are assumed to be more physically and psychologically fit and constitute less organizational cost, there appears to be little consistent empirical evidence that demonstrates these relationships. (Kizzy M Parks and Lisa A. Steelman, 2008). Moreover, there is research which shows that some companies have not been able to generate a positive health care costs savings to program cost ratio. (Herzlinger and Calkins, 1986).

Furthermore, although organizations implement wellness programs as an integral part of corporate strategy for reducing health care costs, improving employees' morale and improving behaviors that are associated with workers productivity, reducing work stress, the efficacy and effectiveness of these programs in meeting these goals are rarely evaluated. (Kizzy M Parks and Lisa A. Steelman, 2008).

Turning to the situation in Malaysia, the awareness of the benefits of corporate wellness programs is not as ingrained in our corporate culture as it is in the West. Although,

many multinational organizations have implemented workplace wellness activities here by adopting this practice from their parent companies, the challenge is to establish these beneficial programs even in our small-medium industries and local establishments. Many Malaysian employers are especially concerned with the upfront cost and time involved, particularly lost time away from productions, as these programs are conducted in-plant. Moreover many Malaysian employers are still doubtful in the feasibility of conducting these programs in small and medium-sized companies. In fact, wellness programs are applicable to organizations of varying sizes and circumstances, not just large corporations or those with economic leverage.

Apart from that, although past researches have demonstrated that many organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, stress, healthcare costs and job satisfaction have been dramatically improved as a result of employees' participation in wellness programs (Goetzel, Jacobson, Aldana, Vardell, & Yee, 1998), most of these studies are conducted in the West. Research on corporate wellness programs is still very much lacking in Malaysia. In view that we are from different cultures, with different attitudes towards work and health, etc, there exist the problem of extrapolating the results into Malaysia context.

Furthermore, if job stress and job satisfaction can be intervened significantly by corporate wellness programs even in those individuals feeling overloaded or possesses type-A personality behavior, then employers' investment on the implementation and maintenance of these organizational activities will be worth the while.

It is with these interests in mind, that I am determined to examine the effects of wellness programs on job stress and satisfaction among Malaysian workers.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- (i) To examine the effects of Type A personality behavior and job demand on work-related outcomes (job stress and job satisfaction).
- (ii) To explore whether participation in the corporate wellness program affect individuals' work-related outcomes (job stress and job satisfaction).

Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study will act as a catalyst for other companies to adopt workplace wellness programs into their corporate policies.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objectives, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does the participation in the corporate wellness programs affect employees' work-related outcomes (job satisfaction and job stress)?
2. Does Type-A behavior personality affect work-related outcomes of those participate in the corporate wellness programs?
3. Do job demand affect work-related outcomes of those participated in the corporate wellness programs?

1.5 Significance of the Study

With the business arena getting increasingly competitive and demanding, Type A behavior pattern has become common. Apparently, competitive and aggressive behavior are encouraged and rewarded in the rat race. Unfortunately, individuals with Type A behavior

personality are more vulnerable to coronary problems and cardiovascular disease. (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974). Type A personality is also found to have a predisposition to stress and experience difficulties in job satisfaction. (A.D. Batigun, & N.H.Sahin, 2006). In view those stressful events are felt more intense in these individuals than others, organizational activities eg corporate wellness program hopefully can help to alleviate and reduce these negative impacts. Hence, this research will bring benefits to both employers and employees.

In addition, some jobs tend to be more stressful than others. Job demand overload, both quantitative and qualitative was proven to lead to strain symptoms, affecting individual's behavior, causing symptoms both physiologically and psychologically (Roberts et al, 1997). By studying the relationship of job demand to job stress and job satisfaction, it will alert employers to step in early on intervention measures before affected employees end up with burnout. Along with the increasing recognition of the importance of quality of working life, by identifying resources to protect employees from negative effects of stressors, it will make a great leap forward in terms of employee recruitment and retention. Particularly, as economy is picking up, and all businesses are clamoring for the best skills and brains to join them.

A healthier workforce will translate into savings both for the individual and the company. As companies learn more about the correlation between healthy employees and a healthy bottom-line, corporate wellness programs come into mind. Mounting health care costs have also boosted wellness movement in the workplace. In addition, people's lives can be saved with screenings. Employees who are "walking time-bombs" with Hypertension-the silent killer, have many a times been detected with malignantly high blood pressure on routine screening during wellness campaign and sent to the emergency room for treatment. By averting the complications of strokes, heart attacks, corporate wellness programs not only can improve employee health and wellbeing, but at the same time will contain rapidly

escalating healthcare costs. This empirical study will explore whether there are additional benefits of reducing work stress and increase job satisfaction.

In addition to the above, hopefully this research will be able to convince employers to have on-going wellness programs in their corporation if the study findings can show that even though there are costs incurred, it is worth it, and the healthy bottom line will support its effectiveness. Furthermore, in this globalized competitive business environment, businesses need to focus on retaining and attracting the best human capital. By launching corporate wellness programs, paying attention to its workers health and wellness, employees will know that their firms care about them and are concerned of their well-being. This will improve employees' commitment to the companies, at the same time, earning a good reputation for the firms.

Finally, increased knowledge from this research has the potential to make significant contributions to future researches, business policy-making, and interventions that aim to further enhance job satisfaction and reducing job stress.

1.6 Definition of key terms

In order to clarify the objective of this study, several important terms are defined as followed:

Type A behavior personality – Type A behaviors are seen in individuals who are highly competitive, race with time, cannot bear to wait, are impatient, and led by success. They talk fast, work fast, and try to lead during interpersonal interactions.

Job demand overload - may be of qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative overload occurs

when people lack the ability needed to complete their jobs or that performance standards have been set too high. Quantitative overload is as a result of having too many things to complete at any one time.

Health - State of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (*World Health Organization*)

Wellness- as a lifelong process that at any given time produces a positive state of personal well-being; of feeling good about oneself; of optimal physical, psychological, and social functioning; and the control and minimization of both internal and external risk factors for both diseases and negative health conditions. Wellness is a process, rather than a goal. It integrates the mind, body and spirit (Anspaugh, Hamrick and Rosato, 2006).

Corporate Wellness Programs – services sponsored by organizations, which attempt to promote good health, or to identify and correct potential health related problems (Wolfe, Parker, & Napier, 1994). These programs condense three main categories: education, fitness, and comprehensive (a combination of educational and fitness methods), each of which typically is comprised of several components. Educational wellness programs consist of seminars, stress management, smoking cessation, newsletters, bulletin boards, and nutrition awareness, while fitness programs are made up of employee health clubs, aerobic exercise, and/or weight training.

Job Stress – situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change his or her psychological and/or physiological condition such that the person is forced to deviate from

normal functioning. (Beehr, T.A., and Newman,J.E., 1978)

Job Satisfaction – emotional reactions and attitudes that workers have about their jobs, usually as a result from their perceptions of the job.

1.7 **Organization of remaining chapters**

This chapter gives overall introduction, purpose of study, research question and significant of the study. Subsequent chapters will provide theoretical framework of study, how hypotheses were developed, how data will be collected, and methodology of the study, data analysis, result discussion and conclusion. References and appendixes (including SPSS output) are attached at the back of report to provide relevant materials and documents for further digestion.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the concept of health and wellness, the iceberg model of health, corporate wellness programs together with its impacts and importance. The relationship of corporate wellness programs with job stress and job satisfaction is also discussed. Subsequently, job demand and Type A behavior pattern (TABP) were touched upon before finally discussing the issues forming the theoretical framework of this study, as well as the development of the hypothesis.

This chapter will start by exploring the concept of health and wellness.

2.2 The concept of health and wellness

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1948). Overall, health is achieved through a combination of physical, mental and social well-being which together is commonly referred to as the health triangle.

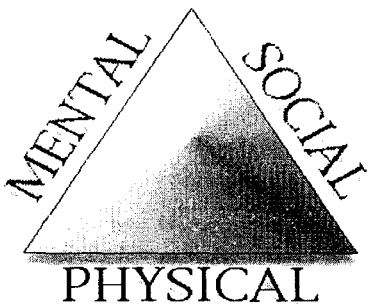


Figure 2.1 the Health Triangle

The health triangle which is the brainchild of the students in Tanana Middle School in Alaska 1997 looked at the interdependency, interrelatedness and interaction of its 3 sides. Physical health will be direct and indirectly related to mental health, and social health will also have a profound impact on mental and physical health

However, wellness is a process, and not a goal. In fact, it is a lifelong process that at any given time will produce a positive state of personal wellbeing; of feeling good about oneself; of optimal physical, psychological, and social functioning; and the control and minimization of both internal and external risk factors for both diseases and negative health conditions. Wellness has a holistic approach that integrates the mind, body and spirit (Anspaugh, Hamrick and Rosato, 2006). Wellness presents a new paradigm to healthcare! (Larson, 1999)

2.3 The Iceberg Model

One of the founders of the modern wellness movement in the United States was John W. Travis, MD, MPH who created The Iceberg Model of Health in the 1970s.

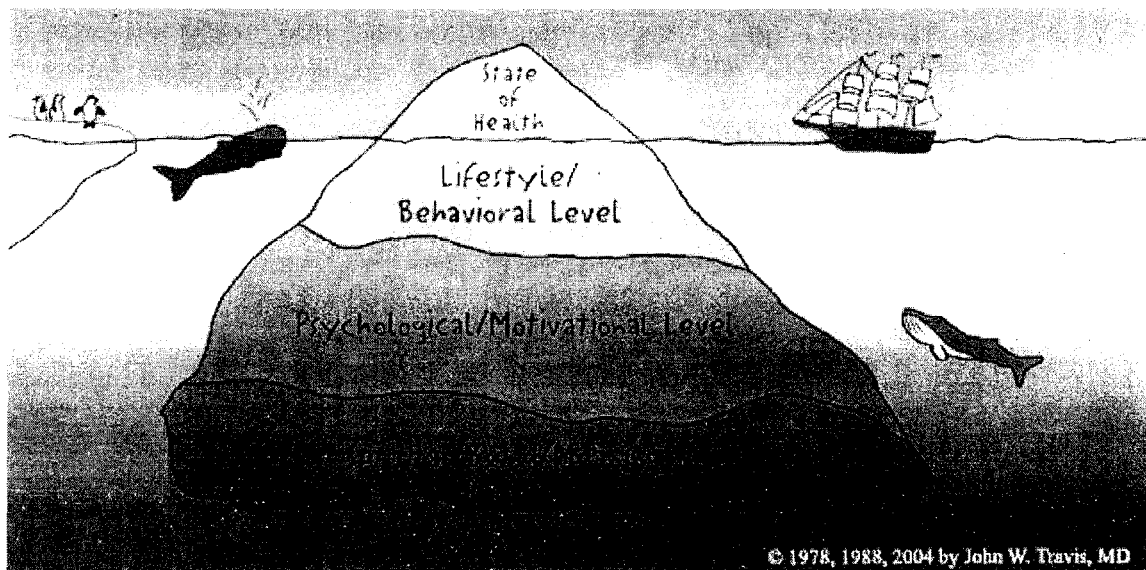


Figure 2.2 the Iceberg Model

The concept of this model is that illness and health are only the tip of the iceberg (John W. Travis, MD, and Regina Sara Ryan, 1981, 1988). As icebergs reveal only one-tenth

of their mass above the water, our current state of health, just like the tip of the iceberg only one-tenth of our health is the visible part that shows. This is the portion that we can attempt to change. However, whenever these are being removed, more of the same will come up from below to take its place.

Hence, we have to look underwater to further understand what creates and supports our current state of health.

The first level under water is the lifestyle/behavioural level, which is essentially: “what you eat, how to use and exercise your body, how you relax and let go of stress, and how you safeguard yourself from the hazards around you.” Many people follow lifestyles that they know are destructive to their own well-being, to the people around them and to the planet. Yet many feel powerless to change the way they live.

To understand why, we need to look deeper into the next level. The subsequent level is the cultural/psychological/motivational level. We learn how our cultural norms and our families influence us in subtle yet powerful ways from a very early age. Investigating this level, we also can become conscious of any ongoing psychological payoffs we have that are based on early life experiences and, ultimately what their cost is to our physical and mental well-being. In short, we know why we lead the lifestyle we have chosen.

The deepest level is the spiritual/being/meaning level. It includes the mystical, mysterious, metaphysical, and everything else in the subconscious mind and concerns such issues as your reason for being, the meaning of life, and your place in the universe. How you address these questions and the answers you choose underlie and permeate all levels above. The realm ultimately determines whether the tip of the iceberg, representing your state of health, will be one of disease or wellness.

2.4 What are corporate wellness programs?

The growth, and in some cases, the very sustainability of business is linked to employee health. Undeniably, this is due to the fact that healthy people are more capable of doing what they are paid to do and even more. Unhealthy people, on the other hand, are at a distinct disadvantage in their ability to hold up their end of the employment contract, much less apply any discretionary effort to their tasks.

Corporate wellness programs are programs that are developed, and usually sponsored by employers to promote health and wellness at work. The goal is to support the wellness of employees, whether at work or at home for the mutual benefit of both the individual and the employer. Corporate wellness programs have its root in the United States during the 1950s as Executive Fitness Programs within organizations such as Johnson and Johnson, Pepsico, Chase Manhattan Bank etc. Later, momentum was gained as a result of raising healthcare costs due to the USA's Workplace Employee Medical Cover Scheme.

Corporate Wellness Programs are increasingly popular with employers. More than half of those employers that do not offer workplace wellness programs currently plan to do so in the near future. (Katherine H.Capps, John B. Harkey, 2008). The assumptions are that by launching worksite wellness programs, employees will be motivated to live healthier, so they will feel better both at home and on the job. As a result, business will be healthy even in a tough economy.

Even the smallest businesses can find ways to incorporate a corporate wellness programs in the workplace. It can be as simple as putting an anti-smoking poster in the

workplace. In other words, workplace wellness programs are anything an employer does to encourage employees to live healthier. Corporate wellness programs help employees connect to healthier lifestyles by encouraging them to manage chronic conditions, be physically active, eat healthy food, and give up tobacco products.

Basically, corporate wellness programs can be divided into 3 main components, fitness/physical, educational and health screening tests. Fitness or physical programs consist mainly of gym training, aerobic exercises, yoga etc. Regular physical activity and higher levels of fitness allow daily tasks to be accomplished with greater ease and comfort and with less fatigue. Functional decline with advancing age is no longer accepted lightly as research shows that as much as one half of the decline between the ages of 30 and 70 is due not to aging itself but to an inactive way of life (I.Thune et al, 1997). Furthermore, many researchers have reached the conclusion that physical activity can lower the risks of cardiovascular diseases and death rates. Morris et al (1990) found differential in death rates among British civil servants who were followed up over an 8-year period, between those who reported no vigorous exercise and those who engaged in vigorous activities of >35.1 kJ. This took account of the difference in age, smoking, obesity and successive interval of follow-up. Studies conducted in the United States also showed similar results. (Paffenbarger & Lee, 1999, US department of Health and Human Services, 1996, Paffenbarger et al 1993, 1994).

Educational programs include counseling, health and wellness coaching, exhibitions, seminars, health talks, newsletters, posters and others. Topics discussed range from nutrition, eating habits to stress management, smoking cessation, anti-toxic substances etc. Developing educational programs that focuses on behavior change across the health care continuum will encourage everyone to become healthier, regardless of their current health risk or health

status.

Health screening tests are actually preventive medicine activities which may consist of blood testing for cholesterol, sugar, uric acid, ultrasound scanning for organs abnormalities, mammogram for breast cancer detection, Pap smear test and vaccination. These preventive health care activities help to detect disease before symptoms appear, leading to improved prognosis. At the same time, they can ensure that common, serious diseases and conditions are detected and treated, before it is too late. As an example, the Papanicolaou or Pap smear test is a cheap and cost-effective test that has been well-established to reduce the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. (Anderson GH, et al 1988, Laara E et al, 1987). In addition, research has proven that fecal occult blood test can reduce mortality of colorectal cancer as compared with no screening. (Richard FA Logan, 2009)

2.5 The Importance of Corporate Wellness Programs

Organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated with sophisticated people working in them who have very clear expectations of what work is about. Employers and managers have to recognize this and attend to those needs if they are to bring about the end results organizations require. Employers who provide wellness programs are deemed to be demonstrating care and concern for the wellbeing of their employees (Shinew and Crossley, 1988). In view of this, staffs tend to maximize their potential, reduce the time taken from work with stress-related illnesses and remain within their area of employment for longer with greater job satisfaction, as they feel 'valued' by their own organization (Mackay, Cousins, Kelly, Lee, & McCaig, 2004). It is no secret that healthy employees add more to the bottom

line. There is clear evidence (Jacobson, 1995; Murphy, 1996; Pelletier, 1999) that profitable productive workplaces are those in which attention is given to the quality of work life of employees while they are at work. In addition to such instrumental concerns, there is a broader ethical argument in favor of the view that employees' well-being is a general social good, benefiting the individual, their immediate community, and the wider society in terms of quality of life and social integration. (D.Hillier, F.Fewell, W.Cann, V.Shephard,2005) .

2.6 The Impacts of Corporate Wellness Programs

For many companies, medical costs can consume half of corporate profits or more. Some employers look to cost sharing, cost shifting, managed care plans, risk rating, and cash-based rebates or incentives. But these methods merely shift costs. Only worksite health promotion stands out as the long-term answer for keeping employees well in the first place.

Expenses such as health care premiums, hospitalization, and prescriptions medicines are direct medical costs. The absenteeism that results from chronic illnesses is indirect cost drivers. Corporate wellness programs help employers manage costs by giving their employees the tools to avoid and reduce the cost drivers of absenteeism. In addition, ongoing illnesses cost employers' money by contributing to lost productivity and higher medical expenses, which eventually will be detrimental to the bottom-line.

The decision to offer corporate wellness programs for most employers is to offset the rising costs of health care. Healthy employees consume fewer corporate resources in the form of benefit payments for medical care, short and long-term disability, and workers'

compensation. There is strong and mounting evidence supporting the cost-effectiveness of investing in employee health management strategies. A meta-review of 42 published studies of worksite health promotion programs showed on average a 28% reduction in sick leave absenteeism, a 26% reduction in health costs, and a 30% reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claims costs. (Stewart WF, Ricci JA, Chee E, Morganstein D, 2003). Potential savings from average risk reduction is \$153 per person per year, compared to a savings of \$350 from risk avoidance (e.g. prevention). (Edington D.W. & Schultz A.B., 2008).

In another study assessing the impact of health promotion program participation on short-term and long-term disability absence days during a 6-year period in a manufacturing company, male, hourly, active employees were analyzed from 1995 to 2000. Disability absences were compared for program participants and nonparticipants from baseline (1995) through 5 years of the program. The percentage of non-participants absent on any given day was greater than that of participants. Moreover, the average number of disability absence days incurred by nonparticipants significantly increased from baseline to program year 5 compared with participants. Hence, participation in worksite health-promotion programs may lead to reduced disability days in a manufacturing worksite population. (Schultz AB et al, 2002). However, this study only focuses on male employees in production. What about female employees? What about those who are office workers? What about our Malaysian context?

2.7 Job Stress and Wellness Programs

Job stress is a particular individual's awareness or feeling of personal dysfunction as a result of perceived conditions or happenings in the work setting. It is ubiquitous across many countries and types of industries. Dating as back as 1948, Hans Selye a scientist in physiology and psychology, coined the word "stress" as a general adaptation syndrome, the body's non specific response to any demand made on to it.

However, the concept of stress lacks precision in that it has been both broadly and narrowly defined, and treated as a stimulus, a response, an environmental characteristic, an individual attribute, and an interaction between an individual and his or her environment (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Thus, for example, while one researcher might label a physiological dysfunction as stress (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980) another would call it a consequence of stress (Schuler, 1980).

The onset of the economic crisis, increasing demands for productivity, cost-cutting measures, and technological changes, had consequences of occupational stress becoming a norm for many employees. Understandably then, workplace stress plays a large role in the lives of many of our Malaysian workers. Haratani and Kawakami (1999) have mentioned that with globalization and intercultural exchanges, new sources of stress are imposed upon workers due to interactions with people from different culture and background. Greenberg and Baron (1995) had mentioned that stress is associated with impaired individual functioning in the workplace. Negative effects include poor concentration, memory lapses, indecisiveness, fatigue, apathy and lack of self-confidence. This finding is similar with Matteson and Ivancevich (1982) where employees were found to have reduced efficiency,

loss of responsibilities and a lack of concern for the organization and colleagues.

In addition, along with these, occupational stress is consistently linked with certain physical health symptoms and diseases. Heart disease, ulcers, some form of cancer, allergies, migraine, back problems, depression and an increased frequency of minor ailments such as colds and flu have been associated with stress. (Sethi and Schuler, 1990). Long working hours, excessive workload, weekend duties, inadequate physical activity and an unhealthy lifestyle are often cited as the key sources of chronic fatigue and work stress. According to a survey conducted in Malaysia by Manshor A.T. et al (2003), it is confirmed that high work demands and the rapid changes in the workplace, together with organizational changes, like downsizing, have often resulted in increasing demands as well. In addition, impact from globalization, as well as entry of China into World Trade Organization had also put extra pressure on Malaysian traditional industries. As a consequence, employee wellness and the work-life balance of many people are adversely affected.

Furthermore, the effects of stress, such as poor mental and physical health, resulted in employees taking more sick days off, and raising workers compensation claims. These clearly indicate that the workplace has become an unhealthy environment for the employees. Even though a certain amount of stress is vital to health and performance, as it can stimulate and motivate positive reactions to challenges, too much or permanent stress can result in employees inability to cope, causing psychometric illnesses. If left untreated, the net result is an impact on performance and profitability. Mounting incidents of occupational illnesses or accidents and the growing number of karoshi and suicides among prime-aged working adult's further raise concerns regarding individuals' health awareness and corporate effectiveness in employee wellness management. (Audrey H. H. T., 2008).

There is a growing body of experimental and clinical research that judges and support the notion that physical fitness can lead to significant reductions in job stress. Regular, rigorous physical activity has been shown to reduce muscle tension, anxiety, blood pressure, heart rate and incidence of heart attacks - all stress-related symptoms. Moreover, exercise can protect individuals by enhancing the state of resistance to any stimulus, so that the individual is less susceptible to the effects of stress. (Tarkan L., 1991). It is convinced that wellness programs constituting de-stressing activities eg fitness classes and health educational seminars are most effective (Mobley, 1982).

In addition to the above, Murphy (1996) identified that cost effective workplace programs, including seminars and workshops, played a part in reducing employees stress which could in turn, further reduce stress-related illnesses and absenteeism. There is also evidence that both Type A and Type B workers had lower use of health services by 50% at the completion of a workplace wellness program and stress symptoms fell by 45% (Jacobson, 1995). As a consequence, many employers are developing wellness programs as a proactive measure.

2.8 Job Satisfaction and Wellness Programs

Job satisfaction is an attitude that workers have about their jobs and is a consequence of their perceptions of the job at hand. In particular, it depends on, and develops in response to the workers' job characteristics or by the characteristics of the organizations (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). On the other hand, some theorists view job satisfaction as being the positive emotional reactions and attitudes an individual has towards their job, which results from the person's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, anticipated or deserved (Oshagbemi T., 1999).

Sousa-Poza A, on a study conducted in 2000 on well-being at work, has suggested that the most important determinants of job satisfaction are whether employees find their job interesting, have good relationships with their managers and colleagues, have high income, are allowed to work independently, and have clearly defined career advancement opportunities. Research has shown that employees with improved morale are likely to be more productive as a result of an increased sense of responsibility to the employer and an improved overall job satisfaction (Shinew and Crossley, 1988).

Unfortunately, current trends in employment conditions may be eroding levels of job satisfaction. Work practices are becoming more automated and inflexible, leaving employees with less and less control over their workload. New working practices and rapid technological advances are changing the nature of many jobs. Many organizations are reducing their permanent workforce and converting to a culture of short term contracts or “out-sourcing”, increasing feelings of job insecurity. These trends have undoubtedly contributed considerably to the development of a “workaholic” culture. With persistence of this climate, the levels of enjoyment and satisfaction employees gain from their work will be negatively impacted. Apart from that, these will also directly damage the physical and mental health of employees. (Kenny D.T., Carlson J.G., McGuigan F.J, et al, 2000) .

It is clear then, why job satisfaction and dissatisfaction has become a major concern in the workplace. Interest in job satisfaction is particularly strong because of its consequences for the organization, such as absenteeism and turnover (Cherrington, 1989) and for the employee, such as mental and physical health (O'Donnell and Ainsworth, 1984).

One organizational factor that may impact job satisfaction is the presence of wellness

program (Kizzy M. Parks and Lisa A. Steelman, 2008). One perspective mentioned by their meta-analysis is that employers will be viewed as having better concern for their employees and in turn employees' attitude toward the organization was improved. There is growing evidence that providing corporate wellness programs will contribute to a positive attitude and increased job satisfaction among employees. A study conducted at the General Electric Company in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA to compare the benefits of employees' recreation participation with those of employees' fitness participation had strongly suggest that employees participated showed less absenteeism and higher job satisfaction than employees who did not participate at all (Baun *et al.*, 1986). Another study that supported the same notion was conducted on police officers who were more physically fit and felt better about themselves, aside from more satisfied with their job. (Kirkcaldy, Cooper, Shephard, Brown 1994).

Studies have found that providing a corporate wellness program will engender a positive attitude, making employees happier with the organization and therefore more satisfied with their jobs. (Gronningsaeter, Hytten, Skauli, Christensen, Ursin, 1992, Zoller, 2004). This is most probably due to the fact that employers who provide wellness programs are perceived as caring organizations. Even in our Asian setting, a study conducted in Singapore has found that organizations which offer wellness programs to their staff are perceived more positively by their employees in terms of their attitudes towards the organizations, job satisfaction levels and satisfaction with fringe benefits. (Janice Ho, 1997).

To further reiterate this point, The Maritz Survey (2008) found that participants in wellness programs are more engaged and satisfied with their jobs. The survey theorizes that the impact may be due to the belief of participants that their employers care about their well-being. It further notes that offering rewards and incentives are critical at key points during the

program. Furthermore, employees are more likely to remain with the company longer and more likely to recommend it to a friend or family member as a place to work.

2.9 Job Demand

The New York law firm Cleary, Gottlieb, Sheen and Hamilton was sued by the father of an associate at the firm. The associate, unable to cope with job demand, committed suicide by jumping off the roof of the firm's building. (A. Stevens, 1994). In Malaysia, as in the west, competition has fast become the new fact of life. Virtually everyone has experienced work overload at one time or the other, and the incidence rate is increasing. (P.Cramer, 2000). Overload may be of qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative overload occurs when people lack the ability needed to complete their jobs or that performance standards have been set too high. Quantitative overload is as a result of having too many things to complete at one time. This problem sees an increase in incidence especially with the push for higher productivity and efficiency in all business areas.

Sonnentag and Krueger (2006) had found that if employees need to take work home to complete it in order to fulfil and achieve a certain professional standard, opportunity for restorative psychological detachment from job would not be possible. Furthermore, if this is persistent and continuous, negative load effects (e.g. fatigue) in the absence of recovery, will eventually lead to exhaustion, loss of function, finally to physical and mental impairment (Sonnentag and Zijlstra, 2006). The potential negative effects of overload will be increased when overload is coupled with low ability to control the work demand (Toby Wall et al, 1996). The worst part is physiological changes may persist even after individual has left work, if high work demands coupled with little or no control over these demands were experienced. (R.A. Franche et al, 2006).