

Nyanga, T., Sibanda, R.

IMPACT OF ONSITE HEALTH CARE CENTERS ON JOB SATISFACTION IN ARMED CONFLICT SOCIETIES: THE ZIMBABWEAN WAR OF LIBERATION PERSPECTIVE

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Takupiwa NYANGA

Julius Nyerere School of Social Sciences, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe

Rosemary SIBANDA

Graduate School of Management and Leadership, University of KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa

Abstract

Employee wellness is one of the key and most essential antecedents to employee and organizational performance. Organisational performance heavily depends on the health and wellness of employees and their attitude towards their work. The study explored the relationship between wellness programs and job satisfaction for workers in armed conflict societies. The study focused on one wellness program; that is the establishment of organizational onsite health centers. A quantitative research methodology was employed to carry out the study. A questionnaire was used to solicit data from 50 people who witnessed or directly or indirectly participated in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe and the civil war in Mozambique. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the collected data. The study established that there is a strong relationship between the establishment of onsite health centers and job satisfaction. All the major services of health clinics such as provision of health services to the injured during the war, provision of counseling services, provision of physical fitness programs and provision of ill-health prevention services showed a strong relationship with job satisfaction. It was recommended that all organizations operating in armed conflict societies should establish health centers within their premises to provide health services to the physically and emotionally injured employees.

Keywords: Wellness, job satisfaction, health care centers, armed conflict.

1. INTRODUCTION

For an organization to successfully achieve its goals, grow and survive, it needs to have mentally and physically fit and satisfied employees who are eager to expend their energy towards meeting set goals. With the need to have physical and emotionally health employees especially in armed conflict societies surging, it is becoming more and more important for organisations to establish systems and programs that promote employee health and wellness. While maintaining a health workforce is a challenge for almost all organizations throughout the world, those organizations operating in armed conflict societies experience even more challenges. An armed conflict society is characterized by the displacement of

people, torturing of people, killing of people and injuring armed forces and civilians (Nyanga et al 2018, Nyanga 2018). All the consequences of the war physically and emotionally disturb the health and wellbeing of workers, working in organizations in armed conflict societies. Chaurika (2011) argued that there are a host of wellness programs which organizations can introduce to promote employee wellness and health. One of the wellness programs commonly used by both organizations in armed conflict and peaceful societies is the establishment of onsite health care clinics which provide counseling services, nursing ill workers, screening programs and providing ill-health prevention services. Ill health prevention services include among others company sponsored exercises and sports, fitness and gym and organized fitness activities such as lunchtime walks, before or after work health tips classes that are partially or fully-funded by the employer, newsletters with health tips, healthy recipes tips, health and wellness articles. Employer health care programs are generally mutually beneficial to both employers and employees. It is in the interest of government, employers and employees to have health employees because health employees are more productive than unhealthy employees (Chaurika 2011).

Employer health care program refers to any employee wellness enhancing activity or organizational policy designed to support healthy behavior in the workplace and to improve health outcomes (Chaurika 2011, Gaebler 2000). Health care program is an organization's strategy of improving worker health and wellness programs. Wellness programs include among others company-sponsored exercise, weight-loss competitions, educational seminars, tobacco-cessation programs and health screenings that are designed to help employees improve their overall physical health. Employer health care programs are usually accompanied by financial incentives given to employees by their employers for behaving in a manner that reduces chances of workplace related accident and other health threatening activities. Some of the financial incentives include lower health-insurance premiums. A good health care program helps individual employees overcome specific health-related issues or diseases or conditions. Studies (Chaurika 2011) have shown that in a bid to have a health workforce, most organizations throughout the world have introduced health care clinics within their premises or outsourced the service from third-party service providers. A study by Abiora (2017) established that most organizations onsite health centers provide compulsory staff training on health issues, nursing ill workers, provide counseling services to the emotionally distressed employees, and provide ill health prevention activities or programs. According to Nkomo (2000) most onsite health clinics and programs are fully funded by employers mainly because health and wellness directly affect productivity and profitability. Workplace wellness programs champion behaviors that minimize health risks, advance quality of life and promote personal effectiveness. While the introduction of onsite health centers is a welcome move by all

business stakeholders, one wonders whether it helps in propelling job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. A study by Nyanga (2018) established that employee satisfaction was generally low among workers working for organizations operating in armed conflict societies. Job satisfaction is one of the most essential precipitators of organizational performance (Nyanga et al 2018), hence it is essential for employers to ensure that employees are appropriately satisfied by their work. Employees in armed conflict societies are susceptible to various forms of war consequences that directly and indirectly affect their health. For instance employees in armed conflict societies are tortured, killed, sexually abused by armed forces which consequently affect their health. The introduction of onsite health centers sounds very useful, but the extent to which it promotes job satisfaction has remained unclear. Most studies that investigated wellness issues emphasized on wellness programs which organizations should introduce and also focused on the causes and effects of not having wellness programs. There is scanty literature if any on the relationship between the establishment of onsite health care clinics and job satisfaction. It is this knowledge fissure which this study aims to seal. The purpose of this paper is to examine the job satisfaction benefits that accrue from employer sponsored onsite health care clinics..

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research methodology. The researcher opted to use the quantitative research methodology because he wanted the participants to have ample time to thoroughly analyse their thoughts before they respond to the research questions. When participants respond to a questionnaire, they are usually not intimidated by the presence of the researcher hence they proffer their views without any disturbances and interference from the researcher. Such conditions make the researcher gather accurate data since participants' views are not influenced by the presence of the researcher and the researcher's body expressions. The study population was approximately 150. A sample of 50 people who witnessed the war, directly or indirectly participated in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe and the civil war in Mozambique was chosen to participate in the study. The researcher used snow blowing sampling method to select all the 50 participants who participated in the study. The researcher identified ten (10) people in Chimbapire village in chief Mahlebadza area in Mbererngwa district. The 10 identified participants then referred the researcher to the other groups of people who directly or indirectly participated in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Most of the selected participants were retired teachers, nurses, doctors, health community workers, veterinary services employees and armed forces who witnessed the war of liberation and/or the civil war in

Mozambique. The researcher opted to collect data from people in chief Mahlebadza area, especially Chimbapire village because it is one of the places in Mberengwa district where war intense, which consequently led to almost all the people in that village to participate in the war of liberation. Chimbapire village is a mountainous area, hence it provided a lot of cover for armed forces to hide. The amount of cover around the area made the area a hive of war activities and made most people who were working in that area and surrounding areas vulnerable to various forms of abuses. Some of the participants were working in mines such as Vumbachikwe Mine, Shabane and Mashava mines and huge companies such as Coca Cola during the war of liberation. The researcher fully explained to all the participants the purpose the study and sought their consent before he started collecting data from them. Data was collected using an 11 item questionnaire. The questionnaire was in both English and Shona (local language) so as to ensure that the semi-illiterate participants fully understand the questions. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

3. FINDINGS

Demographic data analysis showed that there were more male than female participants. There were more male than female participants probably because in most cases more men participate in war activities than women. The other reason why there were fewer women than men was probably because most working women abandoned employment and migrated to other countries such as Botswana and Malawi. Expectedly results also showed that the 71 and above age category dominated all the other age groups. It is so because the second Chimurenga war of liberation in Zimbabwe started in 1964 and ended in 1979 when the country gained its independence. Most of the people who were working during that time have an average age of 71 years. The majority of the participants were married. In terms of educational qualifications the diploma and below category dominated the other categories. During the war of liberation in Zimbabwe there was only one University hence there were very few workers who were holders of undergraduate and post graduate degrees. Most of the participants had an experience of working in armed conflict societies of over 5 years.

TABLE 1: BIOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

1	Gender	Male (56%)	Female (44%)	
2	Age	50 and below (2%)	51-70 (36%)	71 + (62%)
3	Marital Status	Married (68%)	Unmarried (32%)	
4	Educational	Diploma and below	Undergraduate	Post graduate

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	attainment	(48%)	degree (36%)	degree (16%)
5	Work experience	5yrs and below (30%)	6-10yrs (60%)	10yrs and above (10%)

The results show that the majority, 90% of the participants agreed that there is a relationship between the provision of ill-health prevention services with job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. For instance, company sponsored exercises is one of the health care programs and activities done by onsite health centres meant to prevent workers from contracting diseases such as high sugar levels. The other role of onsite health care services is the distribution of disease prevention systems or tools such as condoms which are meant to prevent workers from contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

TABLE 2: EFFECTS OF ONSITE HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES TO JOB SATISFACTION

Onsite Health Center Services	SA	A	N	D	SD
Provision of ill-health prevention services	18 (36%)	27 (54%)	1(2%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
Reduction of medical bills	23 (46)	21 (42)	0	3 (6)	3 (6)
Provision of health services to the injured during the war	22 (44%)	19 (38%)	0	5 (10%)	4 (8%)
Provision of counseling services	11 (22%)	18 (36%)	2 (4%)	13 (26%)	6 (12%)
Provision of physical fitness programs	14 (28%)	25 (50%)	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)

Furthermore employees are trained on various life practices and habits that reduce chances of workers contracting diseases. The corporate onsite medical centre also offers a variety of scheduled programs, such as stress management seminars that address sleep to work-life balance, financial health, healthy recipe, fitness and general well being of employees. Healthy and appealing food was also served at meetings and including in company-provided overtime meals. Onsite clinics also offer in-house workout spaces or marked walking paths on the corporate campus to encourage physical activity and also instituted no-smoking policies and practices. For instance, policies are meant to enforce accident prevention practices such as requiring seat belt use in company vehicles. Elevated blood glucose, high blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure are almost all caused by unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity. Eating appropriate food and exercising are behaviors that promote good health. Onsite clinics provide reading material and conduct workshops on good health habits and methods of curbing and

leaving with chronic disease such as BP and HIV/AIDS. People living in armed conflict societies are prone to various forms of abuses such as sexual assaults, hence equipping workers with survival skills in such environments make workers develop a positive attitude towards their work.

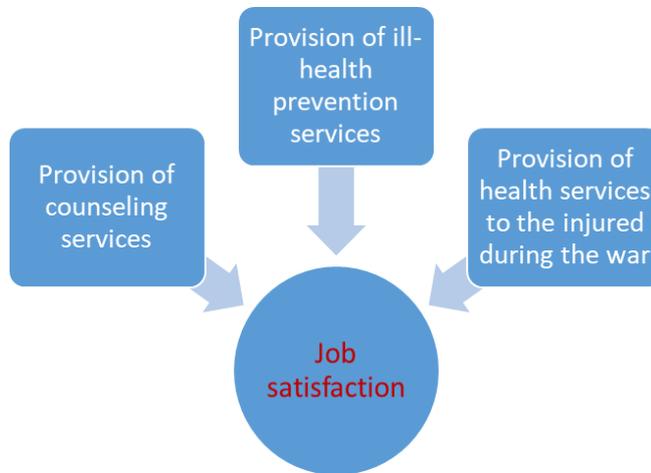


Figure 1: Roles of onsite health care centers that influence job satisfaction in armed conflict societies

In most countries, one of the company sponsored wellness programs benefit both employers and employees is that the government gives incentives such as tax breaks and grants to companies that embark on health care activities while at the same time employees enjoy good health. For example organizations in Zimbabwe and Mozambique received several incentives from government for establishing ill-health avoidance programs such as gymnastics centre for employees and the local community. Wellness programs help organizations to improve their financial positions by keeping a health workforce which productivity. The provision of ill-health prevention services boost the company's productivity since the majority of workers will be health and have the energy to perform their duties to the expectation of their employers. An organization with a good corporate image derived from good corporate responsibility tends to get full support from its customers and other key stakeholders. An increase in the company's sales and productivity has a direct influence on employees' salaries and other conditions of service which consequently propel job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. Onsite clinics benefit organizations in the sense that they make employees become loyal and committed to their organization and do everything within their skills and competencies to achieve set goals. The findings are consistent with Ibrahim (2012) who argued that health centers are an essential factor that boosts employee morale and job satisfaction. It therefore implies that there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and the provision of ill-health prevention programs within

organizations. Furthermore, health education, which focused on lifestyle behavior change along with information dissemination and awareness, which is done by onsite clinics significantly reduce the spread of diseases and help employees avoid unhealthy practices and behaviour. Medical clinics develop informational and educational strategies that build the knowledge base necessary to inform optimal health practices. Onsite clinics provide pamphlets, nutrition education documents, diet and exercise on the company websites and any other places which are easily accessible to workers.

The majority of the respondents (88%) agreed that onsite clinics significantly reduce medical costs for employees and employers. Onsite clinic ill health prevention exercises help employees to understand their health, identify risk factors for disease and make positive changes to improve their overall well-being. If employees know and understand health risks healthcare costs are bound to engage in activities that promote good health. According to Miller (2013) with health care costs on a steep incline in war torn countries, most employees greatly appreciate the establishment of wellness programs put in place by their employers. Most employees in armed conflict societies cannot afford medical bills hence the introduction of employee wellness clinics boosts their positive attitude towards their work. Increasing the overall health of employees reduces medical costs such as costs related to high Blood Pressure (BP) and other stress related diseases. Employers also benefit because healthy employees reduce overall health care costs in the form of medical aid remittances given to medical aid societies. Wellness programs help employees make smart and healthy choices that can reduce health care costs, increase vitality and diminish absenteeism, brain drain and general labor turnover. The employer induced reduction of medical bills makes employees in armed conflict societies develop a positive attitude towards their work and their employers.

Productivity is generally very low for organizations operating in armed conflict societies (Nyanga et al 2018). Low productivity in armed conflict societies is usually caused by the high rate of absenteeism due to ill-health. A significant number of workers get injured during the fighting between armed forces, which in turn negatively affect their job satisfaction. Ill-health prevention programs benefit organizations in armed conflict societies in that it improves productivity. It is estimated that the cost associated with presenteeism due to poor employee health is at least 3 to 4 times greater than direct health care expenses (Aldana and Adams 2017). Presenteeism is a situation where employees are physically at work but not working or mentally absent. To support the view Damon and David (2012) argues that productivity is another factor affected when employees aren't at their best, physically and mentally. Presenteeism can be caused by multiple factors such as lack of sleep, headaches, mental health problems or even financial problems. So providing workers with refreshing activities such as gym and other sporting activities make them reduce their stress levels and concentrate on their work, which

in turn leads to higher productivity. To add more Greenfield (2013) says that lack and loss of productivity due to health reasons can also lead to absenteeism. It therefore implies that keeping employees healthy reduce absenteeism. Worksites with comprehensive wellness programs propel job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. Wellness programs also reduce employees' high blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose which consequently reduce worker absenteeism and increase job satisfaction. 82% of the participants agreed that the provision of health services to the injured during the war increase job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. Onsite health clinics provide nursing services and health care programs to both employees and the community, which in turn increase job satisfaction among workers in armed conflict societies. Employees and their immediate family members receive free medical assistance at the organization's clinic and also get their routine medication for their chronic health problems such as elevated blood glucose, high blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure. Organizations put in place medical clinics that are equipped with first aid kits meant to provide medical services to injured employees and their immediate family members. Some organizations have fully fledged hospitals where employees receive medical care and treatment free of charge. The availability of clinics reduces employees' medical costs since employees no longer pay consultation fees and other health related fees. The reduction in medical bills increases employees' disposable and net income, which consequently lead to job satisfaction. Satisfied and health employees have a higher output than lowly satisfied and ill-health workers (Nyanga et al 2018) so it is essential for organizations to put in place systems that boost job satisfaction. Besides improving employee productivity and decreasing sick days, absenteeism and presenteeism and reducing production costs, wellness programs also lower the organization's health insurance expenses. The decrease of out-of-pocket medical expenditures and an increase in the well-being of employees boost employee satisfaction. The findings are consistent with Takvern (2000) who argued that the establishment of an onsite health centers keep employees health and fit to perform their assigned duties to the expectation of the employer. Onsite clinics assist in increasing productivity and also attracting highly competent and skilled members of staff. Employers benefit a great deal because skilled employees are attracted to the organization and boost productivity. Studies (Desler 2015) observed that one of the reasons for the growth of healthcare costs to employers is the rise in obesity-related illnesses brought about by lack of physical activity; another is the effect of an aging workforce and the associated increase in chronic health conditions driving higher health care utilization. The establishment of medical centres significantly reduces poor health conditions such as obesity among employees.

The majority of respondents (58%) indicated that the provision of counseling services to psychologically and emotionally burdened employees significantly boost job satisfaction among workers in war torn countries. People working for organizations in war torn countries experience a lot of traumatic situations which are caused by the fighting of armed forces. Several human rights violations such as sexual assaults, killing, torturing and beating people are made by armed forces and/or war collaborators. Employees and/or their relatives also suffer the same consequences faced by the generality of the population, which in turn traumatize them and cause a psychological and emotional distress. Onsite health centers become handy in such situations since they provide counseling services to the psychologically and emotionally injured employees. Most clinics in armed conflict have professional counselors in their staff establishments who offer counseling services to employees who will have been physically or emotionally injured by the consequences of the war. Counseling services assist to reduce the psychological burden from the injured employees which in turn lead to employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is boosted because employees will develop a feeling that their employer cares for them and their welfare in and outside the work environment. The findings are consistent with Shoniwa et al (2013) who argued that well planned counseling services in any organization help to increase job satisfaction among employees of different categories. Counseling services provided by trained counselors is a key ingredient to job satisfaction and organisational performance. Counseling boost employee morale, self-efficacy and self-confidence (Zafar et al 2014, Taylor et al 2012, Sogh and Zarei 2016, Sharma and Manani 2012). Furthermore counseling services reduce chances of dysfunctional conflicts between employers and employees. Nyanga and Sibanda (2015) observed that conflict between employers and employees is complex to the extent that it negatively affects productivity and also soils relations between employers and employees. Bad relations between employers and employees are a huge impediment to job satisfaction and organizational citizenship.

Provision of physical fitness programs by onsite clinics garnered 76%. Onsite clinics provide compulsory physical fitness programs to all employees so as to keep them fit and health. For instance some onsite health centers establish soccer teams which play in national soccer leagues. Some onsite clinics also provide leisure and physical facilities that keep workers health and fit which consequently reduce stress among employees and in turn promotes job satisfaction and increase productivity. The other benefit ill-health prevention programs are that it makes employees enjoy a healthy lifestyle which offers incentives such as decreased health care costs, health and fitness of employees. A study by Moyo (2013) showed that Dowd Insurance Agencies' employees were reported to be fit and health ever since they started implementing the health care program where employees were assisted to do sporting activities and other wellness programs such as gymnastics. Some organizations went further and dedicated at least

one afternoon per week for physical fitness programs and activities. On such a day employees are encouraged to engage in sporting activities and other activities that promote physical fitness among workers. Sporting activities promote employee motivation and satisfaction since they serve as a psychological disorder therapy. Sporting activities also promote team work among workers which is another essential ingredient to job satisfaction.

Conclusion

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study made the following conclusions; 1) Employer funded onsite health centers in armed conflict societies significantly contribute to job satisfaction among workers. Onsite clinics provide several health care programs which include but not limited to the following; screening activities, health promotion activities and nursing injured employees. 2) Onsite health centers induced job satisfaction significantly reduce labour turnover, increase productivity, reduce presenteeism, reduce absenteeism, increase employee loyalty and commitment and aide employee retention. 3) All the services provided by health care centres in armed conflict societies significantly positively contribute to job satisfaction and organizational performance. Healthy workers tend to produce more than unhealthy workers. Productivity is one of the factors that promote job satisfaction. An employee who realizes his/her set goals and targets generally develops a positive attitude towards his/her work. In light of the conclusion made, the study recommended that organizations in armed conflict societies should establish onsite health care centres which promote the health and wellbeing of employees and their nuclear family members. Furthermore organizations should give workers incentives for not engaging health threatening and risk activities in and outside the workplace. The provision of health care programs is one of the employee wellbeing best practices in the 20th century which has the potential of making or breaking organizational growth and performance. The government in collaboration with humanitarian organizations should encourage organizations to establish onsite health care centres. Policies that promote good employee wellbeing in armed conflict societies should be instituted. For instance the government can give tax incentives to all organizations that run onsite clinics.

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