

# “Wellness Practices of Employees in a State University: Bases for the ‘Lagsik-Abtik’ Wellness Plan”

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**Abstract:- This descriptive study determined the extent of wellness practices among the teaching and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University during the second semester of school year 2018-2019. There were 333 randomly selected employee-participants who answered the adopted survey questionnaire on wellness practices. The responses of the participants in the instrument and in the interview provided data on their practices in five dimensions of wellness, namely: physical, intellectual, spiritual, social and emotional dimensions. The participants also identified the challenges they have encountered in practicing wellness activities and some recommendations that they think can help them address such challenges. Their responses were guided by a 5-point Likert scale and the data gathered were treated using mean and standard deviation. The results of the study revealed that the teaching and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University always practiced spiritual and emotional wellness activities, often practiced activities for social and intellectual wellness and sometime practiced physical activities. The employees of the university also identified lack of interest and motivation, lack of time, and unstable body condition as their challenges in practicing wellness activities.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Attaining wellness in all dimensions is necessary for all people, specifically for employees. To be truly healthy, employees need to possess a sound mind and body, stable emotional, positive social inclination, professional excellence, and spiritual maturity. Such conditions are said to influence personal health, happiness, and productivity. Hence, every employee needs to be aware of and makes choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life.

According to Bezner (2015), the status of health and wellness among employees has a direct impact on their work performance as well as on the overall organizational success. For regular employees who are working full-time, that is eight hours a day, five days a week, self-care practices may become both personal as well as professional responsibilities. In other words, in providing services to clientele, every paid employee has an ethical obligation to attend to his or her health and well-being so as not to compromise the quality of services he/she is delivering. The

level of wellness among individual employees, when summed up describes the total organizational performance.

To help promote health and wellness among public employees in the Philippines, the government has enacted laws and mandates that required all public agencies to implement regular wellness activities in their respective workplaces and to provide simple rules that encourage their employees to pursue a physically-active lifestyle at an institutional level. The Civil Service Commission, for example, had issued Memorandum Circular No. 8, s. 2011 which directed all heads of both national and local government agencies, departments, corporations, and state colleges and universities to implement the physical fitness program called “Great Filipino Workout.” To develop a healthy and alert workforce, the system of rules mandated all government offices to parcel out reasonable time for regular physical fitness program among their respective employees. Moreover, said memorandum pinpointed key persons in promoting and implementing the said program, namely: health professionals, community health workers, health and sports coordinators, human resource officers, and physical education teachers.

Teachers and non-teaching employees of state universities were observed to be prone to stress; thus, they need to engage in activities that promote overall wellness. The demands of maintaining outstanding performance, plus other concerns in the work environment and family, may contribute to employees’ stress. The complexity and volume of teaching or office tasks may cause university employees to neglect other dimensions of their wellbeing. Furthermore, as observed, busy employees tend to have not enough time to read intellectual and spiritual literature and may be too tired to join community activities on weekends. They, likewise, appear to lose interest in engaging in other creative projects for personal growth.

There is, therefore, a felt need that a study on wellness practices among the teaching and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University be conducted to draw data that are useful in designing the most appropriate wellness intervention plan. The said intervention plan, once institutionalized and implemented, is envisioned to raise employees’ level of personal wellness in all dimensions. The findings of this study may also be utilized as tangible evidence that will help convince the administration of the

university and other neighboring institutions to invest in other human resource programs. The ultimate anticipated result of this study is an improved individual and organizational performance.

**II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was primarily anchored on the Wellness Motivation Theory (WMT) of. The theory states that personal motivation to engage in health and wellness activities is influenced by individual values and resources. Hence, the kind and extent of wellness activities that people do vary from person to person, depending on their contextualized needs and opportunities and choices toward a more successful existence. Moreover, the motivation to practice personalized wellness activities may change from time to time because it is a dynamic and goal-directed behavior leading to new and positive health patterns.

The study is further anchored on the Social and Behavioral theory of Glanz (2016). This theory states that individual choices on foods and activities are influenced by personal preferences, habits, nutrition information, availability, cost, and placement, among other things. The process of choosing is complex and determined not only by multiple factors but by factors at multiple levels. One relevant concept from Glanz’s theory is that any intervention to promote and sustain wellness programs should not only target individuals but should also include organizational and environmental factors influencing health behavior.

Moreover, the present study was also supported by three memorandum circulars issued by the Philippine Civil Service Commission that required public agencies, including state universities, to integrate wellness activities in their workplaces, namely: CSC M. C. no. 38 in 1992 (Physical and Mental Wellness Program for Government Personnel), CSC M.

C. no. 6 in 1995 (The Great Filipino Workout), and CSC M. C. no.8 of 2011 (Reiteration of Physical Fitness Program ‘Great Filipino Workout’). Said issuance required government employees to participate in organizational wellness and fitness programs, which aimed at inculcating among Filipino employees the importance of a healthy lifestyle as a strategy to reduce the level of the risk factors of heart diseases.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The first box of the diagram represents the different wellness practices of teachers and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University that were categorized according to five of Hettler’s (1976) and Swarbrick and Yudof’s (2015) dimensions of wellness, namely: physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. These are the dimensions of wellness that teachers and the rest of school employees need to attain and sustain to be personally motivated in life and become highly effective in their respective work environment. Achieving holistic wellness is

about finding balance in these key dimensions.

The second and the third boxes in Figure 1 represent the challenges that the teachers and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University experience in their wellness activities and the recommended intervention to address them, respectively. According to studies, the success of employees’ wellness activities depends on some factors such as their interest in participation, financial pressure, and the level of commitment by organizational leadership (Person, 2010). Other factors include insufficient incentives, inconvenient locations, time limitations, not interested in topics presented, marketing, health beliefs, and uninterested in the program (Schreiner, 2018). To reap the potential benefits of personal and workplace wellness programs, employees and employers must overcome these hurdles and stay optimistic in their dedication to establishing programs that promote employee health and wellness.

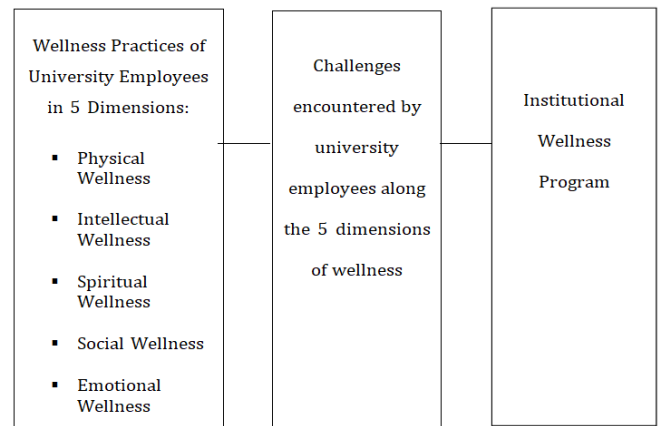


Fig 1:- The schematic diagram showing the parameters of the study.

**III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study determined the wellness practices of teaching and non-teaching employees in Bukidnon State University during the 2nd semester of school year 2018-2019. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

To what extent did the university employees practice wellness activities in the following dimensions:

- Physical dimension;
- Intellectual dimension;
- Spiritual dimension;
- Social dimension; and
- Emotional dimension?

What were the challenges that university employees encountered in practicing wellness activities?

What institutional intervention plan could be designed to help university employees cope with the challenges they experienced in practicing wellness activities?

**IV. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used to gather and interpret data from the responses of the participants. It describes the research locale, the participants

of the study, the research instrument, the administration of the instrument, the scoring procedure, and the treatment of data. This study used the descriptive method of research using an adapted survey questionnaire on the five dimensions of wellness practices.

This study conducted at Bukidnon State University, a state-owned higher education institution located in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

<i>Summary Table on the Wellness Employees in Five Dimensions</i>	<i>Practices</i>	<i>of Bukidnon State University</i>
Dimensions of Wellness Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Spiritual Dimension 4.34	0.91	Always Practiced
Emotional Dimension 4.28	0.84	Always Practiced
Social Dimension 4.06	0.92	Often Practiced
Intellectual Dimension 3.56	0.91	Often Practiced
Physical Dimension 3.13	0.81	Sometimes Practiced
Overall 3.87	0.88	Often Practiced

Table 1:- Summary Table on the Wellness

The overall result shows that the teachers and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University practiced various activities that helped them attain personal wellness. However, the extent of these practices varies from always practiced, often practiced, and sometimes practiced. Among the five components of wellness considered in this study, the spiritual dimension got the highest mean, while the physical aspect got the lowest overall mean rating. Hence, the study found out that university employees may have considered spirituality important and easy to attain. On the other hand, doing physical fitness activities have appeared challenging among university employees. This result affirms the idea of Laws, et al. (2013) that people find physical activities less practical because, at present, machines and technology make many tasks easy, fast, and do not require much physical strength of workers.

The spiritual and emotional dimensions have close overall mean ratings. This result partially supports the concept that to some extent, the various components of wellness somewhat interconnect (Hettler, 1976; Swarbrick and Yudof, 2015; National Institute for Health, 2010) and that wellness is both a dynamic process of different components and an outcome of their integration (American Physical Therapists Association, 2015; Khan, 2017). This finding is similar to those of Rebisz (2007) and Koenig (2004) that there is indeed a connection between emotional and spiritual dimensions of wellness and that as persons

mature emotionally, they also become spiritually mature. Moreover, such relationship may be possible because both are concerned about living a meaningful life despite its circumstances. Spiritual wellness aims at achieving inner peace and harmony, while emotional wellness helps people cope with stress by attaining inner happiness and satisfaction. Hence, churches and religious fellowships are integral partners of universities and other institutions in improving both spiritual and emotional wellness among their employees.

The findings also revealed that Bukidnon State University employees encountered few challenges in doing wellness activities, such as, lack of interest and undefined motive or purpose (Schreiner, 2018; Edmunds, Hurst and Harvey, 2013), lack of time (Person, 2010), and overweight (Ball et al, 2010). The second most prevalent barrier to employees' engagement to wellness activities is their lack of time. This particular result is similar to the finding of Hoare et al. (2017), (Kruger, 2007; Daskapan et al. 2006). Another challenge that hindered few university employees from engaging with physical activities was being overweight- that means having a weight that is above the average Body Mass Index (BMI).

## VI. FINDINGS

Based on the results of the study, the following findings emerged:

- The teachers and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University always practiced spiritual and emotional wellness, often practiced social and intellectual wellness, and sometimes practiced physical wellness.
- The teaching and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University identified lack of interest, lack of time, body condition, heavy workload, time constraint, financial, and unavailability of a university wellness center as their challenges in practicing wellness activities.
- A proposed institutional wellness intervention called Lagsik Abtik was designed for the Bukidnon State University employees to enhance wellness practices.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn based from the findings of the study:

- The teaching and non-teaching employees of Bukidnon State University practiced spiritual and emotional wellness all the time. They practiced social and intellectual wellness most of the time. However, they practiced physical wellness occasionally.
- Some personal and environmental factors have affected the university employees' practices in wellness in the five dimensions.
- The designed wellness intervention is in compliance with existing laws and memorandum circulars of the government, policies and guidelines of Bukidnon State University. It is also a collaborative wellness enhancement program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance employees' holistic wellness and their respective work performance, the following are recommended:

- The university, through its Gender and Development Unit in collaboration with the Physical Education Department, faculty association, the non-teaching employees association and the office of the human resource may work hand in hand to implement the comprehensive and sustainable wellness program designed in the study for the university.
- Wellness activities may be conducted inside the campus during official working hours at least twice a month, preferably in the afternoon of Friday. This scheme will create an impression among university employees that the administration is committed to help them achieve maximum wellness.
- Attendance and active involvement of employees during the conduct of wellness activities may be strictly monitored by the wellness focal person in each department and if possible be integrated in the IPCR under Major Final Output: Support Function.
- Studies on the impact of 'Lagsik-Abtik' wellness program on different dimensions of wellness is also recommended at least 3 years after its implementation.

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