

INVESTING IN A HEALTHY WORKFORCE: THE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL WELLNESS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND THE CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKER PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Investing in a healthy workforce is becoming more paramount as empirical evidence continues to illustrate that wellness has a positive impact on worker productivity. At the same time, studies also show that there is an overall decline in the health of the American workforce with the continued rise in overweight and obesity rates. This is a problem that must be addressed by individuals, the government, communities, and employers alike.

This paper empirically examines the relationship between physical wellness and psychological well-being and finds that improved physical wellness has a positive impact on psychological well-being. Prior studies show a direct positive relationship between physical wellness improved worker productivity. Likewise, studies reveal a direct positive relationship between psychological well-being and worker productivity. This study, however, illustrates physical wellness as an important precursor to psychological well-being. In other words, without physical wellness, psychological wellness cannot be fully realized. This adds a critical component to the hypothesis that a "happy worker is a more productive worker".

The bottom-line of an unhealthy workforce is not only detrimental to individuals and businesses, but our entire economy. There is a multitude of physical health problems associated with being overweight and obese; and with 60% of all Americans being classified in one of these two categories, we have a national crisis on our hands. This paper contends that more businesses must begin to support and invest in physical wellness programs for employees, as physical fitness not only has a direct impact on worker productivity, but it is essential for improved psychological well-being and thus added productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Wellness is generally defined as the "the quality and state of being healthy in body and mind." Recent research suggests that psychological wellness has a positive impact on worker productivity. This paper contends that psychological wellness cannot be fully realized without physical wellness. Therefore, physical wellness is a critical antecedent in the relationship between psychological well-being and worker productivity. In addition, physical wellness has a direct impact on worker productivity. As a nation that is becoming increasingly unhealthy due to