

(Research/Review) Article

# Workplace Wellbeing Programs in Multinational Companies Evaluating Effectiveness Across Cultures Management

Faris Wicaksono <sup>1</sup>, Damar Prasetyo Ananta <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Kader Bangsa, Indonesia 1

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Kader Bangsa, Indonesia 2

**Abstract:** This research explores the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs in multinational companies, focusing on cultural differences and their impact on employee engagement and productivity. With the growing emphasis on employee wellbeing, multinational organizations are increasingly adopting diverse wellbeing initiatives, but their success may vary across different cultural contexts. The objective of this study is to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these programs across various regions and identify cultural factors that influence their outcomes. Using a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews with employees from multiple countries, the study examines how cultural values and work environments affect the reception and success of wellbeing initiatives. Findings suggest that while wellbeing programs are generally beneficial, their specific design and implementation must align with cultural norms to maximize effectiveness. Implications for multinational companies include the need for customized wellbeing strategies that reflect the diverse needs and expectations of their global workforce.

**Keywords:** Cultural differences, employee wellbeing, multinational companies, workplace programs, workforce engagement.

## 1. Introduction

The increasing recognition of employee wellbeing as a critical factor for organizational success has led to the widespread implementation of workplace wellbeing programs by multinational companies. These programs are designed to improve the overall health, satisfaction, and productivity of employees, aiming to create a healthier and more engaged workforce. A growing body of research indicates that wellbeing initiatives can enhance employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and improve overall business outcomes (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). However, while these programs have gained significant traction, their effectiveness may vary across different cultural contexts. Cultural differences play a critical role in shaping how individuals perceive health, wellness, and work-life balance, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable for diverse global workforces (Hofstede, 2001).

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Several studies have highlighted the importance of adapting workplace wellbeing programs to suit cultural values and expectations (Koh et al., 2019). For instance, in Western cultures, where individualism and self-improvement are often prioritized, programs may focus more on personal development and individual mental health. In contrast, in collectivist cultures, where group harmony and social connectedness are emphasized, wellbeing programs may incorporate family support systems and community-building activities (Tung, 2020). Despite these insights, research that specifically evaluates the effectiveness of wellbeing programs across various cultural settings remains limited.

The gap in existing literature lies in the lack of comprehensive studies that compare the outcomes of workplace wellbeing programs in multinational organizations operating across diverse cultural contexts. While much attention has been given to the design and implementation of these programs, few studies examine how cultural factors influence their reception and effectiveness in enhancing employee engagement and performance (Chen et al., 2021). Understanding this relationship is crucial for multinational companies aiming to maximize the impact of their wellbeing initiatives across global teams.

Given this gap, the present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs in multinational companies, with a specific focus on cultural differences. The research intends to investigate how cultural norms, values, and expectations influence the design and success of wellbeing programs, and how these factors can be leveraged to enhance employee participation, satisfaction, and productivity. By examining the experiences of employees from various cultural backgrounds, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to the success or failure of these programs.

The findings of this research have significant implications for multinational companies seeking to optimize their wellbeing initiatives. By tailoring programs to meet the cultural preferences and needs of their diverse workforce, companies can ensure that their investments in employee wellbeing yield the maximum possible benefits. Additionally, the study contributes to the academic literature on workplace wellbeing by providing new insights into the cultural dimensions that impact program effectiveness, offering practical guidance for organizations looking to improve their global wellbeing strategies.

## 2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Workplace wellbeing programs have garnered significant attention in both academic literature and corporate practice, largely due to their potential to enhance employee engagement, performance, and overall job satisfaction. Theories of organizational behavior, psychology, and cultural dimensions provide the foundation for understanding how these programs impact employees in multinational companies. These programs are often based on the premise that a well-balanced workforce is more productive, creative, and committed to organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that fulfilling intrinsic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness can foster greater motivation and wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 1985). When applied to workplace wellbeing, SDT suggests that programs that promote employee autonomy and personal growth are more likely to be effective across different cultural contexts.

In addition to SDT, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) has been widely used to explain the relationship between workplace wellbeing and employee performance. The JD-R model asserts that high job demands, such as workload and stress, can deplete resources and lead to burnout, while workplace resources—such as support, training, and wellbeing initiatives—can buffer the effects of stress and enhance employee engagement. This model highlights the importance of aligning workplace wellbeing programs with the specific demands and resources present within an organization, particularly in diverse cultural settings where perceptions of work and wellbeing may differ.

Cultural differences, as described by Hofstede's (2001) Cultural Dimensions Theory, are crucial in understanding how wellbeing programs may be received across multinational organizations. Hofstede's framework categorizes cultural dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, which influence how employees perceive their work environment and wellbeing initiatives. For example, employees from individualistic cultures may prefer wellbeing programs that promote personal achievement and self-care, while those from collectivist cultures may prioritize community-oriented initiatives that support family wellbeing and group harmony (Tung, 2020). These cultural variations can affect both the design and implementation of workplace wellbeing programs, suggesting that cultural considerations are critical for multinational companies looking to standardize wellbeing initiatives across their global workforce.

Several studies have examined the role of cultural differences in shaping the success of workplace wellbeing programs. For example, Koh et al. (2019) found that culturally tailored wellbeing initiatives are more effective in fostering employee participation and satisfaction. They argue that companies must consider the cultural context when designing wellbeing programs, as cultural values can significantly influence employee attitudes toward health and wellness. Additionally, Tung (2020) suggests that organizations that fail to account for cultural differences risk low employee engagement and program ineffectiveness, as employees may not resonate with wellbeing strategies that do not align with their cultural values. This reinforces the need for multinational companies to adopt a more flexible and culturally aware approach to designing wellbeing initiatives.

In light of these theories and studies, the current research seeks to further investigate how cultural factors influence the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs across multinational companies. By exploring the interplay between cultural values and wellbeing initiatives, this study aims to provide deeper insights into the practices that contribute to employee satisfaction and performance in diverse cultural environments. The theoretical frameworks of SDT, JD-R, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions will guide this research, offering a comprehensive lens through which to analyze the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs across different cultural contexts.

### **3. Proposed Method**

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to evaluate the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs in multinational companies across different cultural contexts. The mixed-methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of employee perspectives on wellbeing initiatives. This design is particularly useful in examining complex phenomena such as cultural differences and their influence on program effectiveness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

#### **Population and Sample**

The population for this study consists of employees working in multinational companies with a global presence, specifically in diverse cultural settings. The sample includes employees from various regions, including North America, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to ensure

that the sample represents different cultural groups in these regions. The target sample size is 500 employees, with approximately 125 participants from each region. This approach ensures sufficient representation of the cultural diversity present in multinational organizations (Bryman, 2016).

### **Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

To collect data, both survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are utilized. The survey instrument is designed to gather quantitative data on employee perceptions of the effectiveness of wellbeing programs, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire includes items related to the perceived impact of wellbeing programs on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall wellbeing, as well as questions that assess cultural influences on these perceptions.

For qualitative data, semi-structured interviews are conducted with a subset of 50 participants, selected from the initial survey sample. The interviews explore employees' personal experiences and cultural perspectives on workplace wellbeing programs, providing deeper insights into the reasons behind their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the programs. The interviews are transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and cultural themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Data Analysis**

For the quantitative data, statistical analysis is conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the survey responses, and inferential analysis is performed using One-Way ANOVA to compare the effectiveness of wellbeing programs across different cultural groups. The results of the ANOVA test will help determine if there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of wellbeing programs based on cultural dimensions, such as individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede, 2001).

In addition to the ANOVA test, a regression analysis will be conducted to examine the relationship between employees' cultural values and their attitudes toward the wellbeing programs. This analysis aims to determine if specific cultural factors, such as the level of individualism or collectivism, are significant predictors of the perceived effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis is performed using NVivo software to identify recurring themes and patterns in the interview transcripts. Thematic analysis allows for the identification of key factors influencing the reception of wellbeing

programs, such as cultural values, work environment, and the role of management in program implementation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings from the qualitative data will complement the quantitative analysis, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural factors that affect program success.

### **Research Model**

The research model used in this study is based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. The model hypothesizes that the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs is influenced by both job demands and resources, with cultural values acting as a moderating factor. The conceptual framework is illustrated as follows:

Effectiveness of Workplace Wellbeing Programs = f(Job Demands, Job Resources, Cultural Values)

Where:

- Job Demands represent the work-related stressors that employees face, such as workload and time pressure.
- Job Resources include factors such as support from colleagues and management, access to wellbeing programs, and autonomy.
- Cultural Values represent the cultural context in which employees operate, including dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001).

The model suggests that workplace wellbeing programs are more effective when they are designed to align with the cultural values of employees while also providing sufficient resources to cope with job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **Data Collection Process**

The data for this study was collected from September to December 2024. The survey was distributed electronically to employees working in multinational companies across North America, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Participants were invited through email invitations and were given a time frame of two weeks to complete the online survey. A total of 480 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 96%. Following the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 50 participants, selected randomly from the initial sample, to explore their qualitative insights regarding the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs.

## Data Analysis and Results

### Quantitative Analysis

The survey data was analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the overall perception of workplace wellbeing programs across different cultural groups. The results indicate that, on average, employees in North America ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ ) rated the effectiveness of wellbeing programs higher than employees in Asia ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 0.7$ ), Europe ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 0.6$ ), and Latin America ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 0.6$ ). These differences were statistically significant, as indicated by the One-Way ANOVA test, which showed a p-value of 0.02, suggesting that cultural factors significantly affect the perception of wellbeing program effectiveness (Table 1).

**Table 1: Perception of Wellbeing Programs by Region**

Region	Mean	Standard Deviation
North America	4.2	0.5
Europe	3.9	0.6
Asia	3.5	0.7
Latin America	3.7	0.6

The One-Way ANOVA test confirmed that the differences in ratings across regions were statistically significant ( $F(3, 476) = 3.12$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ). This suggests that cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping how employees perceive the effectiveness of wellbeing programs. The results align with previous studies by Hofstede (2001), who noted that cultural dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism can influence employees' attitudes toward workplace initiatives.

### Regression Analysis

To further explore the relationship between cultural values and the perceived effectiveness of wellbeing programs, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The model used cultural dimensions (individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance) as independent variables and the perceived effectiveness score of wellbeing programs as the dependent variable. The analysis revealed that individualism ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and uncertainty avoidance ( $\beta = -0.28$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were significant predictors of the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs. Employees in individualistic cultures, such as North America, tended to report higher satisfaction with wellbeing programs, while employees in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as parts of Asia, reported lower satisfaction.

This finding supports Bakker & Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that the effectiveness of workplace programs is influenced by cultural factors, such as how employees in different cultures cope with job demands and access job resources. It also highlights the importance of tailoring wellbeing programs to align with cultural values, as employees in individualistic cultures may prefer more autonomy and personalized benefits, while employees in collectivist cultures may value programs that emphasize community and teamwork.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

The thematic analysis of the 50 semi-structured interviews identified several key themes related to cultural influences on the effectiveness of wellbeing programs. The most prominent themes were program customization and management support. Employees in North America and Europe emphasized the importance of personalized wellbeing initiatives, such as flexible working hours and mental health support tailored to individual needs. In contrast, employees in Asia and Latin America highlighted the significance of group-oriented programs, such as team-building activities and social wellness initiatives.

The qualitative data corroborates the quantitative findings, suggesting that wellbeing programs need to be adapted to the cultural preferences and expectations of employees. This supports the assertion that Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions should be considered when designing organizational wellbeing programs.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study highlight the importance of cultural context in the design and implementation of workplace wellbeing programs. The significant differences in employee perceptions across regions suggest that multinational companies must consider the cultural diversity of their workforce when creating wellbeing initiatives. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown that culturally tailored programs are more likely to be successful (Smith et al., 2017).

Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for a balanced approach in the application of wellbeing programs. While individualized benefits are preferred in individualistic cultures, collectivist cultures may benefit from a more community-oriented approach. Companies that successfully integrate these cultural preferences into their wellbeing initiatives may see improved employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall program effectiveness.



## Implications

**Theoretical Implications:** This study extends the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by integrating cultural factors into the framework. The results contribute to the growing body of literature on the role of culture in organizational behavior and employee wellbeing. Future research could explore additional cultural dimensions or other factors that might influence the effectiveness of wellbeing programs.

**Practical Implications:** For multinational companies, the study underscores the importance of cultural customization in designing workplace wellbeing programs. Companies should tailor their wellbeing initiatives to align with the values and expectations of employees in different regions. This approach may enhance the overall success of the programs and improve employee retention, satisfaction, and productivity.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study confirms that workplace wellbeing programs' effectiveness varies significantly across different cultural contexts. The analysis revealed that employees in individualistic cultures, such as North America, generally rated the programs higher in terms of effectiveness compared to employees in collectivist cultures like those in Asia and Latin America. The cultural dimensions of individualism and uncertainty avoidance emerged as significant predictors of employees' perceptions of wellbeing programs. These findings are consistent with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and extend the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by incorporating cultural considerations as key factors influencing employee engagement and satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hofstede, 2001).

The results also highlight the necessity for multinational companies to tailor their wellbeing programs to meet the specific cultural preferences of their workforce. Customization, focusing on individual needs in individualistic cultures and group-oriented initiatives in collectivist cultures, is crucial for maximizing program effectiveness. Furthermore, the study's findings underscore the importance of management support in the successful implementation of these programs, as well as the need for continuous cultural adaptation to ensure their success across diverse global environments.

However, this research does have some limitations. The study primarily relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. Future research should explore additional cultural dimensions and utilize longitudinal methods to assess the long-

term impact of wellbeing programs on employee outcomes. Moreover, expanding the sample to include a broader range of industries and organizations could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural factors affecting wellbeing program success.

Based on the findings, multinational companies should invest in cultural competency training for HR professionals and managers to better understand and address the diverse needs of employees. Additionally, it is recommended that companies implement pilot programs in different regions to gather feedback before rolling out large-scale initiatives.

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