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IMPACT OF COVID 19 LOCK DOWN ON THE EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of COVID 19 Lockdown on the Employees' Well-Being. It aims at identifying the indicators of employee well-being and to find out whether these indicators have any relationship with factors like life orientation and work attitude and how these factors further impact the work life balance of employees. The total sample size was of 225 professionals. The authors conducted an extensive literature survey in the area of this study and a conceptual model was developed. Structural equation Modeling (SEM) technique and Partial least square (PLS) based software Smart PLS 2.0 was used for analysis of data. The results of the study show that the respondents consider factors like intrinsic motivation, safety and security and belongingness to be more important in jobs as compared to factors like autonomy and job control and anxiety.

Introduction

The national lockdown was imposed in India for the first time from 25th March 2020 to 14th May 2020 which was extended in phases till 31st May 2020. This unprecedented situation followed by the fear of catching the deadly virus, uncertainty of the jobs, business losses resulted in issues like increase in chronic stress, depression, anxiety, insecurity. As per the report by The World Economic Forum, the cases of mental illness risen by 22% in India since the country went into the lockdown (Nair, 2020). The uncertainty of the survival of the organizations also resulted in increased work pressure on their people at the workplace. People are an important asset for organizations and organizations, off-late, have started paying more attention to the psychological health and

mental wellbeing of its employees. Organizations need resilience, collaborative potential and adaptability to fight the COVID 19 outbreak and exactly the similar traits are expected from the employees. This burden of expectations can be justified but if the employers do not priorities the mental health and wellbeing of the employees then they carry the risk of being called out on the social media platform which can seriously damage their reputation. Research conducted by Brooks et al., 2018; Tam et al., 2004 also shows that insufficient psychological and mental support from the employer is a determinant of poor mental health conditions. It is very important for organizations that their employees have and maintain a positive outlook during and after the COVID 19 lockdown. Therefore, this study aims at identifying the indicators of employee well-being and their impact on the life orientation of employees and how life orientation affects their work attitude and work life balance.

Employee Wellbeing

"Wellbeing is defined as how someone feels about the various aspects of their life i.e their home life, their health, relationships with others, job and various other activities. It is all about whether the employees feel well and happy. In an organization the term employee wellbeing is defined in a broader sense. It involves various aspects of employees' health and safety at workplace. It is about more than physiological or mental health, it's about optimizing the health of all employees, not just reducing the numbers of staff who are diagnosed with medical conditions. Employee wellbeing also extends beyond health and into happiness as well, and job satisfaction." (Sarah Short, February 5, 2018). Wellbeing is defined as happiness as per hedonic perspective (Ryan and Deci, 2001). This perspective further gives importance to three components that includes Life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood (Diener et al., 1998). Whereas according to eudaimonic perspective it is defined as engagement in activities which promote human growth, such as autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness that leads to wellbeing (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

Wellbeing of an employee at work directly impacts the way they think and feel about their job. In best of the organizations employees always do not see their job as a basis of discontent or continuous conflict with what they want to attain or enjoy. Employers providing many positive factors to the employees at work place to enhance their well-being. Many researchers suggested that employee well-being is positively related to the productivity and work relationships. If employees are more satisfied and happy at their work they are more likely to trust their supervisors, abiding with company laws and policies, providing suggestions for improvement, supporting their peers.). Banking Standard Boards (BSB) explored that "the eight factors that are affecting the employee wellbeing (Mental & Physical Health and Subjective Wellbeing) are work settings, security and change, job control and autonomy workload, relationships at work, organizational justice, work-life balance, meaning at work."

Life Orientation

"Life Orientation is central to the holistic development of employees. It addresses the knowledge, skills and values for the personal, social, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of employees, and is concerned with the way in which these aspects are interconnected to each other. Life Orientation guides and prepares employees for life and its possibilities and equips them for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming environment". A study by Rathore et.al (2015) found that that life orientation and life satisfaction is the significant predictors of Psychological well-being.

Work Attitude

"Work Attitude is defined as the feelings employees have towards different aspects of their working environment". Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are two key attitudes. Attitude of employees towards the work not only affects their performance but also it affects other employees and various other aspects of the organization. Robertson T Ivan et.al (2012) in their research study found that both positive job and work attitude and psychological wellbeing of employee are the better predictor of employee's productivity. The research reveals that in predicting self-reported levels of performance, psychological well-being is more valued than the positive job and work attitudes.

Work Life Balance

For any working professional, maintaining the work life balance, holds the utmost importance. It helps in improving the work effectiveness, productivity and efficiency. It has also been observed that initiatives taken by organizations in terms of time and work flexibility contribute to increased work-life balance. Clark (2000) had defined work-life balance as "Satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict".

During the COVID 19 lockdown, organizations managed to reach to optimum level of productivity by encouraging the employees to work from home. However not all the employees were equipped or trained enough to give their best productivity by working from home. Those employees, whose jobs comes under essential services and had to go out to perform their duties, reported to have an increased level of stress due to the charges of getting infected by the COVID-19 virus. Even the employees working from home were also reported to have increased level of stress because of the factors like fear of losing jobs arise due to non-functioning of the business, increased work pressure, difficulty in managing work-life balance and issues related to technology in their functioning.

Rationale of the study

The COVID-19 situation has made it difficult for organizations to operate andthey had to either adopt new ways of working or find new avenues for their businesses. It is also obvious for organizations to expect higher level of productivity from the employees but it is also the responsibility to ensure that's the employees well-being is taken care of. A research conducted by Haddon J.

(April 2018) to know the impact of employees' well-being (physical, mental and nutritional) on performance in the workplace found that one of the major contributor to the productivity of the employee is Mental Health. It is the responsibility of the employers to ensure the mental wellbeing of their employees. Mental Wellbeing not only affects the employees themselves but also to other factors around them. This in turn affects the whole teams and organization in totality. Thus, this paper is expected to be helpful to suggest organizations about the perceived importance of the factors contributing to employee well-being so that they can adopt strategies to make the efficient use of their man power in this challenging situation.

Literature Review

Page and Vella-Brodrick(2009) suggested that psychological health and wellbeing of human resources are critical factors in an organization's performance and growth. The dynamics of employee well-being at work is a key to understand the various factors that are affecting the healthiness, behavior towards job and performance of the employees. Various resources available at individual, groups and organizational level are related to the well-being an employee. (Nielsen et al. 2017).

Wellbeing of an employee at work directly impacts the way they think and feel about their job. In best of the organizations employees always do not see their job as a basis of discontent or continuous conflict with what they want to attain or enjoy. Employers providing many positive factors to the employees at work place to enhance their well-being. Many researchers suggested that there is a positive association between the employee well-being, productivity and work relationships. If employees are more satisfied and happy at their work they are more likely to trust their supervisors, abiding with company laws and policies, providing suggestions for improvement, supporting their peers. (Tov, William and David Chan. 2012). Banking Standard Boards (BSB) explored the eight factors that are affecting the employee wellbeing (Mental & Physical Health and Subjective Wellbeing) are work settings, workload, job control and autonomy, security and change, relationships at work, organizational justice, work-life balance, meaning at work. Another study done by Baptiste N. (2008) on public sector employees to understand the wellbeing being of an employee and its relationship with work performance and HRM Practices concluded that there is a strong positive impact of HRM Practices on employee wellbeing at work. The researcher suggested that supportive management behavior, trust amongst employees and management, good leadership plays a major role in positive employee wellbeing. Research on psychological well-being and job satisfaction as determinant of job performance found that Psychological Wellbeing is positively related to job performance. The researcher concluded that well-being of an employee is one the major job performance determinant. (Wright and Cropanzano (2000). Aryan Richa et.al (2017) conducted a research on Psychological Wellbeing at Workplace in IT sector and found that increased psychological wellbeing benefits both the employee as well as organization and it is linked to physical and mental health and greater

happiness for younger employees. Kaisa C.Wieneke et.al (2019) in their study on identifying the impact of Well-Being Champion on Employee Engagement, Staff Satisfaction, and Employee Well-Being found that the relationship between the immediate supervisor, working environment conducive to organizational values, trust amongst the work units, openness to express the feelings, participation of everyone to make employees feel like a part of the team, and accountability within the work unit is positively associated with the better Employee Engagement, Staff Satisfaction, and Employee Well-Being. Nasreen Khan et.al. (2017) conducted a study to identify the impact of workplace stress on employee wellbeing amongst the healthcare sector and hospitals staff found that workplace stress is negatively associated with employee wellbeing. The researchers suggested that support from the organization, family and social support plays a major role in reducing the impact of stress on wellbeing of employees. Bell, Rajendran &Theiler (2012) conducted a study to know the relationship between perceived job stress (PJS), job pressure (JP) and job threat (JT) on the employee wellbeing found that PJS is having a strong negative relation with work life balance (WLB) and it is negatively associated with the Employee Well-being. The researchers further concluded that when employees are faced with immediate perceived stress such as shorter deadlines, it affects their personal lives and anxiety levels at a short term level and not in the long term thereby not affecting their well -being in the long term. Hence workplace stress negatively impacts the employee wellbeing.

As it is clear from various researches done during Pandemics that it affects the business performance negatively. The occurrence of a pandemic may lead to huge financial losses and causes the shutting down of various schools and workplaces (Ferguson et al., 2006), and also the reduction of working hours (Tyko, 2020) or lockdown is taken as a as measures to alleviate the negative impacts and spread of the disease. Business organizations faced a huge losses due to lockdown and due to decrease in their operations, they are taking various HR actions like staff layoff and various other cost cutting measures that substantially decreases the employment level (Page et al., 2006). Due to this it will have a impact of the employees and individuals in the form of financial losses due to loss of income. (Zhou et al., 2020). Another study by Zhang et al. (2020) found that affected mental health and distress is found more amongst employees who stopped working due to covid19 outbreak. Further researchers also found that insufficient insurance and compensation is one the major reason for poor mental health condition amongst employees (Tam et al., 2004). Another research by Strazdins et al., 2004; Virtanen et al., 2002 also reported that due to the impact of pandemic covid 19 outbreak, employees are feeling more insecure in their job and hence their mental health is more affected. Research conducted by Brooks et al., 2018; Tam et al., 2004 also shows that insufficient psychological and mental support from the employer is a determinant of poor mental health conditions. A review based study done by Salima Hamouche (2020) to examine the "impact of coronavirus Covid 19 outbreak on employees' mental health, specifically psychological distress

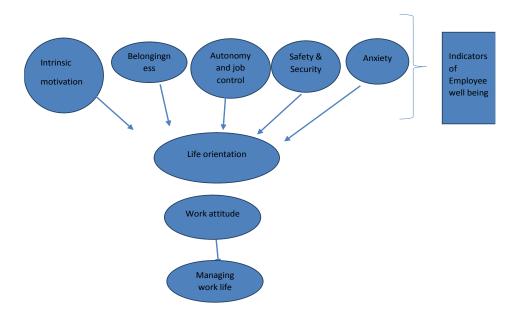
and depression" concluded that there is a negative impact of Coronavirus outbreak on the mental health of the individuals. Major stressors are Safety perception, threat and risk of disease exposure, quarantine imprisonment, social segregation as well as financial loss and job insecurity. The researcher also suggested some factors to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic. A research conducted by Haddon J. (April 2018) to know the impact of employees' well-being (physical, mental and nutritional) on performance in the workplace found that one of the major contributor to the productivity of the employee is Mental Health. It is the responsibility of the employers to ensure the mental wellbeing of their employees. Mental Wellbeing not only affects the employees themselves but also to other factors around them. This in turn affects the whole teams and organization in totality. In the present situation of Covid 19 and its impact on the workforce across Asia, employers are looking forward to minimize its impact and optimizing the costs. It has strong impact on the way businesses operates, managing the cost and structuring the workforces. Strategies like Work from home and increasing communications is adopted by the companies to make sure that employees understand how to stay healthy. Hence looking towards the scenario employee wellbeing is considered to be a major challenge for the employers in the present situation (Sambhav Rakyan and Edward Hsu). According to Office for National Statistics, around 49.5 % (half) of the people in great Britain reported high anxiety, 20.7% reported low happiness, low life satisfaction during march 20- 30, 2020. People worried about wellbeing and finances because of Covid 19 have reported 33% more anxiety as compared to others who are less worried. It is also found that over 50% of the self-employed reported a loss of household income, compared with 22% of employees. Another survey conducted by EY also indicates that in India, 72% of the surveyed organizations felt that COVID 19 may have impact beyond 6 months. It is also found in the survey that approximately 70% of the organizations believe that there is a decline in productivity due to continued remote working and they are highly concerned about that. Further it is also said that more than 70% of the organizations are now moving towards virtual methods of recruitment and new technologies like AI, Robotics, Automation Processes, Machine learning are actually helping the organization in this tough times. (Press Release: EY Survey, 10th April 2020, New Delhi).

Hence it is clear from the literature that Employee wellbeing is something that is very important for the employees as well as for the growth of the organizations. Due to outbreak of coronavirus Covid 19, organizations over the world is trying to enhance the wellbeing of the employees but it is largely affected due to the present economic situation as a result of Covid 19. Employees are continuously suffering from the mental and psychological wellbeing issue and it is of greatest concern for the employers around the world and HR actions are required by reviving the strategies to enhance the wellbeing of the employees.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

From the extensive review of literature of Employees wellbeing and work satisfaction, a conceptual model is developed in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Model aims to analyze the impact of Employees well-being on Work Satisfaction through Life Orientation and Work Attitude. Based on the literature reviewed five variables of Wellbeing are examined i.e Intrinsic Motivation, Belongingness, Safety and Security, Autonomy and Job Control, Anxiety The impact of these variables on Life Orientation, Impact of Life orientation on Work Attitude, Impact of work Attitude on Work Satisfaction are examined. On the basis of this following hypothesis are developed.

H1: "There is a positive relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Life Orientation."

H2: "There is a positive relationship between Belongingness and Life Orientation."

H3: "There is a positive relationship between Safety and Security and Life Orientation."

H4: "There is a positive relationship between Autonomy and Job Control and Life Orientation."

H5: "There is a positive relationship between Anxiety and Life Orientation."

H6: "There is a positive relationship between Life Orientation and Work Attitude."

H7: "There is a positive relationship between Work Attitude and Managing Work life."

Research Methodology

The populations chosen for this study were from education, Information technology, healthcare and BFSI industries. The total sample size was of 225 professionals belonging to these sectors. The study was conducted during COVID -19 Lockdown Period. The scales used for the study were prepared on the basis of review of literature. For the context and purpose of research in order to fit, appropriate modifications were made. The constructs used in the study are Intrinsic Motivation, Belongingness, Safety and security, Autonomy and Job Control, Anxiety, Life Orientation, Work Attitude and Work Satisfaction. All the statements based on the above constructs were measured on a 5 - point Likert scale ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree".

Data Analysis and Results

The authors have used the Structural equation Modeling (SEM) technique has been used to analyze the data. Partial least square (PLS) based software Smart PLS 2.0 was used for interpreting the results. Measurement Model and Structural Model are the two models used for assessing the data. The measurement model is used to express the relationship between latent constructs and their related variables, while the structural model represents the causal relationship among the constructs (Chin, 1998).

Measurement Model: The Table 1

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Intrinsic Motivation	(IM1) "I've been feeling confident during the lockdown period."	0.747	0.5126	0.839
	(IM2) "During the lockdown period, I've been able to make up my own mind about things ."	0.838		
	(IM3) "I am able to invest my time in exploring new things during the lockdown period." (IM4) "When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far."	0.838		
	(IM5) "I am able to overcome the challenges in my work during the lockdown period."	0.657		
		0.674		
		0.656		
Belongingness	(B2) "I've been feeling interested in other people during the lockdown period."	0.757	0.5041	0.7449
	(B3) "I've been feeling close to other people during the lockdown period." (B4) "My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on."	0.835		

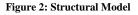
shows the results of the measurement model based on PLS algorithm. Convergent validity and internal consistency are assessed on the basis of the output obtained from the analysis. Convergent validity is estimated by using average variance extracted (AVE), while the internal consistency is assessed by using composite reliability (CR). Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended that the value of CR must be equal to or greater than 0.7 to achieve internal consistency. A value of AVE less than 0.5 is not acceptable because it cannot explain more than half of the variance by its items or variables (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Therefore, some items from the constructs are deleted to gain the AVE value of 0.5. The item deleted from the Belongingness construct is B1 ("I've been feeling useful during the lockdown.") and B5 (I am thinking of self as worthless during the lockdown period). Autonomy and Job Control is AJ6 (I've been dealing with problems well during the lockdown period) .From Life Orientation Construct is L3(I am Capable of making decisions) From Work Attitude Construct is WA 2 (I work for extra hours to get my work done during the lockdown period). The Table 1 shows that the AVE value is greater than 0.5 for all constructs. Similarly, all constructs have a CR value greater than 0.7. Hence, internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity are established in the model.

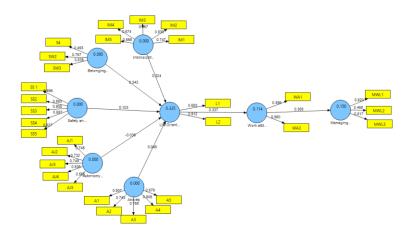
Discriminant validity is performed refer Table No. 2 to check the dissimilarity between the different constructs. Fornell and Larcker(1981) suggested that if the inter - construct correlations are less than the square root of AVE, then discriminant .validity is achieved. It is shown in the Table 2.

	Anxiety	Autonomy and Job Control	Intrinsic Motivatio n	Life Orientati on	Managi ng Work Life	Safety and securi ty	Self worth	Work attitud e
Anxiety	0.709							
Autonomy and Job Control	0.4416	0.7306						
Intrinsic	0.4410	0.7500						
Motivation	0.3284	0.5076	0.7159					
Life Orientation	0.2488	0.3474	0.4535	0.8097				
Managing Work Life	0.1484	0.3369	0.2875	0.3309	0.721			
Safety and security	0.1529	0.2586	0.3922	0.3213	0.2701	0.7957		
Belongingne ss	0.2804	0.4995	0.2673	0.4529	0.2637	0.2716	0.71	
Work attitude	0.215	0.6136	0.4067	0.3371	0.3878	0.0942	0.2865	0.7764

In Table 2, the square root of the AVE is shown in the diagonals, whiles the correlations between the constructs, is shown in the off diagonals. All the square roots of AVE are higher than the construct correlations. Hence, the measurement model represents sufficient amount of inter discriminant validity.

(2) **Structural Model :** The Structural Model is given in the Figure 2.





The model represents the relationship between the various constructs. These relationships are tested by running the bootstrapping procedure in Smart PLS 2.0 software. The path coefficients generated by SmartPLS along with their *t*-values are given in the Table 3.

Hypotheses	Hypothesis	Path	T-	Decision
		Coefficient	Statistics	
H1 Intrinsic Motivation -> Life	H1	0.324	3.5518	Significant
Orientation H2 Belongingness -> Life Orientation	H2	0.343	5.4295	Significant
H3 Safety and Security -> Life	Н3	0.103	3.6276	2-9
Orientation	H4		0.3589	
H4 Autonomy and Job Control -> Life Orientation		0.036	0.8385	Significant
H5 Anxiety -> Life Orientation	Н5		5.0341	Significant
H6: Life Orientation ->Work Attitude	Н6	.046	6.2121	Not Significant
H7: Work Attitude ->Managing Work life				Not Significant
	H7	0.337		aa
		0.338		Significant
				Significant

The t - values are provided by the software by using the bootstrapping procedure. The hypotheses developed in the study are tested and their results

are given in the Table 3. The standardized path coefficients should be at least 0.2 and if possible, greater than 0.3 (Chin, 1998).

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that intrinsic motivation, safety and security and belongingness were found to have a significant impact of the life orientation of the employees whereas the impact of autonomy and job control and anxiety was not found to be significant. Life orientation of the employees has a significant impact on the work attitude of the employees which further has a significant impact on their work life balance. Hence it can be said that an employee with higher intrinsic motivation is usually more open to learning and looks at challenges as opportunities. Similarly, the employee whose belonging needs are taken care of and if he/she feels himself/herself to be an integral part of the organization, he/shecan develop a positive orientation towards life in general and a positive work attitude. If an organization, through its practices, can help the employees develop a positive work attitude, it can not only have more productive employees, but will also have committed employees with higher level of work satisfaction.

Practical Implications

Managerial or Policy Implications

Uncertainty in employment, lack of intrinsic motivation and crises situation in the business often result in increased levels of stress in employees. Unnecessary stress can further impact their health and productivity. It is important for an organization to address the genuine concerns of its employees and to have clear communication about issues and decisions which impact the well-being of its employees. The results of the study show that the respondents consider factors like intrinsic motivation, safety and security and belongingness to be more important in their jobs as compared to factors like autonomy and job control and anxiety. This can also be explained with the fact that during the lockdown when most of the companies faced severe crises and they had to cut or delay salaries of the employees, the employees could understand the reason and were thankful that at least they had their jobs intact. Organizations need to know that during these tough times if at least the belongingness needs of the employees are taken care of and their safety and security is ensured, the employees with higher level of intrinsic motivation will continue to be productive and loyal for the organization even if they don't have the desired autonomy in the jobs.

Social Implications

Employees are a part of the society and if organizations incorporate the above suggestions in their policies, it will increase the wellbeing of their employees and finally will improve the quality of life of employees. Social media has ensured that the business decisions of organizations cannot be spared from public scrutiny and we have witnessed public outrage against companies who have earlier laid off in crisis situation which even led to boycotting the products and services of these organizations. On the other hand those organizations who have stood by their employees during the COVID 19 crisis have seen a surge in their customer base and have gained public praise also.

Hence any organization which makes the employees feel secured and communicates with them freely can be expected to have better loyalty, productivity and a good public image.

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