

Introduction

The research paper entitled “The results of a worksite health promotion program in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia” talks about a particular health promotion program of once company in a city in Malaysia. This study is aimed at analyzing the success of such health promotion program. It is particularly important for Malaysians and other people who are currently working and even to that health buff citizens. Needless to say, this study is so timely that everybody, regardless of the age and gender, will benefit from the results it was able to gather.

First it should be noted that as the time and the society becomes more incline to industrialization, lots of changes have happened since the outbreak of technology. People have become highly dependent to computers. Lots of citizens, may it be kids or adults, are continuously becoming more interested in watching TVs, playing video and computer games. More so, people seemed to be engrossed in being like a couch potato than do some activities to burn energy and fats. Added to this is people’s tendency to eat instant and highly fatty foods like burgers, ice creams, pastas, fries etc. this is exactly what is happening to most Malaysians nowadays.

Summary and Analysis of the Study

The above-stated information is the backbone of this study. Because of the concern in health status of most workers, the researchers Foongming Moy, Atiya Sallam and Meelian Wong felt obliged to study a specific group of workers whose health is of utmost important to perform effectively in their type of work. Thus, a group of security

guards, specifically, Malaysian-Muslim male security guards, workers in the intervention group and in the teaching hospital in the public university in Kuala Lumpur were used as subjects of this study.

Based on records presented in the study, there is an obvious change in Malaysia's health status. For one, infant's mortality rate is gradually decreasing. But aside from this specific positive change, there are other health-related changes significant for the Malaysian people. One best example is the change in lifestyle among Malaysians. They were noted to be physically active before, but in recent surveys, it was noted that Malaysians have preferred sedentary lifestyle than being physically active. The food intake is also changing dramatically as they moved from eating 'high fiber and low fat' foods to 'high fat and low fiber' foods which contributed to the high-energy content (Tee, 2002). This resulted to having increased record of non-communicable diseases (such as heart failure, pulmonary infections and cerebrovascular diseases) as the cause of death of most Malaysians (Ministry of Health, 2002).

Study design

The research design was quasi-experimental in a way that the responses of these three groups of workers were compared and analyzed. It should be noted that in a quasi-experimental study, participants of the study are not selected randomly, instead, the researchers will have to classify and/or categorize the type or qualities of participants needed for the study and pick them up accordingly. This particular study design is very much appropriate for this research paper as it is important to acquire stratified and

carefully selected participants for the study. With quasi-experimental method of study, the research paper becomes more realistic and achievable.

It is a very good idea to use the security guards, the intervention group workers and the teaching hospital workers because they share a common demographic characteristic. They are almost of the same age bracket, within the same range of salary and equally represent both types of gender. Aside from this, all of these three groups of workers are those who use most of their energies and body parts to perform their duties. They are the ones who need to be very active because if not, their key responsibilities will not be attained. The use of quasi-experimental and comparative study as the methodology is also the best approach to be used in this study.

Goal and objective

As stated above, the goal of this study is to ascertain the responses of different group of workers to the health promotion programs being introduced upon them. As the subjects have different work styles and habits coupled with a varied psychological perception towards the nature of their work, it is but necessary to find out whether their responses to the health promotion program will bring the same results or not.

“... The intervention group received intensive individual and group counselling on diet, physical activity and quitting smoking. The comparison group was given minimal education on the same lifestyle changes through mail and group counselling. The intervention group showed a statistically significant reduction in their mean total cholesterol levels as compared with the comparison group, with an intervention effect of -0.38 (95% CI = –

0.63, -0.14) mmol/l. The intervention group also reported a reduction in the amount of cigarettes smoked....”

Based on the data presented, there is a noticeable change in health status in all of the subjects of the study. However, the level of change is quite different. For example, the intervention group has positively change (much lowered cholesterol level) which is more than the comparison group. The intervention group changed more rapidly and more evidently because of the fact that they received intensive group counseling on diet, physical activity and quitting smoking than those from the comparison groups.

It was also concluded in this study that ‘the worksite was shown to be an effective channel for health promotion’. The researchers were able to provide enough proofs of this conclusion. For one, worksites (with this specific type of industry) have workers who work 8 or more hours a day. These workers are those who could not o their duties by just sitting behind their office tables. These workers have responsibilities which would require them to burn their energy and shed lots of efforts; hence their health is very much at stake. If these workers would not seriously take good care of their health, sooner than expected they will not be able to perform effectively. These workers are very much aware that their body is of utmost important hence introducing a health promotion program to them will really get their whole attention.

For the generalization, it was reinstated that the selected participants consisted of 127 intervention groups and 112 comparison groups who are all Malaysian males, however only 111 intervention groups and 99 comparison groups were eligible to participate .

“The groups were followed up for 2 years. Five measurements were taken and the response rates were 82.4, 82.4, 78.4 and 75.5% for the intervention group and 89.3, 81.0, 85.7 and 86.9% for the comparison group, using the number of participants at baseline as the denominator.”

With these numbers presented in the generalization, it should be noted that the health promotion program is a success. There were astounding good and positive responses from the participants. The rates look promising and encouraging. However, this generalization can be a little better if there are specific feedbacks from the participants that were shown. Sometimes, it is not enough to give the numbers. In a research paper such as this, the thoughts, perceptions or views of the participants are very important as this would give further ideas on how related studies can be made in the future. Hence, the generalization lacks depth and profundity. This numbers presented are only good for this particular research paper but can be hard to justified when used as basis for related studies.

As part of the recommendation, the researchers disclosed that an ‘adoption of the new lifestyle behaviors should be supported and sustained through modification of work policies.’ This, they were able to recognize due to the fact that a positive response was gathered from the workers used in the study. This only means that if all companies will regularly have health promotion programs, the good health of their workers will be maintained. Thus, if companies do not have health promotion programs, it is strongly suggested to include this as part of the work policies and procedures. In the same manner, if a company already has this health-related program, then it is suggested that this is maintained and/or conducted on a regular basis.

The recommendation can pose a big help for managers of the companies or the policymakers related to workforce and labor. They will be able to identify some loopholes in the company's health policies or procedures and/or they will be able to identify the changes that should be imposed for the health of the workers.

As it can be reflected, the goals of this study have been met successfully. And the recommendation assures that the ultimate objective of this study, which is to create impact to the society and the whole of workforce unit may seem to be in sight already. Thus, a very good recommendation at that.

General Assessment

Program effectiveness when compared to other scientific studies

The results of the said study – stating that having health promotion programs positively affected the workers' health thereby increasing their level of productivity at work – has been proven positive and effective. The results are also comparable to other related studies as presented in the literature review. This only means that this kind of test has been done in the past and other researchers have acquired almost the same results. The other scientific studies are focused in other companies done in other countries or geographical areas. But however different the cultural backgrounds of the subjects of study might be, the result still speaks of the effectiveness of having health promotion programs as part of the company policies.

Generalizability of the effects produced in the different population and/or setting

As stated above the level of effectiveness of the program may prove to be almost the same when the study is repeated on different population particularly when only a different country or cultural background is concerned. It doesn't matter whether the subject or population is English, Malaysian, American, Chinese or whatever, the result may have been the same. However when the setting will be different, particularly when talking about the kind of workplace there is, the result or the level of effectiveness may vary. Like for example when the type of industry used is a corporate such as the office workers (those people who most of the time are working behind the office desks or in front of their computers) will have very different responses to the health promotion program with those workers doing manual jobs (the blue-collar types of jobs such as mining, gardening etc). These ideas are all presented in the literature review and summary of results of this study.

Usefulness of the Study

All in all, this study is really useful among health groups and policy makers. This would not only support the idea that health must be of great concern of anybody – workers or not – but also it gives ideas that workers, however adult they may be, can still have behavioral change, especially if their health is at stake. Lifestyle, food eating habits, vices and even sleeping preferences can still be revolutionized if the right approach is used. Health advocates all over the world, not only those from Malaysia, will indeed learn a lot from this study.

References:

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