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Impact of Sports Events for Employees on the Organisational Climate

Nidhi Chandorkar

Assistant Professor, Bunts Sangha's S.M. Shetty College of Science, Commerce and Management Studies, Powai

ABSTRACT

Organisational Climate is the perceived attributes of an organisation as a whole or its subsystems by its employees. The climate of the organisation is based on the organisational culture, its artefacts and its behavioural outcome among employees. The organisations continuously create strategies and systems to keep the climate healthy and conducive so that the employees have enhanced morale, high engagement and commitment etc. as these are the determinants of low attrition and high productivity.

The companies of all sizes, today, organise sports events which not only give the employees a break from the routine work and make them feel more recognised but also help the with better teams, more employee engagement, more committed staff who find their identity with that of the organisation. At individual level it encourages employees to stay fit. It helps the new employees in on-boarding more effectively and faster. It helps in creating an open environment which enhances trust amongst the employees. Many organisations have embedded such sports events and activities in their culture. Such organisations make sure that the employees are actively participating in sports for better fitness and work-life balance. It has an overall positive organisational impact in terms of high employee morale, more organisational commitment, more engaged workforce, better teams, more cooperation between employees and also helps in enhancing employee retention.

The research has been undertaken to study the attitude of the employees of various industries towards such sports events and the impact of it on the individual employees and collectively to the department and organisation.

Keywords: Organisational Climate, Organisational Culture, Employee Morale, Employee Engagement, Teams, Employee Retention

INTRODUCTION

India is witnessing a phenomenal increased inclination towards sports and fitness. In the country where right from Prime Minister, to actors, to players and other influencer are encouraging people to remain fit, the corporates cannot remain out of this wave. The corporates are not only organising sports events and encouraging employee participation in it for the purpose of fitness, but is also using it as team building and training tool. Sports is seen as an effective tool by the new employees to fit into the new organisational environment. Some companies use sports events as a part of on-boarding process as an ice-breaker. Sports events also promotes brain storming and creative thinking. It is an outstanding tool for creating a feeling of oneness and results in enhanced commitment.

The sports event organised at inter-departmental or inter-organisational levels, both serve variety of purposes for the benefit of the organisation. In fact, looking into the benefits of organising sports events, many organisations have annual sports event as a part of their organisational calendar. The employees who are otherwise hooked to their laptops and files look forward for this break. These events are seen to be as opportunities by the employees to check their fitness level, get rejuvenated and many times interact with the members of other departments, branches or organisations. In fact, in some organisations this is a regular annual or seasonal activity and the employees prepare themselves, if not throughout the year, for some months to be a part of it.

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These activities within the organisation have immediate impact as well as long-term impact. Some of the immediate impact are learning team spirit, immediate connectivity within employees, stress reduction, overcoming minor conflicts and employee happiness. The long-term impact are an environment of good health and healthy practices, greater employer-ship, more engaged employees, coordination and cohesion within department, employees identifying themselves with that of the organisational identity leading to employee retention to a good extent.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sports Events: The events for engaging the employees in various types of sports organised by the corporates. The sports may include cricket, football, cycling, marathons etc.

Organisational Climate: Organisational climate is a subjective perception of the employees for the organisation's environment they are working in which are based on organisational procedures, policies and practices.

Employee Engagement: Employee engagement is the sum total of emotional commitment the employee have towards the organisation, its goals and the job. The employees which are engaged care and get involved towards their work and organisation.

Employee Morale: It is related to feeling of well-being at workplace experienced by an employee

Team Building: It is a process of exercise done to develop team spirit, that is complimenting each-others efforts, cooperating and working towards collective targets.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term Organisational Climate has been defined in varied ways. Some have defined it as a function of the interaction of individual employee with its environmental factors. Most of the authors have defined it as a dependent variable which depends upon factors which are both internal and external. It is, however, broadly accepted that it is a general perception, of an individual employee or group of employees under similar work condition, for the organisation. This perception is based on individual factors like personality, role in the organisation, motivational level, engagement and environmental factors like type of industry, size of organisation, style of leadership, policies of organisation related to reward and recognition and other cultural factors and their artefacts. It can also be said to be the opinion of the employees based on micro events happened to them and others over a time period.

Organisational Climate can be said to the measure of quality of work environment. The type of climate highly influences the behaviour and morale of the employees, which in turn influence their productivity, engagement and commitment towards the organisation.

An iceberg can be used to draw an analogy for organisational climate. The tip of the ice-berg are the documented part of organisational culture like structure, hierarchy, objectives, appraisal system, technology of the organisation which are visible. But the more important one is part of iceberg beneath the water surface which subjective and non-quantifiable, like mutual support, feelings and attitudes, morale, trust and relationship among peer group, satisfaction with job. This lower part of the iceberg is more personal and subjective unlike the upper part. These factors at the lower side, but, play a major role in organisational stability, employee retention, innovation and communication.

Change in organisational climate can bring about change in behaviour of the employees. Also, if organisation want to retain a homeostatic state, the climate of organisation should change along with the changing circumstances.

According to the Hawthorne experiment conducted by Elton Mayo, it was found the factors like free interaction and formation of informal groups encourages employees to stay committed to organisation and have less dissatisfaction.

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If the organisation is able to maintain a positive organisational climate, the management has to take lesser efforts to maintain employee satisfaction, confidence on management, low employee turnover, less emotional exhaustion, open communication, more creativity at work.

The organisations having bad (or negative) climate have to face problems like increased error rate, wastage and accidents; more stressed employees leading to increased absenteeism, employee turnover and poor engagement.

The business organisations in today's time have been formulating strategies for the wellness of their employees which are having a long-term impact of the organisation's productivity. In the year 2017, HDFC Bank (Calicut) launched one of the largest event of its kind in Indian business world, Josh Unlimited for its employees. During the event employees participated in events like cricket, badminton, chess, lagori etc in association with the university of Calicut. More than 400 employees from Calicut and neighbouring locations participated in the event. HDFC has been conducting such events and had engaged nearly 20000 employees in the year 2016.

In September 2018, nearly 1200 Tata Motors employees and their family members participated in cycle rally in Pune. The event was organised for creating awareness of road safety and re-in fostered the weightage given to social welfare in Tata.

ICICI Lombard organised its Frontier Meet in 2017 where a fun-filled cricket tournament was organised at Delhi. More than 250 sales executives participated in it.

The development centre of Infosys at Jaipur organised a 5km marathon run on women's day

BENEFITS OF SUCH EVENTS:

The benefits of sports events in corporates can be judged at two perspective: individual and organisational. At individual level it can be further divided at two levels physical and psychological.

I. The benefits at individual level the more visible advantages are employee well being and fitness. The employees These types of sports events organised by the organisation provide challenging situations where employees learn to expand their potential

II. According to Rewards and Employee Benefits Association (March, 2016), the primary motive of organising such event is not wellbeing of the employees but desire to organisational culture for improved employee engagement and employee retention. It is an non-comparable tool for team bonding and team building.

- Some organisations add the essence of corporate social responsibility in these events by giving it some social cause. This helps the employees to become socially responsible.
- The employees who receive winning prizes or other awards, immediately gets recognition in front of many employees. This helps him in putting lesser efforts in creating desirable identity in the department and organisation. It also help in enhancing confidence.
- The most important contribution of such events is stress reduction. It is a smart way by which the management can help employees to reduce psychological problems developed due to work pressure like depression, anxiety, episodic stress, encounter stress etc.

The managers have found the following benefits of sports events to the organisation and departments:

- Team sports events helps in quickly breaking ice and opening up communication between the team members and leaders. This factors is highly desired in the organisation. The desirability of the effective communication can be well understood by the Johari Window concept. According to Johari Windows every organisation works to enter into the open arena quadrant where the employees know themselves and others well. This can be achieved to a good extend by organising such team sports.

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- When the company organises sports events on regular basis, the employees get involved in keeping themselves fit to participate. This not only improves their health and lifestyle but also reduces absenteeism due to health issues, increased focus and improved performance at work
- A day or two's break from the normal work helps in making the employees feel happy, this leads to enhanced employee morale. He feels good to be a part of the department and organisation. This is an important factor affecting employee retention.
- It serves as a wonderful opportunity for the managers to understand the skill set possessed by the subordinates and develops better relationship between them. This helps in creating an environment of trust and understanding within a department.
- The formation of informal groups within the organisation is another outcome of such events. Employees can discuss their problems, extend cooperation and create a cohesive environment.
- These activities enhances employee engagement. The more engaged is the employee easier is to retain them.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE

1. To study the reasons for upcoming trend of organising sports events for the employees.
2. To find out the impact of the sports events organised by the organisation at personal level
3. To examine the impact of organising sports events on the organisation's climate
4. To study the relations between demographic factors of the employees and the impact of sports events.

RESEARCH METHOD USED

This is a descriptive qualitative research undertaken to find the impact of sports events for employees on the qualitative factors like communication, involvement, morale.

The research uses both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data is collected using non-probability sampling technique and the respondents are of different age groups and are employed in different industries. The sample size taken in 50 units after eliminated the non-eligible responses. The tool for data collection was questionnaire with 12 questions.

PRIMARY DATA AND ITS INTERPRETATION

The sample comprised on 46% female and 54% male respondents. The respondents were from all age groups starting from 22 years. More than 50% respondents were with 1 to 5 years of experience and 54% were of the age group between 22 to 30 years. The interpretation of the data collected were:

1. Out of the respondents who claim that their companies regularly organize sports events, 70% of them actively participate, 10% though participate but are not interested and 20% never participate in the events. However, there is no relation between age or years of experience with level of interest in sports events
2. Among those who participate 30% of them do not aggressively get involved, 32% play only during such events and remaining 38% prepare the practice entire year. It was observed that out of the people who have practice entire year 80% were from the age group 22 to 30 years with 1 to 5 years of experience.
3. 78% of the respondents feel happy due to change in routine and 92% feel these events help in connecting with colleagues better. 52% feel that they understand their colleagues better post events. 8% feel that there is no change in their psychology.2% feel that it's a wastage of time and money. The respondents who feel that there is no psychological impact or the entire exercise is a waste were all females.
4. Post event, 86% of respondents feel that the employees have opened up to each other, 82 % feel that new informal groups are formed while 18% felt that there is no change in their interaction pattern.

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5. 38% respondents feel that there is a negative impact on general discipline of the organisation due to such events while 62% feel otherwise.
6. 86% respondents felt that these events help the new employees to break the ice easily.

CONCLUSION

Based on the interpretation of the primary data and inference drawn from the secondary data, it can be concluded that organising the sports events in the organisations is having multifaceted benefits. Based on the primary data collected from the respondents belonging to different industries, age groups, gender and years of experience, the outcome of such sports events organised by corporates is beneficial for the individual employees as well as for the organisation.

At individual level, it helps the employees in checking their physical fitness level and motivates them to regularly practice sports. It provides a break to them from their routine and stressful worklife. It helps in developing better understanding for their colleagues which leads to better relationships. Formation of informal groups act as a catalyst to enhance employee morale. Participation and winning prizes helps not only in bringing happiness and feeling of achievement but also helps in getting immediate recognition among the other employees and management.

From the organisation's perspective it has benefits like cultivation of feeling of belongingness towards the department and organisation which is important for organisational commitment. Better understanding amongst the employees leads to development of cooperation between them which helps in building a strong team. These events lead to better employee engagement which increases the individual productivity and also encourages innovation.

It is a very effective activity for the new on-boarding employees. It helps in easily breaking the ice, developing trust and friendship with the existing employees.

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