Employee Well-being at Norbuling Rigter College: A Case Study Through the Lens of 'Sharpening the Saw' Habit

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Abstract

This study examines the well-being of employees at Norbuling Rigter College through the lens of Steven Covey's seventh habit, "Sharpening the Saw." The research aims to contextualize Covey's framework within the college's organizational behaviour and culture, focusing on four domains: physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional wellbeing. Utilizing a survey design, data were collected from 89 employees using a census sampling method and analysed through descriptive statistics. The results indicate varying levels of well-being across the domains, with social/emotional and mental well-being rated highest, and physical well-being rated lowest. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating and improving the four domains in an organisation enhance employee to Recommendations for enhancing employee well-being include promoting physical health initiatives, encouraging spiritual engagement, fostering social connections, and supporting mental health practices.

Keywords: Employees wellbeing, Physical, Mental, Social emotional, Spiritual

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Introduction

According to Dulagil (2012), wellbeing at work is defined as the subjective experience of overall satisfaction and positive feelings toward one's job. Work plays a crucial role in an individual's life, making employee engagement and wellbeing at work essential concepts. For instance, it was observed that people with higher levels of psychological well-being at work are more productive at work. In the contemporary work environment, which increasingly involves knowledge-based tasks, there is a greater demand for employees to engage their mental and emotional capacities. At the same time, employees seek more meaningful work and opportunities for personal growth. Moreover, employee wellbeing has been associated with various positive organizational outcomes, such as team cohesion, job satisfaction, and engagement (Bakker, 2015).

Ryan and Deci (2001) identified two main but distinct perspectives on wellbeing. The first, the hedonic perspective, defines wellbeing as happiness. Diener et al. (1998) emphasize three key components of this perspective: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood. The second perspective, known as the eudemonic perspective, defines wellbeing in terms of self-actualization, suggesting that true happiness is achieved through the expression of virtue (Dewe & Cooper, 2012). According to this view, engaging in activities that human growth—such autonomy, promote as development, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relationships is essential for wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Social relationships and the physical environment are important for employee's wellbeing in an organisation. Fisher (2014) suggests that any conceptualization of workplace wellbeing (and wellbeing in general) should include the aspect of social relationships, as these are fundamental to an individual's positive experiences at work. Additionally, employee wellbeing in the

workplace encompasses all aspects of their working life, including the safety and quality of the physical environment, as well as their feelings toward their job, work environment, organization, and overall work atmosphere (Ip, 2009).

Norbuling Rigter College was established in July 2017 with 24 staff. Today the college has 97 staff. Therefore, it is essential to know the wellbeing of the employee working in an institution. A study by Samdrup (2024) found out that personal reasons, lack of good working environment and low pay scale were three major reasons to leave the institution. Understanding employee wellbeing and designing intervention plans will promote wellbeing of employees and enhance their performance which will benefit organization. Thus, this paper will study employee wellbeing of Norbuling Rigter College through the lens of Steven Covey's seventh habit which is 'sharpening the saw'. The study will contextualize Steven Covey's seventh habit of highly effective people [sharpening the saw] to align with the organizational behaviour and culture of Norbuling Rigter College. By identifying areas for improvement and designing targeted interventions, this research seeks to promote employee well-being, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to the institution's longterm success.

Research Question

What is the status of employee's wellbeing in Norbuling Rigter College through the lens of Steven Covey's seventh habit (sharpening the saw)?

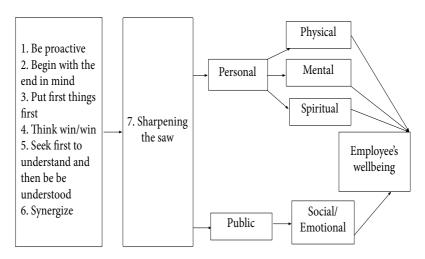
Objective

To study employee's wellbeing through the lens of Steven Covey's seventh habit 'sharpening the saw' in Norbuling Rigter College.

Conceptual Framework

These seven habits are categorized into three groups: personal victory (habits 1-3), public victory (habits 4-6), and renewal (habit 7). The first habit, "be proactive," involves taking responsibility for your life and actions, focusing on what one can control rather than what they cannot. The second habit, "begin with the end in mind," entails defining your goals and purpose in life, using them as a guide for making decisions and prioritizing your actions. The third habit, "put first things first," emphasizes prioritizing your time and energy on what truly matters and learning to say "no" to less important tasks. The fourth habit, "think win-win," encourages seeking mutual benefits in all interactions and relationships, aiming for solutions that benefit everyone involved. The fifth habit, "seek first to understand, then to be understood," focuses on listening empathetically and understanding others' perspectives before expressing your own. The sixth habit, "synergize," involves collaborating with others to achieve goals and create outcomes greater than what any individual could accomplish alone. Finally, the seventh habit, "sharpen the saw," is about taking time to renew and improve yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for ongoing success (Covey, 2004).

Since the emotional and social aspects of individual lives are primarily outward-facing, they fall under public domain. They are largely about interactions, relationships, and influence on others. However, the spiritual, mental, and physical dimensions are deeply personal and internal, and hence, it belongs to the private domain.



The Seventh Habit: Sharpening the Saw

When discussing the seventh habit, Stephen Covey emphasizes the importance of focusing on four key domains—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional—to maintain overall wellbeing. These dimensions are interconnected; for instance, feeling good physically can lead to mental clarity and better emotional control. Similarly, a fulfilling social life can boost motivation and energy, encouraging you to take better care of yourself physically. The interconnection of these human domains allows for synergy, enabling individuals to accomplish more in less time.

Physical

Sharpening your physical wellbeing ensures that your body has the strength and vitality needed to handle life's demands. If you are frequently tired or ill, your productivity will suffer, no matter how hard you work. Therefore, prioritizing your physical health is essential. Start by focusing on three core areas: regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep each night. These foundational habits are crucial for maintaining physical sharpness, so make them non-negotiable in your routine.

Spiritual

The spiritual domain is fundamental to your sense of purpose and identity, serving as the core of who you are and guiding your actions. Neglecting this aspect can lead to feelings of cynicism, listlessness, and burnout. The spiritual dimension is often overlooked because it is intangible, yet it is essential for overall wellbeing. Engaging in activities such as participating in religious practices, prayer, and cultivating gratitude can significantly enhance your spiritual wellbeing.

Mental

In the modern economy, many jobs are heavily reliant on cognitive tasks, leading to mental fatigue. The constant demand on one's cognitive abilities can dull the mental "saw," making it challenging to feel refreshed by further mental activities during leisure time. Instead of further mental engagement, individuals may seek to disconnect by surfing the internet or watching television. However, activities that stimulate the mind, such as taking online courses, watching documentary films, and listening to thought-provoking podcasts, can effectively sharpen mental acuity.

Social/Emotional

Humans are inherently social beings. Research has consistently shown that socializing can help reduce stress and alleviate depressive symptoms. Moreover, engaging with others provides opportunities to learn new ideas and refine one's own thoughts. Social interactions synergize with mental sharpening, enhancing both cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The study was conducted in Norbuling Rigter College located in Doteng Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag. It is a private college with 97 employees.

Research Design

Research design as the overarching plan that outlines how research questions will be addressed. This study employed a survey research design to examine the employee's wellbeing.

Sampling Method

The study used a census survey approach. A census survey involves the complete enumeration of all items within a given field of inquiry, which constitutes the 'Universe' or 'Population.' In a census inquiry, since every item in the population is examined, the element of chance is eliminated, thereby ensuring the highest level of accuracy.

Data Collection Methods

The survey was conducted using questionnaires that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The survey questionnaire was structured into several sections. The first section gathered demographic information about the respondents, while the second section explored their perceptions of the four domains associated with the concept of "sharpen the saw." The questions were adapted and contextualized to ensure relevance to the employees of Norbuling Rigter College. Data collection was facilitated through the use of the Kobocollect toolbox application.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adopted and modified from Myers and Sweeney (2005) IS-WEL five model factors and Hettler (1976) six dimension of wellness model to contextualize Steven Covey's four dimensions of wellbeing in the Bhutanese context. To enhance the validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the questionnaire fits the objective of the study.

Table 1 *IS-WEL Five Model Factors*

Factors	Descriptions
Creative self	Thinking, emotions, control, work, positive humour
Coping self	Leisure, stress management, self-worth, realistic beliefs
Social life	Friendship and love
Essential self	Spirituality, selfcare, gender identity, cultural identity
Physical self	Exercise and nutrition

Source: Myers and Sweeney, 2005.

Table 2
Six Dimension of Wellness Model

Dimensions	Descriptions
Occupational	Personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life
	through work
Physical	Need for regular physical activity
Social	Encourages contributing to one's environment and
	community
Intellectual	Recognizes one's creative, stimulating mental activities
Spiritual	Recognizes our search for meaning and purpose in
	human existence
Emotional	Recognizes awareness and acceptance of one's feelings

Source: Hettler, 1976.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the collected data. This approach allows for the identification of trends within the data and provides insight into the overall distribution. Additionally, descriptive statistics facilitate the comparison of different groups or sub-categories within the dataset and help draw inferences about the larger population from which the sample was taken. Descriptive statistics were essential in this research for understanding, interpreting, and presenting the data effectively. The data were represented in tables and figures, and the analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data in a tabular format.

Data Interpretation Method

To capture the employees' perspectives, a five-point Likert scale was used. Employees were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements in the questionnaire, with the following response options: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2-Disagree (D), 3-Neutral (N), 4-Agree (A), and 5-Strongly Agree (SA). The total scale score was 15, with an average score calculated as 15/5=3. The Likert scale was given a range to facilitate the interpretation of responses, and the range was calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{n-1}{n}$$
n=total number of Likert points
$$\frac{5-1}{5} = \frac{4}{5} = 0.8$$

After using the formula to calculate the range the interval of the range appeared to be 0.8. Then adding the interval value to the Likert scale number, we get the range of each scale given below in Table 3. The mean for each question was summed up and the average mean was calculated for each section under respective parts.

Table 3 *Interpreting Mean Score of Likert Scale*

Range	Interpretation	
1.00 - 1.80	Very poor	
1.81 - 2.61	Poor	
2.62 - 3.42	Acceptable	
3.43 - 4.23	Good	
4.24 – 5.00	Very good	
	1.00 - 1.80 1.81 - 2.61 2.62 - 3.42 3.43 - 4.23	1.00 - 1.80 Very poor 1.81 - 2.61 Poor 2.62 - 3.42 Acceptable 3.43 - 4.23 Good

Results and Discussions

Reliability

Reliability tests show strong reliability. As presented in Table 2, the scale reliability Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for physical domain was 0.832, spiritual domain was 0.747, social emotional domain was 0.874 and for the mental domain was 0.887. Therefore, this study demonstrates very strong reliability.

Table 4 *Reliability Test*

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Physical	0.832	11
Spiritual	0.747	9
Social emotional	0.874	11
Mental	0.887	10

Demographic Profile

An attempt to conduct a census survey was made; however, 8 respondents were unavailable during the time of data collection. Therefore, out of the 97 employees, 89 participated in the survey which represents 91.7% response rate of which 17 (19.1%) were administrative staff, 40 (44.9%) were technical and support staff, and 32 (36%) were teaching staff. By gender, 40 (44.9%) males and 49 (55.1%) females responded to the survey. By age, 14 (15.7%) were below 25 years old and 41(46.1%) were above 36 years old. By qualification, the majority of the respondents have a master's degree 29 (32.6%) and 1 (1.1%) who have Ph.D as shown in Table 5.

Table 5Demographic Profile of The Employees

Category	subcategory	n	%
Gender	Male	40	44.9
Gender	Female	49	55.1
	Below 25 years old	14	15.7
Λσο	Between 26 to 30 years old	16	18.0
Age	Between 31 to 35 years old	18	20.2
	Above 36 years old	41	46.1
Professional	Administrative staff	17	19.1
	Teaching staff	32	36.0
category	Technical and support staff	40	44.9
	No education	19	21.3
	Monastic education	3	3.4
	Non-Formal Education	5	5.6
	Below class 10	12	13.5
Qualification	Class 12	9	10.1
	Bachelors	11	12.4
	Masters	29	32.6
	PhD	1	1.1

Perception on Employee Wellbeing

Employee wellbeing is vital for any organization, and employees have different perspective towards employee wellbeing. Majority of the respondents 27(30.33%) stated that emotional and mental wellbeing, 21 (23.59%) stated a good working environment, and 17 (19.1%) stated work life balance is the most important factor for their wellbeing. However, 3 (3.3%) shared others which includes sending to holidays, and health of the employees as shown in Figure 1. The result also aligns with the findings of Danna and Griffin (1999) that employee wellbeing is employee's physical and mental health, including both life and work experiences. In addition, Guest (2017) also states that employee wellbeing includes psychological, physical, and social aspects.

Figure 1
Perception of Employee Wellbeing



Physical Domain

Table 6 shows the responses to the physical domains of the respondents. The general arithmetic mean was (3.3) which shows that employees indicate acceptable. This result also aligns with the finding of Rampisheh, et al. (2022) that there is a link between

workplace physical exercise and degrees of well-being. Furthermore, increasing physical exercise would be beneficial for improving academic well-being. In addition, Kämäräinen (2019) also found that physical activity does affect employee wellbeing positively.

Table 6 *Physical Domain*

Statement	Mean	SD
I engage in activities like running, cycling, or dancing to improve heart health	2.7	1.0
I engage in strength training to build muscle and boost metabolism	2.4	0.9
I practice yoga to improve flexibility and balance	2.2	0.9
I take brisk walks/ jog/zumba regularly to enhance cardiovascular health	2.7	1.0
I engage in both outdoor and indoor games	2.9	1.2
I consume a balanced diet with a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains	3.8	1.0
I stay hydrated by drinking an adequate amount of water	4.2	0.8
I get 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night	4.1	0.9
I practice good hygiene, such as hand washing and dental care	4.3	0.7
I break up long periods of sitting by incorporating short walks/stretching	3.8	0.8
I practice stress-reducing activities such as meditation, deep breathing	2.9	1.0
Average	3.3	

Spiritual Domain

Table 7 below presents the responses on physical domain scores of the respondents. The overall arithmetic mean was 3.5, indicating that employees generally reported a positive assessment of their physical wellbeing. Research by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) suggests that workplace spirituality has a significant positive impact at the organizational, team, and individual levels. Similarly, Ramesh and Balamurugan (2023) found that employees' spiritual wellbeing not only reduces stress, conflict, and absenteeism but also enhances overall wellbeing, quality of life, work performance, and engagement. Additionally, a study by Robert et al. (2006) revealed that spiritual, religious, and existential wellbeing significantly contribute to job satisfaction.

Table 7Spiritual Domain

Statement	Mean	SD
I practice regular meditation to calm the mind and cultivate mindfulness	2.5	1.0
I spend time in nature, whether it's hiking, walking in a park	3.1	1.1
I cultivate an attitude of gratitude	4.0	1.1
I eat mindfully savouring each bite of the food	3.1	1.1
I engage in prayer or contemplative practices that align with my beliefs	3.6	1.2
I explore spiritual literature, philosophy, or teachings	3.6	1.3
I engage with people through spiritual or religious communities	3.2	1.2
I take breaks from social media platforms	3.3	1.1
I visit spiritual sites/places during auspicious days	4.2	1.1
I volunteer and participate in social services	3.6	1.1

I contribute to charity and donations that supports spirituality	3.8	1.2
Average	3.5	

Social Emotional Domain

Table 8 below presents the scores for the social/emotional domain of the respondents. The overall arithmetic mean was 4.0, indicating that employees reported a favourable assessment of their social and emotional wellbeing. Weziak-Bialowolska et al. (2022) argue that reducing isolation and enhancing social wellbeing led to more positive social interactions and are associated with increased life satisfaction, resilience, and overall health. Conversely, Hodgins et al. (2016) highlight that employees experiencing mental health issues often exhibit decreased performance at work.

Table 8Social Emotional Domain

Statement	Mean	SD
I schedule regular social activities with friends and family	3.9	0.8
I attend social events or gatherings in my community	3.8	0.8
I incorporate mindfulness practices in daily life	3.3	0.9
I volunteer to create a sense of purpose and strengthen connection	3.6	0.8
I establish clear boundaries in both personal and professional space	4.1	0.9
I spend time reflecting on my thoughts and feelings	4.2	0.7
I practice empathy by considering others' perspectives	4.2	0.7
I foster positive relationships with people who support and uplift me	4.4	0.7

I reward myself for achieving both my personal and professional goals	4.0	0.7
I stay connected with my friends/colleagues/family	4.2	0.6
I respond to messages received by email/ WeChat /WhatsApp	4.0	0.8
I express appreciative joy when colleagues succeed or prosper	4.3	0.7
Average	4.0	

Mental Domain

Table 9 below displays the scores for the mental domain of the respondents. The general arithmetic mean was 3.9, suggesting that employees rated their mental wellbeing positively. Fortunisa and Darmawan (2022) emphasize the critical importance of mental health for both employees and organizations, noting its impact on maintaining the quality of work. Additionally, Stoetzer (2010) identifies interpersonal relationships as a key psychological factor influencing employees' wellbeing, job satisfaction, productivity, and performance.

Table 9 *Mental Domain*

Statement	Mean	SD
I engage in activities I enjoy, whether it's art, music/ writing	3.9	0.9
I read few minutes regularly	3.4	1.1
I watch news few minutes regularly	4.2	0.8
I break down large goals into smaller achievable tasks	3.7	0.7
I discuss issues that matters	4.0	0.8
I upskill professionally	3.8	0.8

I reduce excessive time spent on social media	3.6	0.9
I cultivate healthy coping mechanisms for stress management	3.7	0.8
I am mindful of alcohol and substance consumption	4.4	0.7
Average	3.9	

Overall status of employee's wellbeing at Norbuling Rigter College

Table 10 below shows the overall status of employee's wellbeing at Norbuling Rigter College. The general arithmetic mean was (3.7) which shows that employees indicate Acceptable as shown in Table 10.

Table 10Status of Employee's Wellbeing at Norbuling Rigter College

Domains		Mean	Interpretation
Physical		3.3	Acceptable
Spiritual	Individual	3.5	Good
Mental		3.9	Good
Social emotional	Public	4	Good
Average		3.7	

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study reveals that while the overall well-being of employees at Norbuling Rigter College is rated as acceptable to good, there are disparities across different well-being domains. Social/emotional and mental well-being were reported to be in good condition, reflecting strong social ties and mental engagement among

employees. However, the physical domain received lower ratings, indicating the need for more focused efforts in promoting physical health and fitness within the organization. The spiritual domain also showed potential for improvement, highlighting the need for activities that nurture employees' sense of purpose and alignment with their personal values. The application of Stephen Covey's seventh habit, "Sharpening the Saw," proves to be a valuable framework for assessing and enhancing employee well-being. This habit's emphasis on balanced renewal across physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional dimensions aligns well with the holistic needs of employees. By addressing these areas, organizations can foster a more engaged, satisfied, and productive workforce.

By implementing these recommendations, Norbuling Rigter College can enhance the well-being of its employees, leading to increased job satisfaction, better performance, and a more positive organizational culture.

Enhance Physical Well-being Initiatives

The college should implement programmes that encourage regular physical activity among employees, such as incorporating physical activities into the workplace.

Promote Spiritual Engagement

Initiatives like mindfulness sessions, meditation workshops, or opportunities for spiritual reflection could be introduced to help employees connect with their core values and maintain a sense of purpose in their work.

Strengthen Social/Emotional Support

Building on the existing strong social ties, the college can further support social/emotional well-being by creating spaces for informal social interactions, peer support groups, and teambuilding activities.

Support Mental Health Practices

Encourage employees to engage in continuous learning, stress management techniques, and mental health awareness programs. Providing access to mental health resources and counselling services can further support this domain.

Regular Well-being Assessments

To ensure ongoing improvement, the college should regularly assess employee well-being across all four domains and adjust strategies as needed. Feedback from employees should be actively sought and incorporated into well-being initiatives.

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