

**SALUD Wellness Program: A Multidisciplinary Approach To Employee Wellness at UST-Legazpi**

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**ABSTRACT**

Employee wellness programs have drawn a considerable amount of attention around the world, indicating an ever-growing recognition of the value of employee well-being in organizational success. Business organizations worldwide invest in wellness programs to boost employee morale, efficiency, and overall satisfaction. Using a convergent mixed-methods research design, the study explored and investigated the employee wellness program of UST-L in terms of activities along with spiritual, psychosocial, and physical aspects through the empirical data that would inform the institution's employee wellness program. Data analysis revealed significant gaps in current wellness practices and highlighted the importance of a holistic approach that integrates spiritual connection, mental resilience, and physical vitality. Guided by the RIGMAT framework (built on five interconnected phases: *Reframe, Implement, Gauge, Manage, and Transcend*) for continuous improvement, the proposed SALUD Wellness Program (*salud*, a Bikol word for health and well-being represents a holistic approach to promoting wellness) centers on a multidisciplinary approach, with activities designed to enhance interconnected wellness pillars through collaborative efforts among institutional units. It aims for improved employee engagement, reduced stress levels, and a stronger sense of community. Highlighting the value of adopting a comprehensive wellness strategy in promoting employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency, the study concludes that wellness must go beyond its function as a collection of services and become an integral part of the organization – a "lived" attitude that continuously molds the workplace and impacts institutional values and policies. The study offers actionable insights for institutions aiming to create sustainable wellness initiatives that align with their values and goals.

*Keywords: Employee wellness program, workplace wellness, multidisciplinary approach, Philippines*

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workplace harmony (Hassan et al., 2023; Asan et al., 2020; Rajashekar & Jain, 2023, Chin, 2015; Ho et al., 2023). Many organizations in Asia frequently prioritize initiatives that promote collective wellness, such as mindfulness techniques (Lin et al., 2022; King, 2019), team-building events (Misra & Srivastava, 2018), and group exercise programs (Ahmad et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Moreover, there is a considerable emphasis on achieving work-life balance (Le et al., 2020; Nurhasanah et al., 2022), with organizations providing flexible work arrangements (Karani & Mehta, 2022; Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020), and supporting policies that promote family life (Gaikwad et al., 2021; Nanda & Randhawa, 2020). Asian perspectives on employee wellness point out the interdependence of personal and professional lives, emphasizing the significance of cultivating both overall satisfaction and success (Jayasingam et al., 2023).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Employee wellness programs have drawn a considerable amount of attention around the world (Peñalvo et al., 2021; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021; Berry et al., 2020), indicating an ever-growing recognition of the value of employee well-being in organizational success (Aryanti et al., 2020). Business organizations worldwide invest in wellness programs to boost employee morale, efficiency, and overall satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2020; Vonderlin et al., 2020). These programs usually consist of various benefits, such as physical activities, mental health assistance, stress management resources, and access to lifestyle incentives (Berry et al., 2020). Globally, the emphasis is on providing a supportive work environment that fosters physical (Abdin, 2018), mental (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023), emotional wellness (O'Connor et al., 2018), health beliefs (Reif et al., 2020) and behavior (Song et al., 2019), leading to increased employee engagement and retention (Rasool et al., 2021).

In Asia, employee wellness programs are viewed through a cultural lens, a perspective or framework shaped by an individual's cultural background, that underscores holistic well-being and

In the Philippines, employee wellness programs are increasingly acknowledged as critical to corporate growth and public welfare (Abun et al., 2021; Yeung & Johnston, 2019). Filipino organizations are embracing wellness programs that address their employees' specific requirements, such

as mental health assistance, health tests, and nutrition instruction (Sanchez, 2023; Panes et al., 2023; Sabdani-Asiri, 2023). With an increasing understanding of the impact of stress and burnout on productivity, Philippine firms are focusing on programs that promote work-life balance and stress management approaches (Candelario et al., 2024; Garibay & Amonceda, 2023; Areola et al., 2023; Bacala, 2022; Constantino et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is a cultural importance – the value and significance of wellness within a specific group – put on workplace camaraderie and community solidarity (Anog et al., 2023), which has resulted in efforts that build employee connection and mutual support (Vinson et al., 2024; Villasquez, 2022; Gallardo & Chavez, 2022).

The local context of the researcher, which is the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi (UST-L), attests to the global and national urgency to heed the necessity of employee wellness programs for the benefit of both the employees and the organization. In fact, one of UST-L's objectives is promoting a “healthy mind and body through sustained scientifically-based wellness programs” as part of achieving its vision to produce “Thomasians whose minds and hearts are nurtured and molded for Christian

social transformation.” This theme echoes the holistic approach to employee wellness programs (Hassan et al., 2023; Asan et al., 2020; Rajashekar & Jain, 2023; Ho et al., 2023). Although there has been an effort to promote a holistic employee wellness program in the institution as evidenced by the institution's existing wellness program indicated in the operational and strategic plans, the lack of data makes it challenging to affirm whether the program is what the employees need or contributing to the attainment of the institution's objectives.

The current status of UST-L's wellness program involves various activities, as well as spiritual, psychosocial, and physical aspects, implemented by different departments, such as the Office of Religious Affairs (ORA), Office of Guidance and Testing (OGT), and Center for Sports, Wellness, Culture, and Arts (CSWCA). Each of those departments initiates and supervises the implementation and evaluation of the activities that target the enhancement and wellness of specific aspects of their department.

Moreover, despite the evaluations of every wellness program conducted, the absence of extensive and intensive studies related to the institution's employee wellness

program makes it more unclear due to the following reasons: Is the existing program being implemented seamlessly? Are the activities included in the program needed by employees with different demographics? Does the program respond to the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the employees? Are the programs sustainable? Are the activities in the program scientifically based or research-based? Does the program contribute to the attainment of the institution's objective? Hence, the researcher explored and investigated the employee wellness program of UST-L in terms of activities along with spiritual, psychosocial, and physical aspects through the empirical data that will inform the institution's employee wellness program.

Given the current status of UST-L's wellness program and the absence of extensive and intensive studies related to the institution's wellness program, this present

## **METHODS**

The study used the convergent mixed-method research design. This design is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by merging the results from the qualitative and quantitative data (Sharma et

study fills the gap by providing a proposed improved wellness program. The study is anchored on the institution's vision to produce Thomasians whose minds and hearts are nurtured and molded for Christian social transformation through its mission to create an environment for its employees where they can develop emotional maturity toward an integrated Christian community. One way to achieve this is through UST-L's objective of promoting a healthy mind and body through sustained scientifically-based wellness programs.

The study aimed to enhance the Employee Wellness Program at the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi. Specifically, it sought to present the status of UST-Legazpi employees wellness program, their wellness needs, the gaps and challenges in implementing the existing UST-L's wellness program, and propose a wellness program conformable to UST-L.

al., 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, the data were collected concurrently in order to provide a wider understanding of the needed wellness program for UST-Legazpi employees. It integrated quantitative

data with qualitative data to design the proposed wellness program.

The researcher utilized standardized and validated questionnaires. The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) developed by Underwood (2002) was used for the spiritual well-being. The DSES contains 16 quantitative self-report questions that assess the frequency of experiences that many describe as spiritual (Underwood & Vagnini, 2022). Sample questions are: “I find strength in my religion/spirituality” and “I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities.” For psychosocial well-being, the short form of the third version of the Copenhagen psychosocial questionnaire with 32 questions (Burr et al., 2019) was used. Sample questions are: “Do you have to deal with other people’s personal problems as part of your work?” and “Is there a good atmosphere between you and your colleagues?”. For physical well-being, the questions were lifted from Workplace Wellbeing Question Bank, a collection of validated questions used by organizations to measure and monitor employee well-being. It covers all relevant aspects of well-being derived from existing frameworks of well-being and work. Employers can use this bank to target wellbeing activities and programs

questions are: “I think my health or safety is at risk because of my work” and “My main job involves tiring or painful positions”.

For the qualitative data collection, the researcher used a semi-structured interview and focus group discussion (FGD). The interview and FGD were recorded to ensure that no important information would be missed out.

To ensure systematic data gathering, the researcher followed protocols before, during, and after the data gathering. Before the data gathering, the researcher secured permission from the university Rector and administrators. Following the permission, letters were sent to every department explaining the nature and purpose of the study. A return letter was sent back to the researcher with the names of employees in each department willing to participate in the study. After the initial communication, the proper data gathering followed with the help of several enumerators. The consent form and the questionnaires were sent to each participating employee. After answering the questionnaire, a focal person in each department was assigned as an enumerator to collect the instrument. After the data gathering, verification and coding of the

instruments followed. Then, the answers were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

Likewise, for the qualitative data collection, which was conducted concurrently with the quantitative data collection, the researcher followed the same protocol before, during, and after the data gathering. The participants were properly oriented regarding the nature and purpose of the study and the potential benefits to the employees of UST-L and to the overall performance of the university. The interviews and FGDs were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically.

The respondents of the study were the employees of UST-Legazpi. For the quantitative part of the study, the researcher used a random sampling technique. The sample respondents were calculated using the Raosoft Online Calculator. With a population size of 320 and a 5% margin of error, the calculated sample size was 175 respondents. To get the 175 respondents, the researcher sent a letter to all the 320 employees of UST-L with the attached consent to participate in the study. The first 175 employees (99 females and 76 males) who expressed their willingness to participate were selected as the respondents of the study.

For the qualitative part, the participants of the study were the department heads and staff of the Office of Religious Affairs, Office of Guidance and Testing, and Center for Sports, Wellness, Culture, and Arts.

In analyzing the quantitative data, the researcher used statistical tools like frequency count, mean, ranking, and percentage. Scales of interpretation were used to interpret spiritual, Psychosocial, and physical well-being and overall well-being. For qualitative data, the researcher used thematic analysis based on the 3Cs framework of Lichtman (2013): coding, categorizing, and conceptualizing. The process of analyzing qualitative text data through dissection to determine the results and then reassembling it in a comprehensible way is called coding. Gathering the aggregated codes with related concepts into a single concept is the process of categorizing. Gathering the developed categories and settling on a common subject is conceptualizing. These are the phases that go into coding, categorizing, and conceptualizing.

The researcher observed ethical considerations throughout the conduct of this study. The respondents were informed about

the study's goal, methods, and benefits before participating. They were able to ask questions and freely express informed consent. The consent procedure was properly documented. The confidentiality of respondents' data was protected. The researcher ensured that any personal information obtained from respondents and participants would be kept confidential and not distributed to unauthorized parties. Additionally, efforts were made to anonymize data to protect the identities of respondents and participants. Moreover, they were assured that they could withdraw from

The researcher respected the respondents' and participants' individuality and ensured that participation was voluntary. They were not coerced or under any undue influence to participate in the study. Lastly, adequate security measures were taken to protect the data collected from them. This included safeguarding data storage systems against illegal access, establishing encryption as needed, and safely disposing of any identifiable information once the study was concluded

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

This section presents the findings of the study. The first part presents the quantitative findings, while the second part presents the qualitative findings. The last part converges the results leading to the output of this study.

### **Quantitative Results**

#### *Status of UST-L employees' Wellness Activities alongside their spiritual, psychosocial, and physical well-being*

The results in Table 1 reflect a comprehensive assessment of the well-being of UST-L employees across three aspects: spiritual, psychosocial, and physical well-being. Each area was evaluated based on responses from employees, using Likert-scale survey instruments where the mean (M) scores and corresponding interpretations were calculated.

**Table 1.** Status of UST-L employees' well-being

| <b>Aspects</b>          | <b>M</b> | <b>Interpretation</b> |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Spiritual Well-being    | 5.08     | High                  |
| Psychosocial Well-being | 3.47     | High                  |

|   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Demands at work                         | 3.22        | Moderate    |
| Work organization and job contents      | 4.08        | High        |
| Interpersonal relationship & leadership | 3.04        | Moderate    |
| Work individual interface               | 3.30        | Moderate    |
| Social capital                          | 3.71        | High        |
| Physical Well-being                     | 4.02        | Moderate    |
| <i>Whole</i>                            | <i>4.19</i> | <i>High</i> |

Given the results above, the UST-L employees generally have a strong sense of their spiritual well-being. They experience a feeling of purpose or greater significance, while they might occasionally look for a more profound spiritual connection. This suggests that UST-L employees' spirituality, which is in line with the study of Mohamad and Abiddin (2023) is a source of well-being and that it enhances their general wellness.

Overall, UST-L employees' psychosocial health is good. They have consistent relationships, a usually optimistic outlook, and very few worries or anxieties. The breakdown of the element of psychosocial well-being into five different areas demonstrates differing degrees of satisfaction:

In workplace demands (3.22, moderate), workers who are subjected to work-related demands encounter moderate degrees of stress or strain ((Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). This implies some challenges or stress in handling the workload, but nothing

too severe. In the organization of work and contents of jobs (4.08, high), positive perceptions in this area show that workers believe their job duties and organization are well-structured, which supports their mental health (Lari, 2024). In interpersonal relationships and leadership (3.04, moderate), the leadership and relationships with coworkers are scored moderately, suggesting that there may be room for improvements in terms of nurturing stronger bonds and support from the leadership (Fisher, 2023; Dagar & Sisodia, 2023). In the work individual interface (3.30, moderate), employee sentiment about the degree to which their goals in life and job responsibilities (Ali, 2023) correspond is indicated by this score, which is relatively neutral to moderately positive. In social capital (3.71, high), trust and networks among coworkers are examples of social capital that is well-regarded. Employees can sense a sense of solidarity and cooperation in

this encouraging social environment (Lucas, 2023; Reese et al., 2023).

In terms of physical well-being, although most employees handle their everyday physical tasks with little trouble, there are certain physical challenges. They could be caused by illnesses or exhaustion that just slightly interfere with their capacity to lead an active, healthy lifestyle (Sharma, 2024; Altman et al., 2023). The moderate interpretation indicates that there may be opportunities for wellness initiatives or support services to better promote physical health among UST-L employees.

## **Qualitative Results**

### *1.1 Spiritual wellness needs of UST-Legazpi employees*

Given the high level of spiritual well-being that UST-L employees now possess, the emphasis should be on more profound spiritual engagement, more structured spiritual development activities, and spiritual wellness counseling or spiritual direction. This demand is motivated by the workers' occasional yearning for a deeper spiritual

degree of total well-being when one takes into account their psychosocial, physical, and spiritual well-being, which reflect a holistic approach to EWP (Safariningsih et al., 2024; Sabitha & Rajeswari, 2024; Zoller et al., 2023; Collinson, 2023; Mohamad & Abiddin, 2023; Tripathy et al., 2023). This suggests that employees are typically satisfied with their lives and state of health despite small setbacks. Their spiritual, psychosocial, and bodily health are all in balance, as evidenced by the high overall score, with the majority of areas showing positive contributions.

connection, indicating that they could gain from experiences that allow them to contemplate and delve deeper into their sense of purpose. Table 2 below shows the three major areas where the employees' needs are visible and the proposed activities for each area. Although the spiritual well-being of UST-L employees is strong, the activities are designed to keep or improve more their spiritual wellness.

**Table 2.** Areas for Spiritual Needs and Proposed Activities

| <b>Areas for Spiritual Needs</b> | <b>Proposed Activities</b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Spiritual Engagement             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mindfulness program (King, 2019)</li> <li>2. Guided reflection workshops (Hunt, 2021)</li> </ol> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | 3. Group discussions on spirituality (Dal Corso et al., 2020)                                      |
|   | 4. Personal reflection workshops (Paul et al., 2020) like solitude                                 |
|   | 5. Organizational spirituality (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2021)  |
| Structured Spiritual Development Activities | 1. Spiritual retreats (Jansson & Adams, 2021)  |
|   | 2. Workplace spirituality (Iqbal et al., 2023)   |
|   | 3. Alignment of spiritual beliefs with employees' professional environment (Binu Raj et al., 2023) |
| Spiritual Wellness Counseling               | 1. One-on-one spiritual counseling/direction (Obilam, 2023)  |

*1.2 Psychosocial Well-being needs of UST-Legazpi employees*

Based on their current situation and backed by research findings, the psychosocial wellness needs of UST-L employees point to several crucial areas that

require attention: stress management, leadership development; a balanced work-life dynamic; and fostering social capital. Table 3 below presents the areas for psychosocial health needs with proposed activities.

**Table 3.** Areas for Psychosocial Health Needs and Proposed Activities

| <b>Areas for Psychosocial Health Needs</b> | <b>Proposed Activities</b>   |
|--|--|
| Stress Management Programs                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mindfulness and meditation workshops (King, 2019)</li> <li>2. Stress awareness seminars (Singha &amp; Singha, 2024)</li> <li>3. On-site counseling services (Reese et al., 2023)</li> <li>4. Team-building activities (Sabitha &amp; Rajeswari, 2024; Zoller et al., 2023)</li> <li>5. Flexible work arrangements (Leuhery et al., 2024)</li> <li>6. Work-life balance workshops (Singha &amp; Singha, 2024; Leuhery et al., 2024)</li> <li>7. Workspace design (Singha, 2024)</li> <li>8. Open communication (Roselin, 2024)</li> <li>9. Contributing to society (Lucas, 2023)</li> <li>10. Webinars (Augustus &amp; Kotera, 2022)</li> <li>11. Reiki (Topal &amp; Kaplan, 2023)</li> <li>12. Yoga and Ayurveda (Sharma &amp; Kumar, 2023)</li> </ol> |
| Leadership Development Initiatives         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Empathy workshops (Augustus &amp; Kotera, 2022)</li> <li>2. Communication mastery training (Ali, 2023)</li> <li>3. Team collaboration retreats (Lucas, 2023)</li> <li>4. Conflict resolution programs (Menda et al., 2023)</li> </ol>  |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Leadership styles assessment and coaching (Reese et al., 2023)</li> <li>6. Inclusive leadership seminars (Ali, 2023)</li> <li>7. Time and stress management for leaders (Papini et al., 2023)</li> <li>8. Leadership mentorship programs (Papini et al., 2023)</li> <li>9. Vision and strategy workshops (Ali, 2023)</li> <li>10. Recognition and motivation programs (Zoller et al., 2023).</li> </ol>  |
| Work-life Balance Strategies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flexible work schedules (Leuhery et al., 2024)</li> <li>2. Remote work options (Singha, 2024)</li> <li>3. Boundary-setting workshops (Ali, 2023; Roselin, 2024)</li> <li>4. Family-inclusive activities (Sabitha &amp; Rajeswari, 2024)</li> <li>5. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) (Zoller et al., 2023; Roselin, 2024)</li> <li>6. Wellness breaks (Topal &amp; Kaplan, 2023; Ali, 2023),</li> <li>7. Workload management training (Menda et al., 2023; Ali, 2023)</li> <li>8. Wellness leave options (Collinson, 2023)</li> <li>9. Monthly stress reduction events (Lazarević et al., 2023; Luoma, 2024)</li> </ol>                                 |
| Fostering Social Capital     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Team-building retreats (Sabitha &amp; Rajeswari, 2024; Zoller et al., 2023)</li> <li>2. Peer mentorship programs (Augustus &amp; Kotera, 2022)</li> <li>3. Interdepartmental collaboration projects (Safariningsih et al., 2024)</li> <li>4. Recognition programs (Zoller et al., 2023; Roselin, 2024)</li> <li>5. Cultural exchange and/or interdisciplinary events (Tripathy et al., 2023)</li> <li>6. Volunteer initiatives (Lucas, 2023)</li> <li>7. Employee-led interest groups (Safariningsih et al., 2024)</li> <li>8. Wellness buddy program (Augustus &amp; Kotera, 2022)</li> <li>9. Collaborative learning workshops (Luoma, 2024).</li> </ol> |

### *1.3 Physical Well-being needs of UST-Legazpi employees*

Employees at UST-L have a moderately satisfactory level of physical well-being, meaning that although the majority of them can carry out their everyday responsibilities without any problems, they may occasionally experience minor health issues or physical discomfort. There is

potential for improvement to assist employees in achieving optimal physical health, as indicated by the mean score of 4.02. These difficulties may be caused by things like insufficient ergonomic settings, stationary work habits, or restricted access to resources for proactive health care. Table 4 below presents the area for physical health

needs of UST-L employees with proposed activities.

**Table 4.** Areas for Physical Health Need and Proposed Activities

| <b>Area for Physical Health Need</b> | <b>Proposed Activities</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Fitness Program                      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Luoma, 2024): hiking, sauna and bathing, swimming, complete relaxation and enjoying nature as it is, kayaking, cooking workshops outdoors, foraging wild herbs, and muscles and cardiovascular exercises</li> <li>2. Exercising the neck and back (Lazarević et al., 2023)</li> <li>3. Breathing exercises (Topal &amp; Kaplan, 2023; Pearman, 2023)</li> <li>4. Forest or nature bathing (Mohamad &amp; Abiddin, 2023)</li> <li>5. Health checkups (Zoller et al., 2023)</li> <li>6. Ergonomic workplace modifications (Ali, 2023).</li> </ol> |

According to the results, UST-L employees could benefit from a comprehensive wellness program that proactively attends to every aspect of well-being (Hassan et al., 2023; Asan et al., 2020; Rajashekar & Jain, 2023, Chin, 2015; Ho et al., 2023). Although there is a high level of spiritual well-being, this strength should be maintained by offering continual opportunities for more profound spiritual connections (Binu Raj et al., 2023). Support is crucial for mental health (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023), especially in the subdomains of interpersonal interactions and work obligations. Programs for physical wellness should emphasize encouraging an active lifestyle and reducing physical challenges (Ahmad et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). It is essential to conduct regular evaluations of

employees' well-being to make sure that the programs continue to be relevant and responsive to their constantly evolving needs (Jayasingam et al., 2023). By using a multidisciplinary approach and drawing from recent studies, the UST-L can successfully customize its wellness programs and sustain high employee health and satisfaction levels.

*2. Gaps and challenges in implementing the existing UST-Legazpi employees' wellness activities in spiritual, psychosocial, and physical aspects*

The focus group discussion (FGD) helped the researcher identify several themes related to gaps and challenges in implementing the existing UST-L employees' wellness activities in spiritual, psychosocial, and physical aspects. They are divided into three major themes: planning

(scheduling conflicts, resource gap, holistic wellness integration), implementation (limited engagement, leadership and advocacy, communication and collaboration), and sustainability (strategic improvements, minimal integration into institutional culture, absence of structured monitoring and evaluation).

**Table 5.** FGD Themes and Sample Utterances of the Participants

| Themes         | Participants' Utterances   |
|----------------|--|
| Planning       | <p><b>Scheduling</b><br/> <i>"... One of the barriers we face is that 80% or 90% of the faculty have teaching loads until 8:00 o'clock in the evening..."</i></p> <p><b>Resource Gap</b><br/> <i>"... But what I'm saying is, the equipment there is open for everyone, but not for those without knowledge, because we don't have a gym instructor. It would be great to have a gym instructor, but it's a bit expensive."</i></p> <p><b>Holistic wellness integration</b><br/> <i>"Could it be that our wellness program is not fully developed? It's not well introduced, and our people are not oriented on its importance..."</i></p>   |
| Implementation | <p><b>Limited Engagement</b><br/> <i>"So actually... we started with just 15%. I was already stressed at year-end, reaching only 5%, 15%, and the target for me was always 50%. At first, I couldn't achieve it, and I wanted to give up... but they always said, 'Create... what else? Innovate ways...' So, I thought of using a group chat and a classroom system."</i></p> <p><b>Leadership and Advocacy</b><br/> <i>"...it's a big factor when the department head themselves join because, for others, there's no one overseeing or they're not given the time...."</i></p> <p><b>Communication and collaboration</b><br/> <i>"Our activities are institutional. It is part of the University. It's just the way we manage our activities. In my opinion, there's a lack of focus. It shouldn't just be announced or sent as a message in the group chat. Take it seriously, like a subject, where it's necessary to have an official memo."</i></p> |
| Sustainability | <p><b>Strategic Improvement</b><br/> <i>"We need feedback mechanisms to know why some employees are not joining and adjust the programs accordingly."</i></p> <p><b>Minimal integration into institutional culture</b><br/> <i>"Wellness feels like an afterthought. It's not something that we see as part of our everyday work or priorities"</i></p> <p><b>Absence of structured monitoring and evaluation</b><br/> <i>"We don't even know if the programs are working or if people are benefiting"</i></p>   |

Planning, implementation, and sustainability are the three primary facets that encompass the gaps and challenges facing UST-Legazpi's employee wellness programs

in terms of spiritual, psychosocial, and physical components. Schedule conflicts, a lack of resources, and a lack of comprehensive integration are some of the planning issues. Program efficacy and engagement are decreased when activities overlap and frequently conflict with instructional periods, which has to do with management and leadership (Sharma, 2024). Lack of resources (Yeti, 2024) restricts access and awareness, as does the absence of necessary fund and promotional efforts. Furthermore, wellness initiatives appear disjointed since they are unable to cohesively link together mental, physical, and spiritual aspects (Hassan et al., 2023; Asan et al., 2020; Rajashekar & Jain, 2023, Chin, 2015; Ho et al., 2023).

Programs are hindered in their implementation by low engagement, a lack of leadership (Sharma, 2024), and poor communication (Fisher, 2023). Program emphasis is weakened by a lack of aggressive leadership and lobbying, while participation is decreased by time constraints and conflicting obligations (Dagar & Sisodia, 2023). Ineffective communication regarding the availability and advantages of the program causes implementing offices to be less aware of and cooperative.

The absence of systematic monitoring and assessment, poor integration into institutional culture, and a lack of strategic changes are all problems with sustainability that must be spearheaded by Human Resource Management (Lazarević et al., 2023). Employees perceive wellness as secondary to institutional goals since programs are not routinely assessed and there are no specific well-being schedules (Ayanponle et al., 2024). Programs are frequently seen as compliance-driven rather than meaningful, and the absence of systematic evaluation hinders data-driven improvements and accountability.

To overcome these challenges and guarantee meaningful and sustainable wellness programs, better scheduling, better resource allocation, greater leadership advocacy, seamless communication, institutional integration, and frequent monitoring and evaluation procedures are needed.

### **Convergence of Quantitative & Qualitative Results**

The quantitative findings provide a data-driven understanding of the wellness status of UST-L employees. The results were supplemental in determining the wellness needs of the employees. The qualitative findings, on the other hand, provided clearer justifications for designing an enhanced wellness program for UST-L to respond to employees' wellness needs and respond to the challenges in planning, implementation, and sustainability. Hence, the researcher came up with the proposed improved wellness program for the employees of UST-Legazpi.

*Emerging Framework: RIGMAT  
Framework*

The RIGMAT Framework is a comprehensive and strategic framework created as a mechanism to continuously improve the employees wellness program of University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi (UST-L). The Bikol word "rigmat", which means "consciousness" or "alertness," is the source of its name, which reflects the core idea of the framework—that is, encouraging increased awareness and intentionality toward wellness.

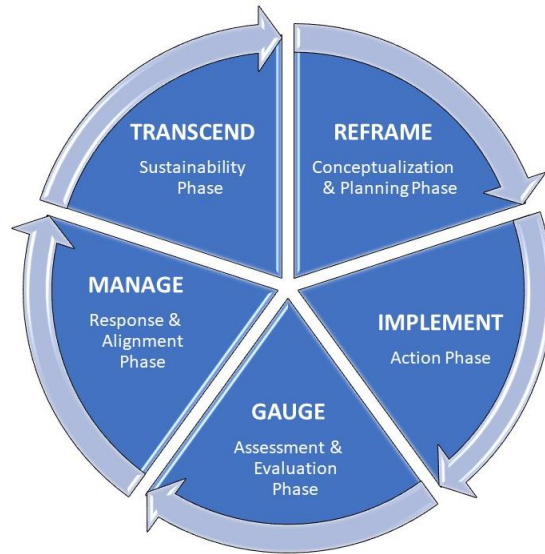
the results in the gauge phase and ensuring that wellness efforts resonate with institutional values and adapt to challenges. Finally, *Transcend* inspires the program to go beyond routine practices, aiming for

The RIGMAT Framework highlights a strong commitment to fostering all facets of employee health by blending cultural identity with contemporary wellness ideas, guaranteeing alignment with UST-L's commitment to holistic development.

The RIGMAT Framework (see Figure 1) is built on five interconnected phases: *Reframe*, *Implement*, *Gauge*, *MANage*, and *Transcend*. These phases provide a comprehensive roadmap for creating, executing, and sustaining a wellness program tailored to the specific needs of UST-L employees. Focused on planning, the framework begins with *Reframe*, where existing practices are reviewed, goals realigned, and strategies enriched based on current needs. It moves to *Implement*, focusing on translating plans into action through well-coordinated and seamless initiatives of the three implementing offices: ORA, OGT, and CSWCA. The *Gauge* phase measures program effectiveness and ensures that adjustments are informed by data. *Manage* phase emphasizes the responses to sustainability, inclusivity, and long-lasting impact.

By encouraging a work environment where well-being is valued, the RIGMAT Framework provides UST-L with a number

of advantages. In addition to meeting the immediate requirements of the workforce, it fosters adaptability and resilience, enabling the organization to prosper in a changing environment. By establishing wellness programs within a framework that resonates



The RIGMAT structured approach sustaining a comprehensive wellness program that takes into account the physical, mental, and spiritual health of UST-L employees. It serves not only as a backbone for planning the holistic and comprehensive wellness program of UST-L, but also as a mechanism tool that will set the wellness-implementing offices at UST-L in constant motion as far as wellness program is concerned. The RIGMAT Framework is used by the researcher to design a proposed wellness program for UST-L’s employees.

*'improved employees'  
 um for UST-Legazpi*

The Bikol word for health and well-being, SALUD, captures the spirit of the suggested wellness program for UST-Legazpi employees. By focusing on the three main pillars of spiritual, psychosocial, and physical health, this program seeks to promote a holistic approach to wellness. By selecting "SALUD," the program emphasizes its ties to the community and the institution's dedication to community values and the general well-being of its staff. The name also represents a holistic approach to promoting physical, psychosocial, and spiritual well-being, which is consistent with UST-

Legazpi's goal of providing a caring and encouraging work environment for its employees.

The proposed activities in the wellness program of UST-L include integrated activities where ORA, OGT, and CSWCA may work collaboratively in one activity to target the three pillars without requiring too much time from the employees. Since the three pillars are interconnected, the three implementing offices should work together to implement a seamless wellness program for UST-L employees.

### **CONCLUSION**

Given the results of the study, a reflective conclusion encourages examination of the more profound consequences of wellness programs in creating a truly holistic workplace. UST-Legazpi employees indicate high levels of well-being, especially in spiritual and psychosocial areas, but the difficulties in establishing, maintaining, and integrating wellness programs point to deeper issues. The philosophy behind wellness goes beyond periodic interventions; it urges for a long-term culture change in which wellness is not just prioritized but is integrated into everyday work life. Therefore, wellness must go beyond its function as a collection of services

and become an integral part of the organization—a "lived" attitude that continuously molds the workplace and impacts institutional values and policies.

The RIGMAT Framework, with its emphasis on awareness, adaptability, and cultural relevance, aligns with this philosophy by encouraging the cultivation of wellness consciousness within the community. The deliberate steps—Reframe, Implement, Gauge, Manage, and Transcend—propose not only a strategic framework but a reflection on the nature of wellness itself: an ever-evolving pursuit that requires attentiveness, resilience, and flexibility to remain impactful. Each step resonates with a journey of self and communal improvement, demanding an ongoing commitment from leadership, staff, and all stakeholders to genuinely support each dimension of well-being.

The idea that spiritual, psychosocial, and physical health are interconnected is further supported by the incorporation of the SALUD Program. It implies that the integrated effect of fostering all aspects of well-being—which eventually results in a resilient, peaceful workplace—is what makes health more than the sum of its parts. With personal development and professional obligations coming together to create a

rewarding work environment, this integrated approach not only produces healthier workers but also healthier leaders and a better organization.

UST-Legazpi is called to develop a proactive, inclusive culture that supports wellness as an ethical imperative through such integrative wellness initiatives, where wellness programs are seen as vital elements of the institution's mission rather than just optional perks. This perspective represents an ideal that prioritizes employee well-being as a core principle, acknowledging that when wellness is ingrained in institutional life, it promotes not just individual flourishing but also the overall excellence and integrity of an organization.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this study provides important insights, it has some limitations. First, the size of the sample was relatively small, which could limit the generalisability of the findings to a wider population. Second, this study was based on self-reported data that were likely affected by biases as social desirability, or recall errors. Third, this study was carried out in one specific geographic and cultural context, making diversity limited. The study captured only a specific time frame and, after that time frame, there may have been

### **Direction for Future Studies**

Future studies may address such limitations by increasing sample size to improve the generalizability of results. Longitudinal studies may give a fuller picture of trends and long-term effects. Also, employing mixed-method strategies, like interviews or observational data, permits triangulation of results and lessens self-reporting bias. Comparative insights could also be derived from conducting similar research in different cultural or institutional contexts. Lastly, careful consideration about technological advancements or innovative methodologies can also help bring new perspectives to the topic at hand.

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