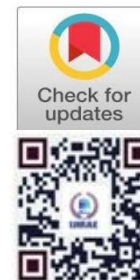


The Strategic Role of CHRO's in Shaping Employee Well-Being: A Comparative Study of Deloitte India and Infosys

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Abstract: In recent years, employee well-being has become a strategic priority for organizations worldwide, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study examines the role of Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs) in shaping employee well-being initiatives within Indian organizations, with a specific focus on two major companies: Deloitte India and Infosys. Through a comparative case study approach, this research explores the design and implementation of well-being programs, including mental health support, flexible work arrangements, and digital wellness tools. The study highlight show CHROs in these companies drive cultural change, integrate well-being into organizational strategies, and measure the effectiveness of these programs on employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. Findings suggest that both companies have successfully prioritized employee well-being, but their approaches differ in terms of leadership involvement, program structure, and performance metrics. The research emphasizes the growing importance of employee well-being as a critical factor for organizational success and provides insights into how CHROs can lead transformative change in the workplace. The study concludes by reinforcing the need for companies to invest in holistic well-being programs as a competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environment.

Keywords: Employee Well-Being, Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), Mental Health Support, Workplace Flexibility, Employee Engagement

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of employee well-being has shifted from being a supplementary benefit to becoming a strategic priority in many organizations. In India's fast-paced and competitive corporate landscape, especially within sectors such as information technology and professional services, employees face increasing levels of stress, burnout, and disengagement. As a result, companies are now recognizing the critical importance of fostering a supportive, inclusive, and healthy work environment. The Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), whose responsibilities have expanded beyond traditional people management to the organization's overall strategic direction, is in the front of this change. No longer limited to policy enforcement and compliance, 70% of CEOs rank people management as their top priority for attaining business goals, according to a recent Gartner survey.

CHROs are therefore expected to sit at the strategy table and have a say in choices that affect everything from the bottom line to corporate culture. Data-driven insights are essential for today's strategic HR management, and they are frequently provided by advanced HR management software, which equips CHROs with the means to create and carry out business-growth-promoting initiatives. The responsibility of creating comprehensive well-being initiatives that promote workers' financial, physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These days, they have a say in choices about leadership development, work culture, hybrid work methods, and the incorporation of digital wellness platforms to ensure that the company not only meets but exceeds employee expectations, the CHRO must advocate for policies and procedures that support the welfare of human capital. Career management initiatives, which ensure that workers have the resources and opportunities to advance, are another area that CHROs must actively promote. CHROs may boost employee morale and job satisfaction by expressing gratitude and acknowledgment. This study examines how CHROs are driving employee well-being in India by analyzing two leading companies: **Deloitte India and Infosys**. These organizations were selected due to their widely recognized HR innovation and proactive approaches to well-being.

Through secondary research, the paper explores the specific strategies employed by each company and compares their effectiveness in enhancing employee engagement, retention, and overall satisfaction. In doing so, the study highlights the growing strategic importance of HR leadership in shaping the future of work in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolving nature of work has made employee well-being a central concern for organizations globally. Several scholars and industry experts have highlighted that workplace well-being is now intrinsically linked to business performance, employee retention, and employer branding (Mehta & Sharma, 2023). In particular, the role of the CHRO has gained prominence in driving these initiatives at a strategic level.

Deloitte's (2023) Global Human Capital Trends report introduced the concept of "human sustainability," which emphasizes helping employees thrive not just at work, but in life. The report argues that organizations must move beyond temporary wellness benefits and instead embed well-being into the core of organizational culture. This includes psychological safety, inclusive leadership, and transparent communication.

Gartner (2022) further supports this shift, stating that nearly 70% of CHROs globally are incorporating mental health support and well-being metrics into business planning. Their report also identifies well-being as a primary driver of employee engagement and productivity, especially in hybrid and remote work environments.

In the Indian context, Mehta and Sharma (2023) conducted a study analyzing post-pandemic employee satisfaction across mid- to large-scale enterprises. They found that companies with structured wellness programs particularly those that addressed emotional and psychological needs experienced a 25% improvement in employee retention and a 30% boost in morale. This finding suggests that wellness programs led by CHROs are not just effective, but essential for organizational resilience. Moreover, Infosys (2023) has documented the success of its HALE (Health Assessment and Lifestyle Enrichment) program as part of its sustainability and ESG goals. The company attributes a significant portion of its employee engagement success to this initiative, which combines digital health tools, counselling access, and hybrid work flexibility.

OBJECTIVES

1. Study the strategic role of CHROs in shaping employee well-being initiatives in Indian organizations.
2. To compare the employee well-being strategies of Deloitte India and Infosys.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative secondary research approach to explore how CHROs influence employee well-being initiatives in India. Given the nature of the topic focused on strategic leadership, organizational culture, and HR practices, qualitative analysis is appropriate to capture the depth and context of each organization's efforts.

Research Design:

The research employs a comparative case study design, focusing on two leading Indian companies: Deloitte India and Infosys. These firms were selected based on their public recognition for HR innovation and comprehensive well-being programs. Case studies allow for in-depth analysis of real-world practices and their implications.

Data Collection

Data was collected through secondary sources:

- Official company websites and sustainability reports.
- Human resource strategy documents and press releases.
- Peer-reviewed academic journal articles.
- Industry white papers and credible HR publications (e.g., Gartner, Deloitte Insights).

Data Analysis

Analysis was conducted to identify common themes in well-being strategies, including:

- Types of wellness initiatives (e.g., mental health support, hybrid work, digital tools).
- Role of CHROs in initiating and managing these programs.
- Reported outcomes such as employee engagement, retention, or satisfaction.

Case Study: Deloitte India

Deloitte India, a subsidiary of the global consulting firm Deloitte, is widely recognized for its innovative approaches to employee well-being. The company has adopted a holistic framework that integrates mental, emotional, physical, and financial wellness initiatives into its overall employee engagement strategy. The role of the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at Deloitte India has been very important in shaping and executing these initiatives.

Wellness Programs at Deloitte India

Deloitte India has implemented a comprehensive suite of well-being programs under its "Well being at Deloitte" initiative. These programs are designed to support employees' health in multiple dimensions, ranging from physical fitness and mental health to financial planning and work-life balance. One of the core components of this initiative is the Mental Health Awareness Program, which provides employees with access to counselling services, stress management workshops, and mental health days. This program is reinforced by the creation of a mental health ambassador network within the organization, which aims to normalize conversations around mental health and provide peer support.

Another key offering is the Hybrid Work Flexibility Policy, which allows employees to tailor their work schedules to meet personal and professional needs. This policy gained significant traction during the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued to evolve post-pandemic to support flexible working arrangements that improve work-life integration.

Role of the CHRO in Employee Well-Being

The CHRO at Deloitte India has played an instrumental role in embedding well-being into the company's culture. Under their leadership, well-being is no longer seen as an optional benefit but as an integral part of the organization's value proposition to employees. The CHRO has championed the integration of well-being metrics into performance management, ensuring that employee well-being is tracked and prioritized alongside productivity and engagement. Additionally, the CHRO has led the development of a Digital Well-Being Platform, which provides employees with access to resources, such as mindfulness apps, fitness tracking tools, and financial wellness calculators. This platform also serves as a central hub for employees to access personalized well-being recommendations based on their individual needs.

Outcomes and Effectiveness

According to Deloitte's internal reports, the company's well-being initiatives have led to a measurable increase in employee engagement and retention. The Global Human Capital Trends Report (Deloitte, 2023) noted that companies with strong well-being programs experienced a 20% higher employee satisfaction rate and a 15% decrease in turnover rates compared to organizations without such initiatives. Employee feedback from Deloitte's annual surveys highlights high levels of satisfaction with the mental health support services, with 85% of respondents stating that the company's mental health initiatives positively impacted their well-being. Furthermore, the flexibility offered by the hybrid work model has been associated with a 30% improvement in work-life balance satisfaction. In conclusion, Deloitte India's comprehensive well-being programs, coupled with strategic CHRO leadership, have resulted in improved employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention, reinforcing the organization's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Case Study: Infosys

Infosys, one of India's leading multinational corporations in the IT sector, has long been known for its commitment to employee well-being. The company has adopted a strategic, holistic approach to workplace wellness, aiming to create an environment that fosters not only professional growth but also personal health and happiness. The Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at Infosys plays a pivotal role in the design and implementation of these wellness initiatives, driving a culture of care and inclusivity.

Wellness Programs at Infosys:

Infosys has established a robust suite of wellness initiatives, primarily under its HALE (Health Assessment and Lifestyle Enrichment) program. This program integrates multiple aspects of well-being, including physical health, mental wellness, and lifestyle enrichment. Key components of the HALE program include:

- **Digital Health Tools:** Infosys provides employees with access to a range of digital tools that promote physical fitness, mental well-being, and lifestyle management. This includes wearables that track health metrics, fitness apps, and resources for personalized wellness plans.
- **Counselling and Emotional Support:** Infosys offers 24/7 access to counselling services through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These services are designed to support mental health, reduce stress, and provide confidential counselling for personal or work-related issues.
- **Financial Wellness Initiatives:** Understanding the financial stress many employees face, Infosys offers financial planning seminars and tools that help employees manage their finances and prepare for future needs.
- **Flexible Work Environment:** Another corner stone of Infosys's wellness offerings is its Flexible Work Environment policy, which promotes work-life balance by allowing employees to work from home, utilize flexible working hours, or opt for part-time arrangements when needed.

Role of the CHRO in Employee Well-Being

The CHRO at Infosys has been instrumental in fostering an organizational culture centered on employee well-being. Under their leadership, Infosys has prioritized the integration of well-being initiatives into its core business strategies, emphasizing that a healthy, engaged workforce directly correlates with business success. One of the major steps taken by the CHRO was the creation of a Well-being Committee, which includes leaders from various departments, including HR, operations, and IT. This committee works collaboratively to ensure that employee wellness is a cross-functional priority and that resources are consistently allocated to support well-being initiatives. The CHRO has also advocated for a Psychological Safety Framework, which encourages open communication, reduces stigma around mental health, and fosters an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges and seeking help when needed.

Outcomes and Effectiveness

Infosys has seen notable improvements in employee engagement and satisfaction as a result of its well-being programs. The company's Employee Experience Survey (Infosys, 2023) revealed that 90% of employees felt that the company's wellness initiatives had a positive impact on their overall job satisfaction, with specific praise for the mental health and flexible work policies. Moreover, Infosys reported a 25% reduction in absenteeism and a 15% increase in retention rates in departments that heavily utilized the wellness services. These outcomes suggest that Infosys's approach to employee well-being has not only enhanced the quality of life for its employees but has also contributed to the company's organizational stability.

The HALE program's success has garnered recognition within the industry, with Infosys receiving multiple accolades for its commitment to sustainability and employee well-being, including rankings in various "Best Places to Work" awards. In conclusion, Infosys's strategic implementation of well-being initiatives, championed by the CHRO, has proven to be an effective model for enhancing employee engagement, reducing turnover, and fostering a supportive, inclusive work environment.

COMPARISON FINDINGS

The comparative analysis of Deloitte India and Infosys reveals both commonalities and unique approaches in their strategies for fostering employee well-being. While both organizations prioritize a holistic view of well-being, with a focus on mental, physical, and financial health, there are notable differences in the way these programs are structured and executed. This section contrasts the two companies' wellness initiatives, evaluating their impact on employee engagement, retention, and satisfaction.

Common Approaches in Employee Well-Being Strategies

Both Deloitte India and Infosys have embraced the concept of holistic well-being, practices:

- **Mental Health Support:** Both companies have implemented robust mental health support programs, such as counselling services and mental health awareness initiatives. Deloitte has created a mental health ambassador network, while Infosys offers 24/7 access to counselling services through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Both organizations have recognized the importance of work-life balance, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Deloitte has adopted a Hybrid Work Flexibility Policy, while Infosys promotes flexible working hours and work-from-home options as part of its well-being strategy.
- **Digital Well-Being Platforms:** Both companies have invested in digital tools to support employees' wellness. Deloitte offers a platform for mindfulness apps, fitness tracking, and financial wellness tools, while Infosys provides wearables and personalized wellness plans through its HALE program.

Diverse Approaches in Employee Well-Being Strategies

- **Focus on Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** Infosys has placed significant emphasis on its EAP, offering comprehensive emotional and psychological support, including counselling, stress management workshops, and personalized care. Deloitte, while also providing similar services, integrates mental health initiatives within a broader culture of mental health ambassadors, emphasizing peer support and creating an open dialogue around mental health issues.
- **Leadership Involvement:** Deloitte's CHRO has championed the integration of well-being metrics into performance management systems, which has allowed the company to track well-being alongside employee productivity and engagement. In contrast, Infosys has taken a more committee-driven approach with its Well-being Committee, which includes cross-functional leadership involvement but does not directly tie well-being initiatives to performance evaluations.
- **Recognition and Industry Awards:** Infosys has received multiple accolades for its employee well-being programs, especially its HALE initiative, which has been recognized for its focus on sustainability and employee health. Deloitte, on the other hand, has earned praise for its culture of innovation and its "Wellbeing at Deloitte" initiative, though it has not garnered as many specific industry awards as Infosys.

Impact on Employee Engagement, Satisfaction, and Retention

Both organizations report significant positive outcomes as a result of their well-being strategies to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover:

- **Deloitte India:** According to internal surveys, the company has seen a 20% increase in employee satisfaction and a 15% reduction in turnover rates. The hybrid work flexibility policy has contributed to a 30% improvement in work-life balance satisfaction, while mental health initiatives have led to higher engagement levels.
- **Infosys:** The Company has experienced a 25% reduction in absenteeism and a 15% increase in retention rates in departments that heavily utilized wellness services. Employee feedback indicates that 90% of employees felt that the wellness programs positively impacted their job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the increasingly strategic role of Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs) in advancing employee well-being initiatives within leading Indian organizations such as Deloitte India and Infosys. These companies exemplify a progressive shift, treating employee well-being not as a supplementary benefit but as a critical pillar of organizational performance and sustainability. The evolution of well-being from a peripheral concern to a strategic priority has significantly influenced employee engagement, retention, and productivity. Deloitte India and Infosys have each adopted holistic approaches to well-being that address mental, physical, emotional, and financial health. Common strategies include mental health support systems, flexible work models, and digital wellness platforms. However, their approaches are also shaped by distinct organizational cultures. Deloitte integrates well-being metrics with performance management, making well-being a measurable component of employee performance. In contrast, Infosys employs a committee-led model focused on personalized care through its Health Assessment and Lifestyle Enrichment (HALE) program, emphasizing individual employee needs. Despite differing strategies, both companies report notable improvements in employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes. These positive impacts highlight the pivotal role CHROs play in aligning well-being initiatives with broader business goals.

Their leadership ensures these programs are not only well-designed and implemented but also continuously evaluated for effectiveness and strategic fit. In the post-pandemic work environment, where hybrid models and employee expectations have transformed the work place, the CHRO's role has become even more critical. Organizations are recognizing that a well-supported workforce is essential to maintaining competitiveness, resilience, and a positive employer brand. Deloitte and Infosys serve as bench marks, demonstrating how strategic investment in well-being can yield both human and business benefits. In conclusion, the enhanced focus on employee well-being signals a profound transformation in work force management. The proactive involvement of CHROs in this domain reflects a shift toward more human-centric leadership, where employee health and happiness are seen as vital to organizational success. This alignment of well-being with strategic priorities ensures that businesses are not only fostering a healthier work force but also securing long-term growth and sustainability in an increasingly dynamic global landscape.

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